



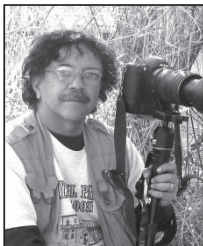
Solar subsidies shine on corporations

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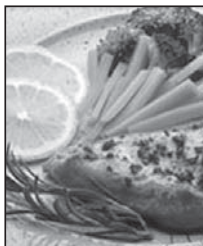
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THE ORANGE COAST VOICE

No. 8 Serving Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa and surrounding communities May 2007

Harman: Shorten EIR

Critics say corporate bill will weaken environmental law

By JOHN EARL
OC Voice Editor

State Senator Tom Harman (R-Huntington Beach-Costa Mesa) has quietly introduced a bill (SB 427) in Sacramento that would make it easier to build in undeveloped urban areas.

This bill changes the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to allow developers to file a far less comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for projects that are consistent with an already established city master plan.

Certain development projects located in urban areas covered by a broad city plan, and which provide housing or employment near "business centers or transportation corridors," would be exempt from current CEQA regulations that require an EIR to examine project alternatives as well as growth inducing and cumulative impacts.

The short form EIR is also exempt from currently required "findings" that indicate what changes have been made to the project to make it more environ-



PHOTOGRAPH FROM [HTTP://REPUBLICAN.SEN.CA.GOV/WEB/35/](http://REPUBLICAN.SEN.CA.GOV/WEB/35/)

SB 427: State Senator Tom Harman claims his bill will help stop urban sprawl.

mentally sound and why other such measures were not taken.

CEQA's "fair argument" clause, which requires the EIR to examine any reasonable argument—with-out cost to the person making

it—that a proposed development would have an adverse environmental impact, is also eliminated from the new short form EIR.

That would create a considerable financial burden, normally

placed on the developer, for individual residents or non-profit groups who usually can ill-afford to hire professional researchers to prepare an independent EIR that would have less legal standing than an official EIR.

Harman introduced the bill to the Senate in February. It now awaits consideration by the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality.

The bill, which Harman depicts as an environmentally friendly way to combat "urban sprawl" by allowing residents to live closer to their jobs and reduce use of fossil fuels, was written by the California Building Industry Association, which represents the interests of large corporate developers throughout the state.

"This prevents urban sprawl that we see in the Central Valley in California and we've seen so much of in Orange County," Harman told the *OC Voice*.

Harman says that the bill is necessary because CEQA currently has "unintended consequences." He didn't have any particular examples in mind, but added that "frequently people

See SB 427, Page 4

CM Affordable Housing Shortage

City lags way behind state requirements

By SARA ELLIS
OC Voice

In J.G. Ballard's 1975 novel, "High-Rise", class-conscious snubs and petty complaints among the residents of a sleek, 40-floor apartment complex deteriorate into all out war.

Not wanting to allow the lower classes into pools and rooftop sculpture gardens ostensibly built for everyone, the wealthier residents block elevator access, destroy the building's elementary school, and embark on nocturnal rounds of vandalism: urinating into laundry chutes, strewing garbage in the hallways, and pillaging the apartments on the lower floors.

With no outside authorities called in for help, and the middle floors struggling for a niche at the top, the building's poorer residents are left defenseless, pitted in a

struggle to feed and educate their children against the chaos raining down from above.

The modern high rise, touted like the free market as a great equalizer, works only to aggravate class divisions, distilling them into the lowest examples of human behavior.

Although exaggerated, Ballard's modern Lord of the Flies is a fit analogy for the voting patterns of the reigning majority in Costa Mesa's city council chambers, particularly with regard to the city's own high-rise plans.

By now sound bytes from Costa Mesa's Jan. 16 Council meeting have become bumper sticker slo-

gans for laissez-faire greed, after Mayor Mansoor, Mayor Pro-Tem Eric Bever, and Councilmember Wendy Leece, with her clumsy paeon to the market—"they're entitled to make as much money as they wanna make, uh, if they feel they can"—nixted an affordable housing inclusion for all three of the city's new high-rise residential projects.

Despite the unflattering fact that surrounding cities such as Irvine and Laguna beach all have inclusion ordinances, requiring a specific percentage of low-cost housing units in new developments, or at least the in-lieu fees to provide for them elsewhere,

Costa Mesa is once again playing Scrooge.

Such affordable housing mandates, argued Mansoor and his coattails, are too "last minute," and might even, as suggested by Bever, roll out the welcome mat for illegal immigrants. "I've read that in L.A. County, 68 percent of all HUD low-cost housing is occupied by (illegals)," Bever said, dubiously. "Perhaps we need to push that issue instead."

But Bever did not say who will most likely build the aesthetically based "architecture" he spoke of in that AP Art History lecture he graced on the public at the same council meeting: "The buildings actually function as art work themselves," he said, in arguing against builder fees to help fund art in the "City of the Arts."

Mansoor's arguments See HOUSING SHORTAGE, Page 5

[The state of California will be setting a specific requirement for the number of affordable housing units to be provided within in the city; Costa Mesa, it can quickly be estimated, is grossly behind

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ENERGY WATCH

Solar Initiative

Subsidies shine on corporations

By **LISA WELLS**
OC Voice

It is no surprise that solar energy is coming to center stage in California, as a clean, productive and—one hopes—cost efficient energy alternative to the expensive and dirty, heat trapping, carbon-releasing, peaked-out fossil fuels that cause global warming.

Even California's Hummer driving governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, has jumped on the solar bandwagon by having expanded already existing solar energy incentive programs in 2004 with his image-greening "Million Solar Roofs" plan, also known as the California Solar Initiative (CSI).

The intent of CSI is laudable: to create a self-sustaining solar industry in California that will provide "a mainstream [economic] option for both homes and businesses" in 10 years. This starting point will, ideally, then lead to 50 percent of all new homeowners (an estimated 1 million) having solar energy systems on top of their homes by 2018—that's a total of 3,000 megawatts of electrical power.

CSI aims to accomplish this goal by offering \$3.3 billion in rebates—subsidized by rate payers through their electricity bills—to individuals who choose to go solar by installing photovoltaic solar panels on their home or business. This hefty sum makes CSI the country's largest solar rebate program.

But if one imagines that this new legislation is producing a crop of solar paneled roof tops in your neighborhood, think again. That's because CSI brings with it a nightmarish mass of paperwork and high-cost structuring that works great for new home construction projects and large commercial roofs, but leaves the average home owner and the small scale solar installer out in the cold, say critics.

As a result, many owners of previously built homes, as well as members of the solar retrofit industry, which installs solar panels for those homes, face a possible crisis unless the California Public Utilities Commission, the various utility companies and legislators find solutions to this bureaucratic quandary.

All parties involved agree that this was not supposed to happen and that CSI looked great on paper.

Yet Bill Korthoff of Energy Efficiency Solar (EE Solar), a smaller local solar installation company operating out of Pomona, is getting nervous. Korthoff says that CSI is flawed and needs to be changed now.

Paperwork for residential solar installation has "...gone from about five to 50 pages" under CSI, Korthoff says, adding that Southern California Edison (SCE) makes things worse by requiring redundancy. For example, SCE requires duplication of one section of paperwork to be sent to two separate offices within SCE. Additionally, if any changes need to be made on an application the entire application



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF EE SOLAR

SOLARIZED: EE Solar's install projects have dropped 50 percent this year and two-thirds of its clients don't like the price, due to state subsidy program.

needs to be resubmitted, saving watts but wasting trees.

EE Solar's install projects have dropped 50 percent this year and two-thirds of its clients are not comfortable with the price, says Korthoff. At this point he just wishes the panels would be cheap enough without the program.

But for large companies like SPG Solar, the CSI transition has been smooth and business is booming. In fact, they have been working hard to meet demand, according to Iris Chan, SPG's senior marketing coordinator.

"The new CSI Program has not impacted our large commercial business as much as the residential

for her niche of the solar power industry.

She has been working tirelessly to get the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and SCE to understand the impact CSI has had on the state's solar industry. Administration of the program, a complicated, burdensome, 90-page handbook and some of CSI's actual legislation are creating havoc for her constituency and the average residential solar customer, she says.

But some environmentalists feel that CSI's monumental goal of creating enough megawatts of power to reduce greenhouse gasses and putting precious power on the grid at peak times—not to mention making the solar industry independently viable—is a good end that justifies the messy means.

For example, Rhonda Mills, from the Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies—a coalition of leading environmental and public interest groups—thinks that CSI gives more than enough money to go around and that the small-scale retrofit industry will get its share too. "We need to make sure that road blocks are pushed out of the way," she told the OC Voice.

On the other hand, everyone in the environmental community seems to agree that the "Time Of Use" (TOU) rate structure CSI mandates is full of good intentions, but disastrous in action.

TOU provides cheaper energy in the evenings and more expensive energy during the day. That's great if you work outside your home during the day; however, if you are elderly, at home with children or work from home, the TOU rate structure is not the one for you. Some folks' energy bills skyrocket, due to their usage, even after they've paid for a \$30,000 solar energy system on their roof.

TOU has put a halt to a lot of projects, especially in SCE's area (which contains 20 percent of the state's solar installations) according to Huntington Beach Mayor Pro-Tem Debbie Cook, who has solar panels installed on her large Seacliff area home and spent less than \$45 on electricity last year. "TOU penalizes people who aren't able to get a system that takes care See **SOLAR SUBSIDIES**, Page 8

**Even California's
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and small business market, due to different incentive structures and similarities and or differences from the last program," Chan stated. "We have had a few customers who have chosen not to go solar because it heavily affected their financial payback...but the demand for solar energy is not slowing down," he said.

One reason CSI works better for large companies like SPG Solar is access to the legislative process. "Fortunately," Chan said, "we have been very involved since the beginning of the CSI handbook writing process and have participated heavily throughout this intensive process, which has helped us smoothly transition into the new program."

Sue Kately, executive director of California Solar Energy Industries Association (CALSEIA), which represents solar companies that do retrofit work on older homes, wishes she could say the same

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.

Bible as literature course

I would like to thank the Huntington Beach Union High School Board for proceeding with caution on the Bible as Literature issue. This is a very complicated and emotionally loaded matter that is better left alone. The proposal to the school board is obviously a thinly veiled attempt by the faith-based people to get their foot in the door in public education, in clear violation of the separation of church and state principle, despite the proponents' claims to the contrary. When the "scientific" hypothesis of creationism did not fly in terms of it being a "scientific" concept to be taught in public schools, they turned to a more scientific sounding name, "intelligent design (ID)," which worked no better. The courts dismissed ID when it was proposed as scientific subject matter for the classroom; it is a religious construct, through and through.

It is interesting to note that primarily congregants of the Presbyterian Church of Westminster obtained the 2,000 signatures from school district parents. People with an agenda are obviously promoting this whole thing. The quotes attributed to the supporters are suspect. "We're ordinary parents endeavoring to add something we consider very, very important to the curriculum." It would be very surprising if these "ordinary parents" were not "ordinary" Christian parents whose evangelical zest has emboldened them.

The education professor's quote is even less convincing: "When I see students not familiar with the Bible, it's difficult for them to understand Western literature or American history." At the risk of using "anecdotal evidence," I never had any Bible education and I managed to earn a Phi Beta Kappa Key, a BA and PhD at UCLA. As a result of this newly gained intellectual curiosity at UCLA, I have read many books and articles about the Bible. It is certainly a source of great interest, inspiration, debate, and controversy. Any educated person should have at least a basic knowledge about the Bible, as they should of other important religious writings. But I think high school students in Huntington Beach would be better served by getting a solid education in the usual disciplines and study the Bible in Sunday School or other religious oriented venues.

Let's now allow Huntington Beach to be identified with the narrow minded people of Kansas, Pennsylvania, and parts east (e.g., the Bible belt). We are a little more modern, educated, and sophisticated than that.

Javier Regalado
Huntington Beach, CA

Editor's note: A group of residents recently asked the Huntington Beach Union High School District to add a Bible as Literature course. The school board heard the opinions of the public and has postponed further discussion for a future date.

Sucky markets at best

Yes, I'm a local citizen, obviously, and you know, I'm reading this article about Ralphs ["Boycott Ralphs?", April 2007]. Well, Ralphs and Vons for many years have been sucky markets at best, okay? And Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach have one thing in common: they're both run by a bunch of complete morons. Sorry to say that, but that's the way it really is and I've been here since '64. These cities could be the Twin Cities because the people who run both of them are totally inept at everything

and anything. They don't stand behind their people, they never would and they never will. As far as Ralphs, or Vons, both markets are at best horrible—on a scale of 1-10—minus 10. Hey, have a nice day.

Tom
Huntington Beach, CA

Gosh, it's great!

Your newspaper was delivered to my front door sometime last week and I only this morning got a chance to look at it. I want to tell you how much I love this paper. I can't believe that something like this finally exists for Huntington Beach. I lived here for 20 years and went to school in Orange County, but really consider myself part of LA just for the diversity and all of the opportunity to hear different opinions, which we don't get out here much. Thank you so much for this paper. I am putting a letter to subscribe in the mail today. Gosh, it's great! Thank you so much for being available and being a voice for people who have different opinions than what we're used to in Orange County.

Carolina M.
Huntington Beach, CA

Boycott hurts workers

What does "I'm a Mexican-American woman" have to do with anything? ["Boycott Ralphs?", April 2007] Ralphs is not the cause of the homeless or the blighted center. I worked at that store and it was pretty much used as a large 7-11. When you boycott Ralphs you are hurting the employees. Most workers are part time and when customers don't buy groceries our hours are cut. We have mortgage payments, car payments and tuition's to pay. With all the tragedy in the world don't you think this is a bit petty.

Kimberly Heckman
City Unknown

Editor's note: When asked for her city of residence, Ms. Heckman answered, "It doesn't matter where I live. You don't get it. People spend too much time on the negative. They need not sweat the little stuff. They will be happier and healthier."

Healthcare costs skyrocket

As our healthcare crisis inexorably metastasizes until nobody can ignore it any longer, phony "reforms" have been popping up like lesions, all of them cruel hoaxes, some of them laughable. Arnold's celebrated "plan" is properly characterized as Private Insurers' Pork, with ten pages of band-aids added on, but at least it allows the Governor to play a caring maverick reformer on TV and in the national press. Newport Beach philosopher Allan Beck likens it to politicians sitting down with auto manufacturers to deal with a transportation crisis by forcing every Californian to buy a car, and creating a government program to steer scarce tax dollars to poor Californians who can't afford one. Pure genius!

But SB 840, Senator Kuehl's single-payer bill, the only true reform of the bunch, refuses to die, and just comes back stronger each year. Let me get you up to speed just in case you haven't been following the issue: Americans spend far more than any other nation on healthcare—over \$7000 per year per person now—and yet we are number 37 in quality of healthcare, below all other industrialized nations. 18,000 Americans die each year due to denial of medical care; and half of all bankruptcies are due to medical debt—and mostly that's folks who were insured when they got sick. There are many problems contributing to this crisis, but by far the biggest is the unnecessary, parasitic private health insurance industry, which pulls in untold billions by charging us higher premiums every year while covering as little of our medical necessities as they can legally get away with (they refer to that as "medical losses.")

And that's why SB 840 just keeps not dying but coming back stronger than ever—it is the only reform on the table in this state that will actually cover all of us, comprehensively, while saving us \$8 billion a year. It does this mainly by eliminating the

See **LETTERS**, Page 6

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SB 427: Bill Cuts EIR Standards

Senator Harman says intent is pro-environment

From Page 1

use the CEQA process to delay, hinder and otherwise obstruct a project which is perfectly normal... Why make somebody go completely through the whole process again, increase the cost [and] open the door to more litigation?"

Detailed EIRs are unnecessary for urban developments, Harman claims, because cities already have to complete a detailed EIR for the general plan area and that would entail specific and as yet unknown developments in the future.

A general plan EIR would be able to stand for ten years under SB 427, instead of five years currently stipulated by CEQA.

"There's no need for them [developers] to go through the entire EIR process again because it's already been done once," Harman says, but he acknowledges that there's no way to know ahead of time what specific project is going to appear.

Harman claims that's not important, however, because "You know what its parameters are going to be. We know that this is the type of project that's going to go there."

But that's not good enough for Sandra Genis, former Costa Mesa mayor and a local activist, who was recently involved with Huntington Beach residents in an unsuccessful attempt to deny approval of the EIR prepared by Poseidon Inc. for a 50 million gallon per day desalination plant planned for southeast Huntington Beach, on the corner of Newland and Pacific Coast Highway.

Genis, who is urging Harman's constituents to oppose the bill, says it's part of an ongoing attempt by building interests "to gut CEQA by exempting any project consistent with a general plan or zoning for additional review."

In an analysis of SB 427 sent by email to the *OC Voice*, Genis claims, for example, that relying only on the general plan EIR to examine cumulative impacts of a specific (and future) project within the plan area is "problematic in that some impacts, such as loss of habitat, would not even become apparent until site-specific investigations were pursued."

A city's general plan is not and cannot be as comprehensive as a site project generated EIR, according to Genis.

"Cities do not have the resources to examine specific resources and impacts on every single lot," she says, "Plus, it would be a waste of time, since why do detailed



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN EARL

POSEIDON'S PARTNER: Desalination plant slated to partner with AES power plant above may encounter relaxed EIR standards in the future.

analyses for property that might or might not be developed within the time frame of the general plan?"

Genis indicates that projects like Poseidon, which, due to a recent court ruling, might have to go through the EIR process again, could qualify for the shorter EIR format, thus avoiding sufficient scrutiny of its potential effects on the environment.

Genis believes that Poseidon Inc.'s previously approved HB desalination plant is incompatible with the city's general plan, but that "If you believe the city's position regarding general plan conformity, they [Poseidon] could have used the short form EIR the first time around."

Not so, says Harman aide Damien Conklin. "Unless Poseidon adds housing closer to jobs or jobs closer to housing, which I strongly doubt, it would not apply."

But in the bill's specific language, the word "near" is used but not clearly defined, meaning, according to Genis, that it could apply to development in outlying areas. But one of the selling points for Poseidon was that its desalination plant would create new, permanent, jobs on the site, which by any reasonable estimation is located "near" the large southeast HB residential area, as well as a future housing development approved for the corner of Newland and

Hamilton streets.

Genis also reasons that by exempting job generating projects from the tougher EIR standards, Harman's bill might defeat its own purpose, exacerbating "jobs/housing imbalances in housing poor/jobs rich areas."

Joe Geever, spokesperson for the Surfrider Foundation, a coastal oriented environmental protection group that sued Poseidon, questions the methods used by Harman's bill to eliminate urban sprawl.

"CEQA has already been weakened over the course of the years and we cannot afford to further sacrifice this important environmental safeguard," Geever says, "There are better ways to create incentives for sustainable 'smart growth' that don't weaken environmental protection."

HB Mayor Pro-Tem Debbie Cook, always a strong supporter of Harman in past elections, said she was concerned about the bill but would withhold comment until she has a better understanding of it. "I would want to know the motivation for it," she said.

Speaking of motivation, the CBJA chose Harman as the bill's sponsor because of his "good environmental credentials," he says.

"They brought this bill to me and said 'Look, Tom, ... You're well respected in the environmental community and we'd like

you to be the [bill's] author,' and I agreed to do that," Harman said.

"I told them, 'Look, this is going to cause some concern in the environmental community and let's go and talk to them to see what their concerns are and try best to explain to them how this bill works,'" Harman added.

But Harman acknowledges that until now he has not made any attempt to contact that community, not even within the 35th Senatorial District he represents. "We're doing that now," he says, "I have initiated contacts with the Sierra Club." He's not sure if there have been any meetings with that group and his staff yet, but he thinks it has met with the CBJA already.

SB 427 may be one of a series of recent political moves by Harman that could tarnish his image as a political moderate, if a recent email reaction to the bill, published on a local Internet discussion board by a long time supporter of Harman's, is any indication.

"There was a time when his [Harman's] values caused him to champion such issues as preserving the Bolsa Chica, local control of our city council," the sender wrote, "This legislation signals a significant change from his positions in past years."

Harman claims that he's always had conservative credentials, but that, as a member of Republicans for Environmental Protection, he's an environmentalist nonetheless. "I'm very protective of things like clean beaches, clean air, urban runoff," he points out. "I've sponsored numerous bills in those areas. So I don't think I've taken any particular change or shift since last election."

It may be that Harman's conservative credentials were simply previously ignored by voters more focused on local environmental issues than the larger political picture.

Indeed, Harman swings to the hard right on many issues: labor—opposes a minimum wage increase; crime—supports three strikes and is firmly backed by the prison industrial complex; immigration reform—mimics the extremist views of groups like SOS and the former Minuteman Project, all while racking up one of the worst environmental protection records in the state legislature, according to the California League of Conservation Voters, which gave him a 10 percent rating in its latest online tally.

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Is Bottled Water Safer?

Billions of plastic bottles harm the environment

By SARAH S. MOSKO, Ph.D.
Earth Resource Foundation
STUART MOODY, M.A.
Green Sangha

Bottled water has become a symbol of our culture, whether it's the 5-gallon jug at the office or the single-serve bottles we lug around every time we leave the house. We've been led to believe that bottled water is better for us than tap water, but is it? And what impact are all those plastic bottles having on the planet?

Is bottled water really safer?

The FDA regulates bottled water as a food product, whereas tap water is EPA-regulated. Surprisingly perhaps, FDA rules are not necessarily stricter. For example, the FDA does not prohibit low levels of fecal bacteria in water while the EPA does. Common parasites (Giardia and Cryptosporidium) are screened under EPA rules but not so under the FDA. There have been several major bottled water recalls since 1990 for chemical and bacterial contamination. Dasani, for example, made the news in 2004 when it was pulled from British shelves for elevated levels of bromate, a suspected carcinogen. Furthermore, the FDA does not require that the label list any pre-existing contaminants, only "additives" such as minerals that are put in purposely. You may be surprised to learn that about 1/4 of bottled water is tap water – some of it is reprocessed, some of it is just repackaged!

Studies from the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC, 1999), Consumer



WWW.IOWAWATERQUALITY.ORG

Reports (2000), and the World Wildlife Fund (2001) have all concluded that you can't assume that bottled water is safer. In the NRDC study, for example, one or more samples of a third of the 103 brands they tested contained significant contamination, i.e., the water exceeded guidelines or standards for substances such as arsenic, bacteria, synthetic organic compounds, or parasites.

In addition, the World Health Organization has pointed out that bacterial growth can occur in bottled water that sits in storage for long periods. Interestingly, a number of top-sellers, such as Dasani and Aquafina, have declined to seek certification by NSF, a non-profit consumer group that tests bottled water for over 160 contaminants.

Is bottled water earth-friendly?

Single-serve bottled water comes in #1 PETE (or PET) plastic bottles, whereas the 1-gallon containers are #2 HDPE plastic.

The 5-gallon jugs at the office are made of yet a different plastic, #7 polycarbonate. All three come from petroleum or natural gas, do not biodegrade, and are thought to last at least a hundred years in the environment (before breaking into smaller pieces, still plastic). Plastic bottles harm the environment throughout their life cycle. We all know that petroleum and natural gas extraction is environmentally costly.

Also, toxic chemicals are used or produced in the manufacture of plastic bottles. For example, Bisphenol-A (BPA), a building block of polycarbonate plastics, is known to mimic estrogen and disrupt endocrine function in a number of ways; these disruptions include reproductive abnormalities in lab animals exposed in utero. Migration of BPA from bottles into water has been documented, and BPA has built up in the environment to the extent that

human tissue contamination is now widespread, at potentially dangerous levels.

An independent analyst working for the EPA noted that all laboratory samples must be kept in glass, as plastic is considered likely to contaminate the samples. He sent some distilled water that had been stored in a plastic bottle to the lab for analysis. It came back rated "hazardous," with dangerous levels of methyl ethyl ketone and other toxic chemicals in the water.

Can't we recycle plastic bottles?

Californians' unquenchable thirst for bottled water is putting an increasing burden on our landfills and creating more and more litter. The California Dept. of Conservation tracks all beverage containers covered under the state's CRV cash refund program. In 2001, a paltry 16% of #1 PET water bottles sold in the state were recycled. The rest, 3 million each day, were trashed. By 2005, the recycling rate had improved substantially to 46%, but the demand for bottled water had skyrocketed so even more water bottles, 5.2 million per day, were being tossed away. Simply put, our consumption is seriously outpacing recycling, so the big picture is getting worse, not better.

Across the USA, 93 billion water bottles were land-filled in 2002 alone. Placed end-to-end, that's enough to reach the moon and back 38 times! And those bottles that are recycled are not reborn as more water bottles—they're made into something like polar fleece that is not recyclable. All that plastic we drink from is forever mounting up around us.

See WATER, Page 11

Housing Shortage

From Page 1

against "last minute affordable housing mandates" seem weak at best. As Councilmember Linda Dixon stated, developers are used to such ordinances. "If one of these projects decides not to do this [because of housing fees], I would really be surprised."

Paul Freeman, spokesperson for Segerstrom, C.J. and Sons, one of the companies constructing the high-rises, confirms Dixon's viewpoint. "At different times," said Freeman, in a January interview with the *OC Voice*, "we've proposed different kinds of housing projects that had a range of products from affordable to less affordable and it's pretty consistently the case with Costa Mesa that the majority didn't want anything but the highest end, the highest quality housing."

Jean Forbath, of the Affordable Housing Coalition, believes that a class based insecurity lies behind the council's narrow approach. "It's more prevalent than the race thing. They don't want to be looked on as a poor relation (to Newport Beach), which is fair, but (at the same time) they don't want to admit that they have poor people."

While the high-rise structures may please the city council trio's "aesthetics," they'll do little for the trio's dreams of making the poor people go away. Currently, over

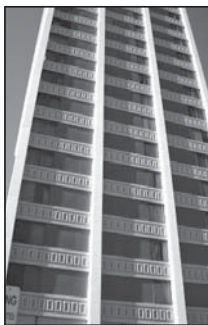
30 percent of Costa Mesa residents now fall into the very low income category of under \$34,000 a year, with 87 percent of households earning below \$20,000 paying 35 percent of their income in rent. Such numbers fall nowhere near those required by the California Housing Element, which sets the rent for a family with \$40,000 per year at \$1,225 per month.

Currently low end rents for two bedroom, one bath apartments average at \$1,393, and for seniors and those on disability, the housing situation is dire: listings from the Orange County Housing and Community Services Department, show Costa Mesa's "affordable" two-bedrooms as over \$1200, with studios at a steep \$825 per month.

At present, the sprinkler-free Bethel Towers, which very recently escaped an inferno, is the city's best example of affordable senior housing. Built in 1966, the Bethel high-rise, with its years of dangerous neglect, is a fit reflection of the council's own desertion, not only of Costa Mesa's low and middle-income residents, but the future of city itself. While whiling away in what affordable housing advocates would call a free market fantasyland, Mansoor, Bever, and Lecece are, it seems, only delaying the inevitable.

Early this summer, the state of California will be setting a specific requirement for the number of affordable housing units to be provided within the city; Costa Mesa, it can quickly be estimated, is grossly behind. Previous Regional Needs Assessment (RENA) goals set nine years ago by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) requested 445 units; the city chalks in at 49.

"The new RENA numbers," estimates Forbath, "are at 2300 units for the next five or ten years, but I think that's not even close



Bethel Towers

See HOUSING, Page 10

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

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Letters

From Page 3

private, for-profit health insurance industry, which we need like a fish needs a bike, and replacing it with a single-payer system like every other civilized nation has. (It saves additional money in some other ways—for example, enabling the government to negotiate down drug prices by purchasing in bulk, and a renewed commitment to preventive care.)

SB 840 won't die but will become law because, just like with the Iraq war, the people are way ahead of the politicians, and the Republican politicians are dragged along last of all, kicking and screaming. To pass the bill with funding (and to break Arnold's veto if he does veto it again) we need at least two Republican senators and six Republican assemblymen to break ranks, and break their silly pledge to never raise taxes. That is the wall we are hammering at now.

The state senator for most of us OC Voice readers—that is, those of us in Huntington Beach and Costa Mesa, and nearby—is Tom Harman, a genial Republican who has been reasonable on environmental and gay rights issues. We're beginning a full-court press on Senator Harman to get him to change his mind and support the bill; once one Republican jumps ship and does the right thing, others will follow. (And Arnold himself has finally been meeting, discreetly, with our hero Senator Kuehl—after years of refusing to.)

Senator Harman needs to understand that, sure, this bill involves taxes, but almost all of us will be spending far less than we are now on premiums, deductibles, co-pays, and the "hidden tax" Arnold correctly mentions where the rest of us cover all the uninsured in many unnoticed ways. The good senator needs to be reminded that SB 840 will save lots of money for the busi-

nesses and constituents in his district, and save lives on the Orange Coast, and that more and more of us know it.

Senator Harman's local mailing address is 950 South Coast Dr., Ste. 240, Costa Mesa CA 92626; his phone numbers are (916) 651-4035 in Sacramento and (714) 957-4555 in Costa Mesa. You know what to do, gentle reader. We're also going to set up a meeting between him and a posse of local SB 840 supporters who happen to be Republicans (yes, we do have that many.)

Finally, if you find this issue as exciting and compelling as we do, please join us for a strategy meeting at the Huntington Beach Central Library, Room B, Monday May 7, at 7 p.m.

Vern Nelson
Healthcare For All California
Huntington Beach, CA

Electrify freeways

Peak oil is a real problem, but also an opportunity. I was pleased to read that Mayor Pro-tem Debbie Cook and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) are planning for it ["Confronting Peak Oil", April 2007]. However, as an engineer, I respectfully submit that a shortage of oil is not an energy shortage. Solar, wind, waves, even nuclear, natural gas and coal remain abundant, though with varying attractions. There is no shortage of electrons.

The well-meant plans to "reduce energy use" will simply increase human misery. People should not be punished for going to work.

For example, the speed of my bus commute with one transfer is 12 miles per hour. First I got angry, then I did the math. Major improvements are impossible with such antique systems and our low-density cities.

One idea started as a joke: vending machines could rent electric mopeds. They are twice as fast as buses, and cost less. They have door-to-door non-stop service and no need for licenses. They even pollute less because central power plants are cleaner than buses. There's already a handicapped bus

system for those who can't ride.

But we can do better. Southern California already has a transportation system that is the envy of the world. Let's fix it.

Let's electrify the freeways. Most transportation energy is used during the fast part of the trip, on the freeways. Ford Research proposed a "program for individual, sustainable mobility," PRISM. Commuters' electric vehicles would use ordinary rechargeable batteries to get to the freeway. There a single, safe-to-touch, non-contact, non-sparking inductive rail would power and recharge the car as it drives.

Users like electric vehicles. They're reliable, convenient and pleasant. The technical problem has been a battery that can store power for long trips. The problem with conventional electrification has been that it wears out too rapidly. PRISM's rail sidesteps both problems. As for fuel, there are many ways to make electricity.

But PRISM's main trick is a set of standards that integrate the road and vehicle to improve congestion, safety and energy use. A PRISM car has an autopilot to safely drive in the "cruise" lanes at freeway speeds in tight bunches. Central computer controls eliminate the human driving behaviors that cause congestion.

The automated driving is hundreds of times safer than human driving, which alone is enough reason to adopt PRISM.

Four-passenger or minivan "near PRISMs" would be excellent family vehicles, meeting every social need but economy. However, the average number of people in a vehicle is 1.2. So the proposed "optimal" PRISM car would seat two, in tandem. It would be half as wide, with 1/4 the weight and energy use. Active stabilization would keep it upright. The infrastructure and energy savings of a tandem PRISM might make it worthy of subsidies. Eventually perhaps, half-width cruise lanes could be added, further reducing congestion and infrastructure costs.

There's even a logical place to start: Electrified freeways are desperately needed

in Torrance and Carson, where thousands of children have asthma from diesel pollution caused by the port's traffic. Serial hybrid trucks are becoming available, and could easily turn off their diesels and use power from an inductive rail.

PRISM requires only cheap government acts: electrify the freeways, permit new power plants and set standards for new types of vehicles. PRISM sneaks in an advanced, electrified, automated personal transit system. It conserves hundreds of billions of dollars of existing infrastructure and social organization.

I hesitate to mention a better scheme because PRISM is so practical for California. However, (I'm an engineer, and love cool gadgets...) around 1995, a disruptively inexpensive form of magnetic levitation was invented at Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, (based on Halbach arrays).

"Personal rapid transit" (PRT) systems use computer controls to fix congestion. The math and algorithms are sound, decades-old. A brilliant O.C. engineer named Doug Malewicki proposes a "Unimodal" personal rapid transit system that uses the new magnetic levitation. The result would be a "solid state" transportation system that goes nearly door-to-door at 100 mph. Standard transit simulations show that it could lure up to 60% of commuters away from cars, just with better service at lower cost.

Personal rapid transit systems are hard because they require governments to innovate. They fail often, usually when some clueless, ah, person promotes, regulates or designs one like a rail transit system. California, in fact, makes PRT uneconomical by requiring train-sized stopping distances between cars.

Still, there's a cool transit system! Couldn't we just fix the regulations?

Californians avoid 19th century antiques like trains, streetcars, and... buses because we made something better. Why not go forward? Do something better!

Ray Van De Walker
Huntington Beach, CA

'300': Clash Of Civilizations?

Get the real scoop at the HB Library!

By SCOTT SINK
OC Voice Columnist

The recent film "300" has sparked controversy at home and abroad. Its critics, among them the Iranian government, have denounced the film as racist propaganda which dehumanizes Iranians. Furthermore, the timing of the film's release coincides with the Bush administration's rush to war with Iran.

Fans of "300" praise the movie as a visually dynamic action movie based on Frank Miller's graphic novel (not available in the HB library system). Any parallels or connections of this historical fiction to today's political reality are purely coincidental, they say.

Although this commercial film will distort many Americans' perception of the ancient Iranian and Greek civilizations, the ensuing controversy will hopefully inspire many to learn more about this subject.

Controversy can pique people's interest about a theme that might otherwise remain below their radar.

I scoured the shelves of the HB Central Library in search of books locally available to the public that could shed light on this matter.

"300" simplistically suggests that Xerxes belligerently invaded the united Greek city-states, Sparta and Athens.

One better understands the battle alluded to in "300" within the context of

the complex series of civil wars fought between the different Greek polities. The Persian invasion was a minor episode leading up to the massive Peloponnesian Wars lasting almost a century.

Victor Davis Hanson's *A War Like No Other* gives a sense of these conflicts.

"300" also suggests a clear line of demarcation between the Persians and Greeks, when both civilizations extensively influenced each other culturally.

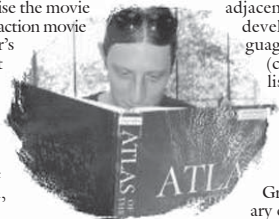
This mutual exchange should not be surprising for two geographically adjacent civilizations both developing written language around 600 BCE (compared with English literature beginning around 600 AD).

The HB Library offers a modest collection of ancient Greek and Persian literary classics. Political and economic relations were also considerable. Throughout the 5th century BCE, different Greek factions allied themselves with Persia intermittently against each other.

"300" also presents a myth of freedom-loving Spartans united against the Persian slavemasters. However, the Spartans were able to thrive in the arts of warfare by basing their economy on slave labor—much like the economic models of their contemporaries.

After sifting through many sources, I could find no illustrations of ancient Persian soldiers wearing silver masks, extensive body piercing or

See '300', Page 8



Heroism & Healthcare

What do you think?

By ANNE HOGAN-SHERENSHEVSKY
OC Voice Columnist

Sorry you missed my column last month. Email was on a "sabbatical."

So much is happening in the news... Tragedy at Virginia Tech, Reid/Pelosi bill to bring the troops home. The Gonzalez hearings, and, right here at home in our lovely city of Costa Mesa, the musical chairs have been resolved. (Also, City Councilmember Wendy Leccc will represent the city on the Senior Center Board of Directors.)

At the Costa Mesa city council meeting, Tuesday, April 17, I asked about demographics concerning 100-year-old residents. No record? Imagine, I went to a lady's birthday at Mesa Verde Rehab recently. She was 108! Good Americanized Canadian stock and still alert. Did you know that the new title for those over 110 is "SUPERCENTENARIANS?" Where there's life, there's hope. I have only 14 years to go, just to be centenarian. Where are you post WWW I babies?

Are you encouraging respect and consideration for the elderly? Can you help them get affordable housing? (Another reporter in this OC Voice, a veritable bundle of energy, a gen-x-er, has penetrated the senior world and its needs. Read her articles.) By the way, there is a new generation of Boomerangs, who, like baby birds, make round trips to the family nest. Are you one of them?

Those of us in the waning years of our life are certainly aware of the tragic events that happened Monday morning, April 16. We wish all the families much consolation, and the fellow students who lost close friends our sympathy.

So many acts of heroism are now surfacing from that tragic event. Can you imagine a Holocaust survivor who barred himself against the door to save his students, but lost his own life in doing so? All of us recognize the



heroism to help save lives of each and every student and teacher. How about the female student who played dead to live?

At the same city council meeting of Tuesday, April 17, several eloquent speakers spoke during public comments to advocate a single-payer health care plan for the state of California (SB 840 www.healthcareforall.org/kuehl.html). There was a medical doctor among the speakers. He reiterated the fact that we're all paying for emergency room care of uninsured children and adults. Why can't there be an extended Medicare health plan? Don't let PHARMA be king!!! If Costa Mesa rivaled the Pennsylvania city of Bradenton, which tried to purge the city of "illegal aliens," why can't we rival other cities and states like Massachusetts, Vermont, Minnesota and several others with our own health plan for all residents?

Let me hear your suggestions about relevant topics for mature adults. AARP begins at 50 years. Senior lunch sites offer subsidized meals to those 60 and over, but boomers are always welcome for a bit more "dinero."

May is OLDER AMERICANS MONTH. Did you take a senior out to lunch?

E-mail: annehs@ocvoice.com

COMMUNITY VOICES

Use SA River For PRT

Light rail? Hardly!

By **ROY REYNOLDS**
Guest Columnist

While Orange County endures ever more traffic with very limited options to add more pavement, transportation planners have long coveted the Santa Ana River as a natural transportation corridor. And why not, it runs from Pacific Coast Highway through the "Central Core," across the densest population and employment concentrations in the county. It also touches the Anaheim Metrolink Station, crosses the Pacific Electric right-of-way and runs adjacent to Anaheim's planned ARTIC regional transit hub where the Metrolink and Amtrak may be relocated.

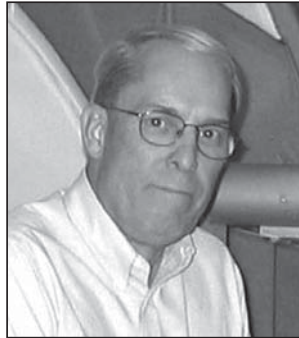
As late as last year, the Orange County Transportation Authority was discussing the extension of the 57 Freeway south, to have been elevated above the River. The OCTA will not consider this to PCH, but an extension to the 405 is still occasionally reviewed even though a Fountain Valley councilmember last year threatened the Authority with no support from the city for Measure M's renewal if any reference was made during its campaign to extending the freeway down the River—and none was.

The Santa Ana River has proven a very useful concrete-lined ditch, mostly controlled by the county's flood control department and the Army Corps of Engineers. Its engineering prevented many a flood back when it actually rained in Southern California. It's also home to a brine pipe for moving sea water, and bike paths, which are part of the OCTA's county-wide on and off road network.

The River could be used for transit, but a more reasonable approach than extending an elevated freeway needs consideration. Light rail? Hardly! Another CenterLine would be welcomed with the same outcry and community resistance as before. Light rail is an economic albatross and will never prove practical in our suburban environment; it's also redundant, competing with an award-winning bus system.

Personal Rapid Transit is a viable option. PRT, a lightweight, elevated monorail system, which supports small two to three person electric vehicles, could easily share the River's edges with the bike paths and traverse cross streets above street traffic. PRT isn't designed as a "line haul" system. Rather, it's built in series of loops which form a network, much like the design of the Internet. Vehicles, like Internet packets, are driverless, and directed by redundant wireless computer systems to take a rider directly to a requested destination, without stopping at any stations along the way or needing to share the ride with others.

The Santa Ana River edge is a perfect route for future PRT passengers, intersecting major arterial streets and freeways where it could be extended along shoulders and in medians to reach, for example, John Wayne Airport and South Coast Plaza. The River also provides a made-to-order connection between the County's two biggest tourist draws: the Anaheim Resort with 25 million tourists and conventioners annually, and the sand, downtown and pier attractions at Huntington Beach, which draw 11-12 million visitors each year. Newport Beach is also a strong tourist draw and, as HB, would benefit from an inexpensive and fast



way to exchange them travelers between the beach and the Anaheim Resort.

The city of Anaheim expects high-speed rail connections will support their ARTIC development, but that funding appears to be a low priority with the Schwarzenegger administration, especially if a needed bond issue doesn't make the 2008 ballot. It's also unlikely that any high-speed connection between Anaheim and Las Vegas would survive the resistance of contribution-happy Indian Casino interests.

Tucked into ARTIC and extended along the River, PRT would not only provide the tourist connection between Disneyland and the Anaheim Resort to Huntington and Newport Beach, it could also be run north along the 57 Freeway or east in the 91 Corridor to create a fast and convenient connection to Ontario Airport. An inexpensive, quick link to Ontario has long been high on Anaheim Mayor Pringle's wish list, and as well creates a way to better utilize a 24/7 international airport and take pressure off John Wayne. Arrivals and departures at SNA exceed ONT by about three million passengers annually.

Any active uses of the River for transit will be met with NIMBY resistance, but consider that PRT is far less impactful than either a freeway extension or light rail. PRT vehicles emit nothing, drawing power from the electric grid or even on-track solar cells. Small electric PRT vehicles are practically noiseless as well, and run without lights at night.

PRT's very small footprint, simply a pylon in the ground, means it can be extended to more useful places than other systems; for example, through flood channels to Huntington Beach's downtown area, Hyatt and Hilton Hotels and the new Pacific City and Strand developments. Also important, there are NO homes in Huntington Beach which back to the River. Southern California Edison transmission lines occupy most of the area alongside the River which is now planned for park space. Fountain Valley also has no homes along the River, and Costa Mesa's few dozen can be avoided by simply using the opposite river edge.

It's time to reasonably consider how to use the Santa Ana River as an asset and make progress in transit with a modern, electrified, emission-free PRT system.

Roy Reynolds is managing director of PRT Systems out of Fountain Valley. His firm's website offers more information on Personal Rapid Transit and Orange County-specific strategies at www.prtstrategies.com.

Finding The Real Surf City

By **JOE SHAW**
OC Voice Columnist

On my nightly walk through downtown, I recently overheard two residents talking about Surf City Nights. "Yeah the music was really good," the man said to his neighbor across the street, "I've got to get down there again."

People are talking about what's been going on downtown on Tuesdays. Live music, street performers, a farmer's market, activities for the kids, specials from our downtown restaurants and sidewalk sales from our downtown retailers have all created a downtown buzz.

By all accounts, Surf City Nights is an astounding success. Business is thriving and residents are bringing their families downtown for the first time in years. In fact, it's as if the entire city had been waiting for this moment: a reason to come downtown again.

What's more, the city and downtown merchants have succeeded in producing what many cities would give anything for: a week night event drawing thousands to the urban core of the city, an event with true community spirit.

The Project for Public Spaces says that "small steps to enliven streets, parks, and other public spaces are the building blocks of a thriving city." Surf City Nights is the first small step we've taken toward making downtown Huntington Beach the kind of thriving community space residents and merchants want.

That's why it's necessary to keep it going. This event could trigger a turning point for a downtown critics have branded as a place merely to "booze and cruise."

I'm hoping that city leaders and merchants will realize the significance of what they've created and look for ways to build upon this success and to explore more ways to enliven HB's urban core.

Residents for years have said they'd like to see Main Street closed and many see the success of Surf City Nights as proof that it would work. Others like myself, believe we have merely proved that a well-planned event will bring residents downtown. The trick is getting more people downtown the rest of the time.

The city's Economic Development department has recently hired urban design firms to come up with new ideas on how our downtown should look and to revisit our downtown parking plan.

To that end, I've been doing a lot of thinking about downtown, a lot of walking, looking at our downtown and how we can make it more pedestrian friendly.

By the time you read this, I'll be on a long-awaited much-needed vacation to Europe and I plan to use some of my time there to look at European town centers, transit hubs, public spaces and parks to see if what's working there can work here. I'll be reporting back here in the next two issues as well as periodic updates on my website, www.greetings-fromhb.com.

A few weeks ago I traveled to the far away burgh of Rancho Cucamonga to visit a highly recommended and award-winning development there.

Victoria Gardens won an Urban Land Institute (ULI) award for basically creating a downtown shopping area



where there was none! I was amazed at this development for its vision and scope. You could be fooled into thinking this was once Rancho Cucamonga's downtown area, but the developers simply recreated the look, feel and scope of an old fashioned downtown area.

Consisting of a 4-5 block size area, shops, plazas, street parking and even a town square make up this remarkable development.

The ULI wrote: "To create a sense of place, the project's backstory explains how the community grew over time from a simple group of buildings along a farm road to a diverse main street locale. Four architectural firms were engaged to design buildings representing various historical periods. Some buildings were designed to look as if they had been converted from other uses to serve today's needs; others appear to be several small shops stacked next to each other. The result is a tapestry of structures, streetscapes, and landscaping that reflects the history of Rancho Cucamonga."

Which got me thinking. The most attractive, original and popular part of Huntington Beach's downtown is the north side of the second block where the Sugar Shack, Longboard and No Ka Oi are. And not surprisingly, these are actually some of downtown's few remaining historical structures.

Wouldn't it be great if the massive building housing the parking structure that's across the street from these historic structures had utilized false old store fronts reflecting the old Surf City facades much like Victoria Gardens did?

That's the kind of vision and innovative thinking that our city's planners, leaders and developers should use when deciding the future of our downtown. As the Victoria Gardens development shows, progress sometimes means looking backwards.

As we move forward with the two upcoming new developments we have some difficult questions to ask. Is it too late to recreate that old beach town feeling? Which is the real Surf City: the old downtown storefront look and the beach bungalows remaining in our downtown neighborhoods or the Mediterranean developments and McMansions?

As we take another look at downtown, these are the questions that need to be answered.

Joe Shaw authors his own blog, "Greetings from Downtown Huntington Beach" at <http://hbdowntown.typepad.com/> and writes for the blog, *Orange Juice*, at <http://o-juice.blogspot.com/>.



Victoria Gardens

The Orange Coast Voice welcomes submissions to Community Voices by residents of Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach. All submissions should be well researched with a maximum of 800 words and accompanied by your full name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Send to admin@ocvoice.com.

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- Jan's Health Bar**
501 Main St., #D
- Kathy May's Restaurant**
7320 Center Ave.
- Landmark Liquor**
8491 Atlanta Ave.
- LaRocca's Pizzeria #2**
101 Main St., #112
- Limelight Java**
18581 Beach Blvd.
- Mailbox Center**
5942 Edinger Avenue, Suite #113
- Mailbox Station**
419 Main St., #A
- Mail Center Of H. B.**
16787 Beach Blvd.
- Mailstore & More**
9852 Hamilton Ave.
- Main Street Market**
508 Main St.
- Marco's Chicken & Sushi**
9017 Adams Ave.
- Michael E. Rodgers Senior Center**
1706 Orange Ave.
- Mitatie Healthy Vietnamese Cuisine**
7636 Edinger Ave.
- Murdy Community Center**
7000 Norma Dr.
- Pacific Crust Sandwiches**
21451 Brookhurst St.
- Papa Joe's Pizza**
414 Pacific Coast Hwy.
- Perqs**
117 Main St
- Sango Sushi**
7101 W. Yorktown Ave.
- Seacliff Liquor**
402 17th St.
- Sugar Shack Cafe**
213-1/2 Main St.
- Superb Donuts**
408 17th St.
- Sushi Ya**
5864 E. Edinger Ave.
- Taste of France**
7304 Center Ave.
- The Mail Secretary**
5901 Warner Ave.
- The UPS Store**
412 Olive Ave.
- Upper House Boba Tea Shop**
6846 Edinger Ave.
- 24 Hour Fitness**
303 3rd Street
- COSTA MESA**
- C. M. City Hall**
First Floor Lounge
77 Fair Dr.
- C. M. Senior Center**
695 W. 19th St.
- El Chinaco**
560 W. 19th St., #D
- Greek Town Grill**
279 E. 17th St.
- Natale Gourmet Coffee**
2800 Harbor Blvd.
- Native Foods Cafe**
2937 Bristol St., #E100,
- Orange Coast College, A.S. Bookstore**
2701 Fairview Road
- O.C. Public Library, Costa Mesa Branch**
1855 Park Ave.
- O.C. Public Library, Mesa Verde Branch**
2969 Mesa Verde Drive
- PK Burgers**
1875 Placentia Ave.
- Red-E-Rentals of Costa Mesa**
2075 Harbor Blvd.
- SecondSpin.com**
1781-A Newport Blvd.
- Sushi Box**
3001 Bristol St #D
- Taco Mesa**
647 W. 19th St.
- TK Burger**
2966 Bristol St.
- Wingstop**
1781-C Newport Blvd.

You can also find us on the web at ocvoice.com

Solar Subsidies

Homeowners left in the dark

From Page 2

of all of their needs," she claims.

But CSI was designed with efficiency in mind, say supporters, like Edward Randolph, policy advisor to Assemblyman Lloyd Levine (D-Van Nuys). Drafters wanted to generate as much solar power as possible from its \$3.3 billion subsidy budget in order to create a sustainable, i.e., unsubsidized, market for solar energy.

"There's nothing in the bill that should make it any more difficult," he says, adding that CSI's language intends to make residential solar installation easier. He said he was surprised to learn of the paperwork problems that Korthoff described, yet he acknowledges that Assemblyman Levine is "trying to work out the problem as soon as possible."

But Kately says installers are telling her that CSI makes it difficult for contractors to even bid for a job. They have to tell customers there's no way to know exactly what costs will result due to the maze of regulations. Rebate calculations are so complicated that the installer is in the awkward position of having to go back to the customer and tell them that the bill is off by some amount, sometimes in the thousands of dollars, or else he has to eat the difference.

Kately reports that on April 2, 300 residential solar installers showed up to voice their grievances about the new system's burdens, at the first of four required CSI/PUC public forums. "Homeowners were even there," she says. "One installer brought a 48-page application and asked, 'Is this really necessary?'"

Kately hopes that the PUC will work with her industry before it's too late. Some installers have already had to restructure their businesses from PV panels to solar pools, she says. Solar pools are not covered by CSI rebates.

According to Kately, "Solar businesses will fail if the problems are not corrected expeditiously. I don't think that the PUC staff knows what it's like for this industry."

In response to the entire controversy, the PUC's simply says that "We recognize there is an issue and we are working to ascertain the extent of the problem," but it has yet to implement any policy changes.

David Hochschild, Executive Director of a solar lobbying firm called PV Now says that SCE has a real problem and should be

looking at how other utilities comply with CSI regulations. Pacific Gas and Electric, which does 45 percent of residential solar installation in the state since CSI passed, has come up with a flexible plan that offers more varied options that work for more people, he claims. "Why can't SCE do this for their customers," he asks.

Much of the cost barrier for homeowners who need to retrofit is connected to CSI's pro-corporate approach, masquerading as "free-market" economics.

Supposedly, as more PV panels are sold, prices will drop, thus weaning the state's solar industry off state subsidies. Instead, however, prices have gone up. This is due, in effect, to diminishing rebates. Residential solar panel sales are now going down—the opposite of CSI's intended purpose.

That's not how Sun Power Corporation's spokesperson Julie Blendon sees it, however. She argues that CSI is a good program that helps companies that can install a Wal-Mart-sized roof in a day—a much more efficient way of bringing more solar energy to California than the small retrofit companies that use old, time-consuming installation practices.

There probably isn't any need for big solar companies like SPG and Sun Power to worry about CSI changing anytime soon. If Schwarzenegger has helped anyone, he has been a big friend of big business. Why should the solar industry be any different? At this rate, however, the CSI that is bringing "solar power to your local Wal-Mart" may also end up as a "green" corporate welfare check. But if corporate control is seized this way, what is the fate of the independent installer?

On the brighter side, Assemblyman Levine says he has scheduled a meeting between his staff and the utility companies, probably for July, to discuss a way out of CSI's paper maze.

Still another sunbeam's ray of hope is that the federal tax break which gives businesses a full tax write-off for PV systems, but caps homeowners at \$2,000, may be lifted. That legislation may become official this July as well. If so, everyone who installed solar panels on their homes in 2007 will receive the tax break, retroactively. Maybe there is a ray of hope for the little guy.

'300'

From Page 6

shark-fin-razor-blade-implants (replacing their hands for the specialized purpose of beheading transgressors).

Neither could I find an image of Xerxes marching to war in golden Speedos. Although most of the Persians in "300" are literally a faceless horde (wearing masks), the few with a human face are strangely black. Even though the Persian empire had incorporated parts of northeastern Africa during its height in that period, Persian art from that era suggests that many Persians looked more like their Greek neighbors. Nevertheless, one must consider that ancient—not unlike modern—Iran was composed of diverse ethnic groups.

Even though I appreciate that "300" is a work of wild fantasy made for entertainment, I could not help being bothered by the outrageously inaccurate caricatures of the Persians juxtaposed with the fairly ac-

curate images of the Greeks.

Perhaps this is an unconscious bias, since as a society we are more familiar with our Greek founding fathers than with the exotic Persians. For example, I used the library's computer to do a key word search for "Greece," which resulted in 638 matches. Searches for "Iran" and "Persia" turned up 223 and 56, respectively.

Sandra Mackey's remarkably readable Iranians: Persia, Iran and the Soul of a Nation (two copies available at the Central Library) delves into Iran's unique historical position as a bridge between the East and the West. Mackey's interpretations provide a historical perspective from ancient times up through the 1990's.

Recommended Reading:

Hanson, Victor Davis. A War like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War. New York: Random House, 2005.

Mackey, Sandra. Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation. New York: Penguin, 1996.

ADVERTISE IN THE OC VOICE

RESTAURANT GUIDE

RESTAURANT REVIEW



Bodhi Tree

Healthy & delicious vegetarian cuisine

By **JOE SHAW**
OC Voice Columnist

The Bodhi Tree Vegetarian Café specializes in Buddhist vegetarian cuisine, a delightful variation of Asian food, where chicken, beef and fish come in soy and gluten versions that look and taste like the real thing, but with none of the bad karma.

I've eaten here for years and although not a vegetarian, I enjoy this restaurant's fresh flavors, crunchy vegetables and absolutely delightful take on both Chinese and Vietnamese classic dishes.

For starters, their Spring and Summer rolls are fresh and minty, with a lettuce and bean sprout crunch and assorted soy versions of shrimp and pork. Dipped into the peanut-ty sauce, the complex flavors delight the palate.

On my latest visit, I had the "Assorted Vermicelli Noodle Bowl," the Bodhi Tree's take on the Vietnamese dish, Bun Cha Gio. This dish consists of a bowl of rice noodles topped with chopped egg rolls, fresh herbs, chopped peanuts, fresh vegetables and assorted veggie meats served with a delicious citrus-y nuoc cham sauce. It's both light and filling and one of my favorites.

Another favorite is the "Sizzling Herb Fish Fillets," served on a sizzling platter, delicious "fish" fillets

are served with vermicelli, lettuce leaves and sprouts for making your own wraps. The fish is exquisite, crisp and sweet and is the perfect counterpoint to the fresh veggies.

There's nothing better on a chilly night at the beach than a big bowl of some of their noodle dishes. My favorite is the yellow noodles in the "Curry Noodle Soup" packed full of succulent veggie meats with fresh mint and bean sprouts on the side. Adding the veggies as you go, keeps them crunchy and fresh.

One of the best lunch dishes is the "Assorted Meat Baguette Sandwich." On a crispy outside French baguette, loaded with their versions of assorted meats and the fresh crisp veggies, this sandwich is marvelous.

I could go on and on but the motto on their new menus says it all, this is "healthy food for a happy life." You don't have to be a vegetarian to enjoy all the Bodhi Tree has to offer. It's really one of Huntington Beach's best and most unique restaurants.

Bodhi Tree Vegetarian Restaurant

501 Main St., Suite E
Huntington Beach, CA

(714) 969-9500

regular cheese steak with peppers and mushrooms. Awesome. (ML)
2244 Fairview Road, Costa Mesa
(949) 722-8725

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

Mentatsu

This little hole in the wall Japanese ramen house is one of the best kept secrets of the noodle world. With only a handful of tables and bar stools, service is quick. Shoyu Ramen (Soy Sauce flavor) or the Chashumen (Ramen with Pork) are

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

Fuji's Burger

An unorthodox burger joint that offers the unique as well as good ole cheeseburgers. But Fuji's keeps em coming back with their amazing juicy teriyaki burger topped with a luscious teriyaki sauce. Also offers the more traditional Japanese plate and bowl dishes, including the mainstays of chicken and beef teriyaki. (ML)
15885 Gothard St., Huntington Beach
(714) 891-6066

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

Sugar Shack

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

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

Taco Mesa

This is an area taco Mecca. The carne asada is tender and juicy and the pork oozes with flavor. Quality Mexican food in a relaxed setting. An outdoor heated patio is available, with a view of 19th Street. Starts at around \$2 per taco. (ML)
647 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa
(949) 642-0629

Frank's Philadelphia Sandwiches

Frank's hoagies here 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

great. At around \$6 a bowl. Is also open late, usually around 1 a.m. (ML)
688 Baker Street #7, Costa Mesa
(714) 979-2755

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

Smokin' Mo's

Smokin Mo's is Good old Southern BBQ. Recipes are from some of the South's legendary BBQ places. Remember the ribs and sandwiches. Make sure to get lots of extra sauce: Original, Hot, Philthy Phil's and Sweet Carolina's. They also have great coleslaw, smoky BBQ beans and killer garlic fries. (JS)
301 Main St. #107, Huntington Beach
(714) 374-3033

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

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

El Chinaco

Great Mexican and El Salvadoran food and libations, and the famous Minuteman tacos, served at moderate prices. (JE)
2063 Harbor Blvd, Costa Mesa
(949) 722-8632

Editor's note: The OC Voice restaurant guide is just beginning. We will be adding new dining establishments each month. If you want to recommend a restaurant for inclusion in this guide, please email us at review@ocvoice.com and include the name and address of the restaurant and we will have our restaurant critic check it out ASAP.

Help Wanted!

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It's A Wiener

Dachshunds bark loud, run fast

By **DAVID L. M. PRESTON**
OC Voice Entertainment Editor

Wiener dog racing may not be at the same level of popularity as horse racing (the Kentucky Derby) or human racing (the Boston Marathon) yet it still has proponents. Heck, one can't help but laugh thinking about those lean-long short-legged dogs running! And though there are those who take the racing circuit very seriously, for others it is all in good fun. To think, you've lived and never seen a dachshund race!

The local hotspot for wiener dog racing, in a relaxed and family-friendly atmosphere, is known by the natives to be the quaint German-European themed Old World Village, located at 7561 Center Ave., Huntington Beach, just north of the Huntington Beach Mall. Held every month the races bring out doggies from puppies to seniors to race for the bragging rights of being the hot-rod of four-legged hot-dog kind.

For 12 years the "Wiener Nationals Dachshund Races" have delighted canines and humans alike. The organizer behind the event is Inge McKellop, owner of the coffee shop "Paws at the Coffee Mill" at the Village.

"Dachshunds are small dogs that don't know they're small," said McKellop, who has two dachshunds herself. "They have a lot of attitude, probably to compensate for their size. They are quite loud barkers. They were bred in Germany as badger hunters. And badgers are very nasty animals." This explains, at least in part, the personality of the dachshund. "Their [the dogs'] German heritage is a good match with the Old World Village," she also pointed out.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DAYTON LEGRUA

WIENER TAKES ALL: Baby Luv, Dayton LeGrua's champion wiener dog racer, running at an Old World Village dachshund race. Baby Luv has been racing for years and is featured in an upcoming documentary.

The idea of running the races came from a Dachshund club that came to visit the Old World Village many years ago. McKellop, who was on the board of the Village at the time, recalled how fun the club visit was. (She runs the coffee shop that was founded

by her parents—without the "Paws" name at that time—some 30 years ago.) The next year the club returned and did a demonstration race. After that she went with the idea and organized regular dachshund races. The idea, which she admits isn't wholly original, as there are many other dachshund races around the country, was a good fit for the area. Its popularity took off.

"Sometimes now the Old World Village is referred to as, 'That place where they do the wiener dog races.' It's really been something," McKellop commented, referring to the local popularity of the event. While she doesn't make any money off the races (three trophies are awarded and a \$25 gift certificate to her store) it does bring people to the Village and her shop, which is not just a coffee shop but a place for dachshund memorabilia and merchandise. The races also regularly donate to dachshund rescue charities.

Any dachshund, from the 11 pound miniatures to the 40 pounders, can enter and participate in the races (though the dogs should be over 4 months old and have had all their shots), but pre-registration is needed. Registration is \$1.

Usually between 16 and 36 dogs run, in two dog heats, about a 20-yard straight track length. "We've have puppy heats and a division for our older dogs, the Senior Wiener derby," McKellop said.

"We're very pet friendly; everyone gets a 'prize', a ribbon or a treat. We get a lot of families, kids and grandparents coming to the races," said McKellop.

The races usually begin at 2 p.m. Upcoming planned dates include May 27, June 24, July 8 (German Day), and August 19 (Plumfest). There are also weekly races during Oktoberfest celebrations at the Village, which is, of course, held during October.

McKellop does all the organizing herself, except for the emceeing and manning the gates for the races. If you are interested in volunteering contact her by e-mail at coffemill@aol.com. For information on the races, and how to register your dachshund for the races, visit www.oldworldvillage.biz/events.html online or call (714) 898-5111.

For more information on the Old World Village shopping and restaurant area, visit www.oldworldvillage.biz.

P R O F I L E

Who's On Stage?

Comedian Tom Riehl

By **ERIKKA INNES**
Special to the OC Voice

Comedian Tom Riehl, of Mission Viejo, is a baby boomer who delivers his stand-up energy at full tilt. When he shares his jokes with the audience, he doesn't so much speak them as he shouts them enthusiastically. While he says he got a late start in stand-up, you can hardly tell—his uniquely expressive, emotive style is a definite crowd pleaser.

Riehl's act is observational, with a focus on the everyday things that frustrate us. "That's the underlying theme to my persona, frustration and anger, but not too much anger, more of a funny kind of anger," Riehl says. Catch one of Riehl's routines, and you'll witness the anger and frustration he mentions, but it's all in good fun. In one bit, Riehl complains about how irritating MapQuest can be. "They just give you waaaay too much information for where you're going," says Riehl about MapQuest's directions. "It's like number 1,



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TOM RIEHL

get up from your computer chair. Number 2, exit your bedroom, proceed south down

the hallway 0.002 miles."

A great element of Riehl's stand-up is how relatable he is. Whatever his observations are about, they're usually right on, and something easily recognizable. For example in one joke, Riehl points out that job applications offer a very tiny box for explaining yourself if you've been convicted of a felony: "It holds about three words! What are you gonna put, not my fault?" quips Riehl.

Riehl has also been a finalist in "Orange County's Funniest Person Contest" in both 2003 and 2005. If you want to see Riehl doing standup, you can check out his website www.tomriehl.com for details about his upcoming shows. He's also part of a baby boomer comedy group, The Laff Pack, which you can learn more about at www.laffpack.com.

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

Housing

From Page 5

to what the real need is."

"SCAG is in the process of assigning [new] numbers," says attorney Eileen McCarthy of the Public Law Center, "and (they'll) be final as of June 2007. Costa Mesa and other jurisdictions are under a timeline. Every opportunity that's missed to promote affordable housing means that you're left with that much more unmet need."

Forbath is optimistic about a turnaround. "Hopefully we'll be invited to participate in the development of the Housing Element," she says.

And as for the council trio? "They won't be there forever. Hope springs eternal."

MAY CALENDAR

ART EVENTS

Ken Aldridge. Artist reception at Night Gallery Ceramics. At 7 p.m. May 5 at 201 N. Main St., Santa Ana. For information call (714) 973-8477.

Painter Warren Heard. Exhibition of paintings, throughout May. At Grace Lane Gallery, 2930 Grace Lane, Ste. F, Costa Mesa. Call for viewing times. Contact: (714) 545-1773.

"Faces of Yesterday". Photography exhibition. May 1 during library hours. Orange County Public Library, Mesa Verde Branch, 2969 Mesa Verde Drive, Costa Mesa. Call (714) 546-5274 for information.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

"Back to Bach". Presented by the Pacific Symphony, 8 p.m., May 10, 12, 13, in the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, OCPAC, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Cost: \$22 to \$85. Featuring Bach's Brandenburg Concertos No. 3 and 5 and more, conducted by Douglas Boyd. Call (714) 556-2787 or visit www.ocpac.org.

"Philadelphia Orchestra". Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents the brilliant sound of the Philadelphia Orchestra, directed by Christoph Eschenbach and featuring baritone Mathias Goerne. At 8 p.m., May 23, Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, OCPAC, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Cost: \$35 to \$225. Call (714) 556-2787 or visit www.ocpac.org.

"Trio Nareg". Orange County Performing Arts Center presents violinist Ani Kavafian, pianist Armen Guezelimian and cellist Ani Kalayjian performing as part of the Nakamichi Concert Series; 8 p.m., May 24, in Samueli Theater, OCPAC, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Cost: \$52. Call (714) 556-2787 or visit www.ocpac.org.

"Bolero", opera. The opera classic; at 8 p.m. May 31, in the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, OCPAC, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Cost: call for details. Information: (714) 556-2787 or visit www.ocpac.org.

COMEDY

California's Funniest Female competition. Quarter-final rounds of California's Funniest Female comedy competition at 8:30 p.m., May 5, 12 and 19; Semi-final rounds, 8:30 p.m., May 25 and 26; at Martini Blues,

5874 Edinger Ave., Huntington Beach. Cost: \$10 cover and a \$10 food/drink minimum. Call (714) 840-2129 for information or visit www.funniestfemale.com.

DJ/CLUBS

DJ Christopher Hall. At 10 p.m. every Monday in May at the Kitsch Bar, 891 Baker St. Costa Mesa. Call (714) 546-8580.

"Souled Out" funk mixing with DJs TSC1 and JV. At 10 p.m. every Thursday in May at Memphis Soul Cafe, 2920 Bristol St., Costa Mesa. Call (714) 432-7685.

"Thunderkiss", DJ-ing with Scotty B. Metal-rock theme. At 9 p.m. every Wednesday in May at Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. Call (949) 642-0600.

"Bristol Sessions", DJs Danny Love and Lil Brandon. Electronica. At 9 p.m. every Friday in May at Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. Call (949) 642-0600.

Friction. At 9 p.m. every Thursday in May at The Shark Club, gay-friendly establishment, 841 Baker St., Costa Mesa. Call (714) 751-6428.

DANCE

"Merce Cunningham Dance Company". Renown dance company, presented by the Orange County Performing Arts Center. At 8 p.m., May 19, at the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall and Segerstrom Hall, OCPAC, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Cost: Call for details. Contact: (714) 556-2787 or www.ocpac.org.

FARMER'S MARKET / SWAP MEET

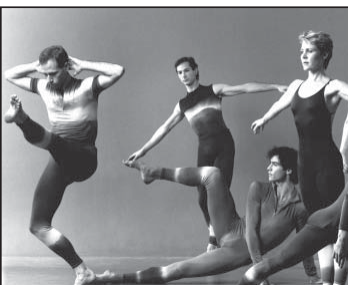
Swap Meet. Orange County Fair & Expo Center; at 7 a.m. every Sunday in May; located at 2701 Fairview Road., Costa Mesa. Phone (949) 723-6660 or visit www.ocmarketplace.com for information; or (714) 740-2000 and www.ocfair.com.

Farmers Market. At 3 p.m. every Wednesday at the intersection of Third and Bush streets in Santa Ana. Call (714) 542-9392 or visit www.grain-project.org for additional information.

JAZZ/POP

Vikki Carr. Legendary Latin/Pop crossover singer; at 3 p.m. May 6; at the Cerritos Center

PREVIEW



DANCE: TAKE A CHANCE

The Merce Cunningham Dance company is one of those touchstone troupes in world dance. Founded, and still run by, Merce Cunningham (now in his late 80s) it is known for its challenging and creative choreography. In his day Cunningham, a collaborator and a lover of experimentalist composer John Cage, has developed a style of dance that is known for extreme athleticism, demanding a lot from the dancers in amazing tableaux of bodies-in-motion. Influenced by Cage's "indeterminacy" composing (creating music by using chance to determine the sound or lack of sound constructions) Cunningham often uses a method of choreography called "Chance Operations." Whether this is reflected in his present works, is up to you the audience. This dance company, by possibly the greatest, and most influential, living modern dance choreographer, is sure to be moving. The opening dance to be performed has been choreographed specifically for the new Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at the Orange County Performing Arts Center. This will be a very impressive night of modern dance.

— David L. M. Preston

"Merce Cunningham Dance Company". Renown dance company, presented by the Orange County Performing Arts Center. At 8 p.m., May 19, at the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall and Segerstrom Hall, OCPAC, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Cost: Call for details. Contact: (714) 556-2787 or www.ocpac.org. A free preview talk at begins at 7 p.m. The evening also includes a showing of the film *Beach Birds for Camera*, and with live music on the plaza of the center.

for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos. Cost: \$37.50 to \$57.50. Call 1-(800)-300-4345 for information and tickets or visit www.cerritoscenter.com.

Andrew Garland. Baritone. At 7:30 p.m., May 9. At the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos. Cost: \$15 to \$22.50. Call 1-(800)-300-4345 for information and tickets or visit www.cerritoscenter.com.

Rick Braun. Smooth jazz trumpeter. At 8 p.m., May 19.

At the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos. Cost: \$20 to \$50. Call 1-(800)-300-4345 for information and tickets or visit www.cerritoscenter.com.

KIDS

"Baron Rabinovits". Orange County Performing Arts Center presents its Family Series in Samueli Theater. Delightful production from the Netherlands about the power of music. At 7 p.m., May 18; 2 p.m. May 19, 20; and 11

a.m., May 20; in the Samueli Theater, OCPAC, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Cost: \$14 to \$19. Call (714) 556-2787 or visit www.ocpac.org.

MUSICAL THEATER

"The Light in the Piazza" Broadway musical. Orange County Performing Arts Center presents the romantic musical, winner of 6 Tony Awards; May 1 to 13, at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 2 p.m. Saturdays, and 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Sundays; in Segerstrom Concert Hall, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Cost: \$20 to \$70. Call (714) 556-2787 or visit www.ocpac.org.

"The Pirates of Penzance". Light, comedic opera. Opera Series, Carl Rosa Opera Company Production of Gilbert & Sullivan. Swashbuckling tale of a merry band of pirates. 8 p.m. May 4 and 5. Cost: \$17.50 to \$26. At the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos. Call 1-(800)-300-4345 for information and tickets or visit www.cerritoscenter.com.

"Beauty and The Beast". LDS Church performance of the Disney musical story; at 7 p.m. May 3 to 5, and a matinee at 2 p.m. May 5, at the Huntington Beach North Stake Center, 5402 Heil Ave., Huntington Beach. Cost: \$6 reserved seats. Information call (714) 840-3858 and visit <http://hbnbb.com>.

"A Little Night Music". At 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, May 4 to June 3. Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. 661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa. (949) 650-5269. At the Costa Mesa Civic Playhouse, 661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa. Cost: \$18 general admission; \$15 for students and seniors. For tickets and more information call (949) 650-5269 or visit <http://www.costamesaplayhouse.org>.

"Rockin' The Beach". Featuring Frankie Avalon and The Surfaris. Classic hits of yesteryear with Frankie Avalon. 3 p.m., May 20. Cost: \$30 to \$57.50. At the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos. Call 1-(800)-300-4345 for information and tickets or visit www.cerritoscenter.com.

"Cats". Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical sensation. 8 p.m. May 11, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., May 12; 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., May 13. Cost, varies from

\$21 to \$49. Limited availability. At the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Drive, Cerritos. Call 1-(800)-300-4345 for information and tickets or visit www.cerritoscenter.com.

POLITICAL

Weekly Peace Vigil: "No War in Iraq, Surf City-Style". At 7 p.m. every Sunday in May. Non-violent protest on the Huntington Beach Pier, intersection at Main Street and Pacific Coast Highway, Huntington Beach. Bring a candle or sign with a peaceful message.

Patrick Henry Democratic Club Meeting. At 7 p.m. May 22, 1840 N. Tustin Ave., Orange. A club for progressive Democrats of all ages.

"Standing Up for Justice and Peace." At 5 p.m. every Friday in May. A non-violent protest against war. At the intersection of Bristol and Anton, Costa Mesa, near the South Coast Plaza.

Declaration of Peace Demonstration. A 5:30 p.m., May 17, anti-Iraq-War protest at the intersection of Edinger and Beach Boulevards, Huntington Beach. Call (714) 847-6617 or visit www.declarationofpeace.org for information.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State will be presenting Dr. Michael Newdow on Saturday, May 19th at 2 pm at the United Congregational Church, 4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine. Dr. Newdow will provide the inside view on the reasons behind the "Under God" challenges, their legal significance and their importance to church-state separation. The public is invited to attend; admission is free. Information: (714) 299-4551 or www.au-oc.org.

THEATER

"My Wandering Boy". Play. At 8 p.m. May 4, 5; 2:30 p.m. May 5, 6; and 7:30 p.m. May 6; at the Folio Theatre Center, 655 Town Center, Costa Mesa; put on by the South Coast Repertory. Cost: call for information. Contact: (714) 708-5555 or visit www.scr.org.

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Water

From Page 5

What are we paying for bottled water?

A 16- to 24-oz bottle of water sells for roughly \$1, about 1,000 times the cost of tap water. Since one gallon equals 128 fluid ounces, that adds up to about \$6/gallon. Comparing this to the price of gasoline nudges us to think more honestly about what we're getting for our money. Realizing that bottled water isn't necessarily cleaner than tap water, that it threatens our health through the leaching of harmful chemicals, and that it is harmful to the environment, could it be time to reconsider the apparent convenience of plastic drink bottles? We have perhaps a 15-minute relationship with a beverage bottle and then toss it away. The earth is left with it for a hundred years or more to come.

Municipally-supplied water is one of the great inventions of human culture. At least

one of these systems in northern California has received awards at water-testing competitions. Some municipal systems, though, have problems with contamination, especially since the introduction of persistent organic pollutants in agriculture, building, and transportation.

If you can't trust the water coming from your tap, or if the taste turns you off, don't resort to another form of pollution in the shape of plastic bottles. Invest instead in a home or office water filter. It will save you many dollars and will have a much more beneficial effect on your health and the environment. While you're at it, why not invest the money you'll save in campaigns for water district officials who will improve the quality of the water that comes out of your tap?

If you would like to participate with Earth Resource Foundation in a statewide plastics reduction campaign, call (949) 645-5163 or visit www.earthresource.org. In Northern California, call Green Sangha at (510) 532-6574 or visit www.greensangha.org.

I N T R O D U C I N G

RUDY RAMOS

Orange Coast Voice Photographer

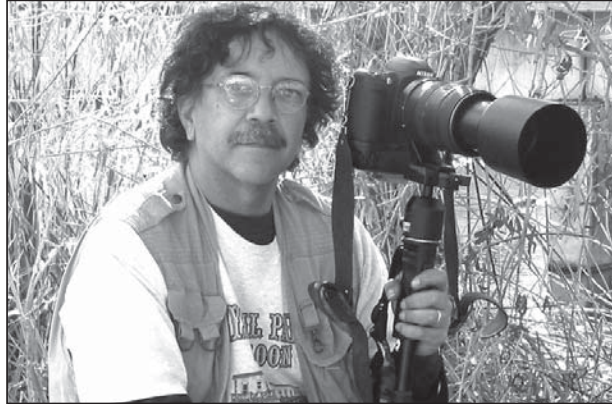
By JOHN EARL
OC Voice Editor

The OC Voice is pleased with the addition to its staff of Rudy Ramos, wildlife and nature photographer, who has a unique style of capturing the essence of any wildlife he encounters with his camera.

Rudy picked up his first camera as a junior high school student in Merrillville, Indiana. He knew then that photography was his true calling. After moving to Ventura, California in 1992, he began his professional journey as a fashion/product photographer for an international cosmetics firm.

He then advanced to his own studio where he did product/advertising photography for several years. But a strong desire to return to his family roots sent him back to northwest Indiana where he worked for an advertising firm. Although this was a highly successful endeavor, it didn't satisfy his creative spirit.

While studying micro biology at Indiana



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICKI GARBER

University, Rudy worked as an emergency medical technician. After he finished school he became a Laboratory technician with the nation's largest veterinarian labora-

tory. Although that was rewarding, Rudy still missed the outdoors and returned to his old love—the eco system—and made the decision to develop his photographic style and become a wildlife and nature photographer.

Rudy chose Phoenix, Arizona as central to that goal. He was invited by Lake Pleasant to photograph bald eagles nesting in the lake vicinity. His enthusiasm on that job resulted in his appointment as lead documentation photographer. His photographs are still displayed in the Lake Pleasant Visitors Center.

Since then, Rudy has moved his ambitions to southern California, where it is his intention to cover the California coastline, especially in Orange County.

Rudy may be reached through his email at rudyramosphotography@earthlink.net or to see more of Rudy's works, please visit his web site at: www.rudyramosphotography.com

Rudy is also available for guest speaking appearances for clubs, associations and schools.



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUDY RAMOS



Top Right: Greater Roadrunner.
Bottom Right: Fox.
Left: Mandrill.
Far Left: Spiney-tail Lizard.
Upper Left: Speckled Owl.
Above: Fennec Fox.



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