

Santa Monica Daily Press

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE MEASURING THE MEASURES ISSUE

District taking confusion out of report cards

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SMMUSD HDQTRS Understanding an elementary school report card may not require an advanced degree, but for parents, it can be downright confusing.

The standardized report card format used in all primary schools has long been the subject of criticism by teachers and parents who complain the document is too detailed and technical, featuring more than 60 individual grades.

District officials have been working with the teachers union over the past few months to streamline the report card, keeping the same standards in place but clustering the individual grades into broader categories. The new format, which will be rolled out in time for the first grading period early next year, will cut the number of grades down by about two-thirds, according to Sarah Braff, the vice president of the Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association (SMMCTA).

Braff, who has taught third grade at Will Rogers Elementary School for the past 20 years, said teachers spend about 40 hours filling out grading sheets for a class of about 20 students.

The report card doesn't connect with many parents who said they were confused and overwhelmed by the number of grades and specificity with each skill, Braff said.

"The whole point of a report card is to be a communication device to show kids and parents their progress," she said. "If it's not doing that, then that's not OK."

The current format was developed about

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STANDING TOGETHER: Los Angeles City Councilman Bill Rosendahl (left) joins Santa Monica City Councilmen Bobby Shriver (center) and Kevin McKeown (right) during a rally in support of Measure T on Cloverfield Boulevard on Friday. The measure aims to limit commercial development.

Council members rally for Measure T

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

VIRGINIA AVENUE PARK Blasting a heavily developer-backed campaign to defeat a controversial slow-growth initiative, several high-profile supporters of Measure T gathered here Friday afternoon for a rush-hour rally.

Los Angeles City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, whose district sandwiches Santa Monica, was the latest name to join the Yes on Measure T cause, which seeks to cap commercial development at 75,000 square



feet a year.

He joined Santa Monica Councilmembers Kevin McKeown and Bobby Shriver, who is running for re-election, for an afternoon press conference in which they criticized the Save Our City campaign, which is opposed to Measure T, for the amount of money they have

received from out-of-town developers.

"These three elected (officials) embody integrity in their political lives," Diana Gordon, who co-chairs the Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City, said. "They know that the quality of life for residents is

SEE MEASURE T PAGE 12

Desire to vote on the rise throughout Los Angeles County

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

NORWALK Nearly 20,000 people registered to vote on Monday, the final day to register for the Nov. 4 Presidential General Election, county election officials said.

"Partnering with the community and the League of Women Voters, we staffed 14 registration sites throughout the county and

most were open until midnight," said County Clerk Dean Logan. "As a result, literally thousands of eligible Los Angeles County citizens were able to come out and register before the legal deadline. We even had a few registrants showing up in their pajamas."

Registration activity in L.A. County continued to break records last week. The final

total for registered voters for the election is expected to be well over 4.2 million. The county has already issued 803,122 Vote By Mail ballots and more than 3,500 voters have visited the clerk's headquarters in Norwalk to cast their ballots early for the election.

Clerk staff assisted voters with registration questions, helped them fill out forms, provided voter education materials and

accepted Vote by Mail ballot applications at the 14 locations throughout the county. Registration activity remained steady from 5 p.m. — when the program began — through midnight, California's legal cutoff for accepting registrations and changes prior to the election.

SEE REGISTRATION PAGE 11

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

A teacher for T

Editor:
Measure T not about our schools, it's about our students. It is about the quality of life for every child in Santa Monica today and long after they graduate from Santa Monica High School. Our children deserve better. They need less traffic so they can again ride their bikes safely to school. Their parents need to be able to drop them off at school without having to fight traffic every day. The teachers union [opposes] it, but only a handful of teachers actually live in Santa Monica. Every teacher I spoke with that lives in town is voting yes on T. The PTSA stands neutral on the issue. Every neighborhood group supports Measure T. If you have ever voiced a complaint about traffic, a yes vote on T can start to solve the problem. It's simple. Less commercial development means less traffic and a better quality of life for all residents.

Edward Anthony Jacobs
Santa Monica

One word

Editor:
One simple word would have made Bill Bauer's column "Stink fills the air," page 4, Oct. 20, more accurate in a very important aspect. Some, not all, Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights leaders may be aligned with business, hotel, and developer interests, as Bauer suggests, but others of us are just as strongly committed to residents and our neighborhoods.

Disagreements within SMRR on commercial development, which Measure T will cap [in an effort] to reduce future traffic increases, are longstanding. Many of us within SMRR, including the chair of the Rent Control Board, individually support and have personally endorsed Measure T.

In signing campaign literature in favor of Measure T, I suppose I could have invoked the power of the SMRR name, identifying myself quite accurately as a "former SMRR steering committee member" or "SMRR-endorsed council member." I chose not to do so, out of respect for the membership. SMRR as an organization has not taken a position on T.

SMRR's democratic decision at our annual convention to let voters make up their own minds on the benefits of Measure T is very telling. If T were indeed any danger to renters, all of us in SMRR would be out there campaigning against such a threat, not only those within SMRR who are predisposed toward overdevelopment.

Santa Monica voters have a keen sense of hidden agendas, because we've learned to follow the money. Measure T came from grassroots resident renters and homeowners, placed on the ballot with over 10,000 petition signatures. The recent campaign finance filings make it clear outside developer money is providing the muscle against T.

Kevin McKeown
City Councilmember



Modern Times

Lloyd Garver

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

America's pastime: Politics or baseball?

A FEW DAYS AGO, I DECIDED THAT I needed a rest from this presidential race. Like many people, I'm too obsessed with it. And now that it's down to just days before the election, it's getting worse. More and more news stories are about anything that has to do with the campaign. Maybe you're like me and need a little break from all this — a diversion. Fortunately, that diversion was offered to us in the form of baseball's World Series.

It's great timing. Right when I thought it's possible that people could be turned off by the long campaign, along comes America's pastime to take our minds off politics. Without some other interest, I worried that some people are going to overdose on politics and be completely turned off.

I feared they might even stay home and not bother to vote. So if you feel you're too obsessed with the campaign, maybe you should join me in trying to get as immersed as possible in the series.

Since I started, I think I'm weaning myself off politics at least a little bit in these last days of the campaign.

It's not easy. First of all, I had to summon interest in a series between the Philadelphia Phillies and the Tampa Bay Rays. Yes, once again, my beloved Chicago Cubs blew it and won't be winning the World Series for the 100th year in a row.

The Rays are the Cinderella team that went from "worst to first," finishing in last place last year and winning the American League Pennant this year. Until this season, they were called the "Devil Rays" and their record was awful. As soon as they dropped the word "Devil," they did great.

Hey, maybe those on the religious right would, oh, no. No way. I'm not going to bring politics into this. It's baseball. Pure and simple.

Because I grew up on Chicago's north side — home of the Cubs — I generally root for the National League team. To me, the American League always represented the enemy White Sox or the always-winning Yankees.

The Yankees were the team in pinstripes with the big money salaries, so they always seemed somewhat Republican and oops! Sorry about that. No politics.

Anyway, I like the Rays' storybook history, but since the Phillies are in the National League, they got my vote. Wait! I didn't mean to say, "vote." I meant to say that I decided to root for them. I guess I'm still a little obsessed with politics. Sorry.

Even the candidates should be able to enjoy baseball without injecting politics into it. Or at least that's what I thought until John McCain accused Barack Obama of "flip-flopping" on the World Series. He said about Obama, "When he's campaigning in Philadelphia, he roots for the Phillies, and when he's campaigning in Tampa Bay, he

shows love to the Rays."

They've traded insults for months, and the campaign has gotten pretty nasty. But to accuse someone of "baseball rooting malfeasance?" Now, that's serious. And which team did John McCain say he was rooting for? Here's what he said, "I'm not dumb enough to get mixed up in a World Series between swing states." He wouldn't give his opinion because he's afraid of alienating Florida or Pennsylvania. And he admitted it!

EVEN THE CANDIDATES SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY BASEBALL WITHOUT INJECTING POLITICS INTO IT. OR AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT UNTIL JOHN MCCAIN ACCUSED BARACK OBAMA OF "FLIP-FLOPPING" ON THE WORLD SERIES.

That probably means that Obama will accuse McCain of not having the courage to take a stance. Then McCain will proclaim that he's been a baseball fan all his life. Then Obama will say, "Of course McCain's been a baseball fan ... just like George W. Bush." And on and on and on.

So, maybe it's impossible for me to get away from the campaign by turning to the World Series, but I'm going to keep trying. For each game, all I have to do is turn on the TV and get on the couch.

The games are broadcast on Fox. Wait a minute. Fox? As in "Fox News?" Does that mean the commentators could start calling the National Leaguers who allow everyone an equal chance at bat "socialists?"

Are they going to call some home runs out if they are "too far to the left?" And are the Democrats crying out every time someone "steals" a base, saying that it reminds them of the 2000 election? Oh, man. I can't get this stuff out of my head. When will this election be over?

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ODDS OF A CHILD BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE: 1 in 16,000

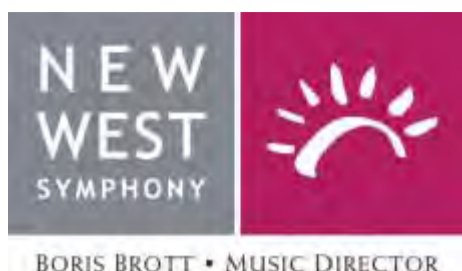
ODDS OF A CHILD BEING DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM: 1 in 166

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The QLine

BUILDING TO A CLIMAX

This past week, Q-line asked:

Measure T, which comes before voters in November, aims to put a yearly 75,000-square-foot cap on commercial development. Backers say it would fight traffic and slow rampant growth while opponents say that it goes too far and is misguided. How will you vote on Measure T and why?

Here are your responses:

"I WILL VOTE AGAINST MEASURE T. IT IS not good land use planning. The city of Santa Monica has spent an incredible amount of time with the Land Use and Circulation Element to implement good planning throughout the city which includes a long-term and short-term transportation management program. Measure T does not make any sense."

"YES, I WILL VOTE FOR MEASURE T. Anything tagged development-approved has been horrible for the city. Look around you."

"THE REASON I'M GOING TO VOTE YES on Measure T is I've lived in Santa Monica for 38 years and I've seen the changes. We already have a beach with millions of people, a promenade with millions of people, Main Street, Montana. How much more does this little city need? It seems like the Powers-That-Be want to build it up into a regional area, a regional hospital, a regional college. So I'm voting for Measure T, to try to keep development down."

"EVEN THOUGH I'M THE WIFE OF somebody that wanted to build the building on Ocean Park Boulevard, I don't think I'm going to say yes on Measure T, because it's not going to help diddly-squat. Particularly because Santa Monica now is chock-block with ugly high-rises."

"I'M CALLING ABOUT MY SUPPORT FOR Measure T on the ballot. This city is being trashed. The last straw is they're taking Michael's art store away on Fourth Street and they propose a four-story office building. There is no loose plan. It's a mess, and they're using scare tactics, lies, and deception, and I'm as mad as hell. Please, everybody, vote for Measure T before we have no city left. There are only eight square miles here."

"I FEEL THAT MEASURE T IS SO IMPORTANT to the protection of Santa Monica from the overbuilding sought by its enemies and I'm not only voting for it, but I am not voting for any of the council incumbents who are against it. I regret that we have members of our present council who would sell us out for \$250."

"MEASURE T IS TOO GENEROUS. WITH the exception of rent-control departments and food marts, it is my suggestion that we tear down all of the existing commercial buildings and return the land to beautiful park lands and recreational play areas. We could then say good-bye and good riddance to deadly automotive congestion and carbon monoxide fumes that pollute the air we attempt to breathe. Just think folks, no more blood-shot, watering eyes, head aches, dizziness, sallow complexion, dull, dry hair – all by-products of air pollution."

"ABOUT MEASURE T, ALL THIS MONEY either for or against Measure T is a disheartening waste of funding. It seems more effective in this city to funnel money into cleaning up the Pico Neighborhood and the gang problem and the transients and the bums causing all this type of crime in this city. Which is not to dispute we are choked to death in traffic – we are. But that's never going to go away. I think more funding and more energy should be put toward fighting the homelessness problem here and the Pico neighborhood. For that reason, I'm going to vote no on T."

"YES, I'M GOING TO VOTE YES ON Measure T because I think there's just way too much development in Santa Monica. I've lived here for 32 years and it just

keeps getting more crowded and more crowded and the streets get more crowded and more crowded. And if there's a cap on commercial development, I think that's great. And by the way, I just don't believe all of the stuff that I hear that if we vote 'yes' on T that the educational system is going to disappear and the fire department's going to disappear and all of this kind of nonsense that the opposition to this is saying. I just don't buy it. And I haven't found any actual evidence for it. I'm voting 'yes' on T."

"I WILL VOTE FOR MEASURE T BECAUSE I and the other 10,000 people that put this measure on the ballot think that unrestricted commercial development and the traffic which it brings will destroy what is left of the uniqueness of our city. We do not want to be one more urban center of Los Angeles. We want to preserve and maintain the community benefits of space, life and air. And no amount of commercial development can give us that benefit."

"I'M GOING TO VOTE FOR MEASURE T because Santa Monica is completely and totally over-developed. I can't even park to do a simple errand Downtown. We don't need more buildings, we don't need more office space, we don't need more apartments, we don't need more people. It will help with traffic and help with density, and I'm voting for T."

"I'M VOTING YES BECAUSE I FEEL THAT growth and development are out of control in Santa Monica. It's become kind of like a cancer, it consumes everything in its path. Mainly it consumes our quality of life. Development has not added anything to my enjoyment of the city."

"I'M VOTING YES ON T. SANTA MONICA has some of the worst traffic congestion in California. This traffic congestion detracts from our quality of life, it's environmentally damaging, and economically wasteful. Our city won't put any limits on new commercial growth, which creates the worst traffic, Measure T will."

"MORE THAN 10,000 SANTA MONICA voters put T on the ballot as a grass-roots response to run-away development and the increased traffic it creates. Some sincere individuals are against T, but the money for the many expensive anti-T mailings are paid for by developers. Follow the money, ask yourself why developers are so desperate to defeat Measure T, which is aimed at what most Santa Monicans want – limited development and an end to the constant increase in traffic."

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T's opponents blast Rosendahl for endorsement

FROM MEASURE T PAGE 1

what makes a town work.”

The opposition campaign has raised nearly \$730,000 this year, much of which comes from developers, land use attorneys, architects and real estate brokers.

The Save Our City campaign, which announced its formation during the summer, has all along stressed that it is made up of the most diverse coalition of individuals, from the healthcare and nonprofit sectors to the educational community, which is reflected on their endorsements list.

“It’s easy to draw in financial support when you have such a broad range of endorsements,” Terry O’Day, the co-chair of Save Our City, said. “The involved leadership of the city is very much opposed to Measure T.”

The gathering at Virginia Avenue Park took place as congestion began building in the city’s main arterials and along the I-10 Freeway — the destination of a protest march that took place soon after.

Advocates for Measure T refuted claims from the opposition camp that the initiative would hurt education funding as a result of lost revenue to City Hall.

Shriver stressed that nobody on the City Council will vote to decrease funding to schools or public safety under any circumstances, calling them “scare tactics.”

“We want Santa Monica to be decided by Santa Monicans,” Shriver said.

Measure T proponents have long criticized City Hall for its land-use practices, pointing to developments such as the Water Garden and the Lantana entertainment

“ HE IS A COUNCIL MEMBER FROM THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, WHAT IS HE DOING ENTERING A PROPOSITION IN THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA? HE AND HIS CITY ARE PROBABLY MORE OF A TRAFFIC GENERATOR IN SANTA MONICA THAN ANYONE ELSE.”

Mayor Herb Katz

complex.

Rosendahl said that the city of Los Angeles has been “assaulted” by the commercial growth in Santa Monica while there’s been little housing developed to create more balance.

“We are joined at the hip,” he said.

The Los Angeles council member’s position drew some criticism by some of the most outspoken opponents of the measure, saying that Rosendahl should focus on stopping traffic generation in his own city.

Rosendahl said that he received calls from several unnamed Santa Monica councilmembers who tried to talk him out of the endorsement. At least two of the calls came from Mayor Herb Katz, who left Rosendahl several voice messages, and Mayor Pro Tem Richard Bloom.

“He is a council member from the city of Los Angeles, what is he doing entering a proposition in the city of Santa Monica?” Katz, who is running for re-election, said.

“He and his city are probably more of a traffic generator in Santa Monica than anyone else.

“If you took L.A. out of the equation, we wouldn’t have traffic or most of it.”

Bloom said he was surprised to learn about the endorsement through the press and immediately called Rosendahl to ask whether he had spoken to anyone from the opposition campaign, to which he allegedly responded that he hadn’t.

“I said ‘Bill, why don’t you just pull back, take some time to consider it and then make a decision,’ and he declined,” Bloom said.

Rosendahl has previously endorsed Bloom, Katz and Councilmember Ken Genser for their re-election bids. Genser is also opposed to Measure T.

Bloom said that he believes the councilmember jumped to the same conclusion as those who had signed a petition to put the measure on the ballot a few months ago. Critics of Measure T have said it would do

nothing to solve traffic, claiming that those who signed petitions were misled into believing it would. The proponents have maintained all along that the initiative is a traffic-fighting measure.

“He represents a city that is repeatedly referenced as one of the top 10 worst traffic generating cities in the nation and so he needs to focus on the problem he has in his city,” Bloom said.

Much attention has been paid recently to the donations received from companies that are based out of state, such as Equity Office Properties, located in Chicago, and Felcor Lodging Trust, which is based in Texas.

“What are they doing trying to take over the city?” Elizabeth Riel, the chairwoman of the North of Montana Neighborhood Association, said. “I think it’s clear that the residents are on one side and developers are on the other.”

O’Day said that many of the contributors who are based out of state do have interest in Santa Monica and have previously worked in the city. He added that the companies have offices here.

He pointed out that there are a number of affluent individuals who are backing Measure T.

“Frankly, I’m disheartened that such a progressive community is dragged into spending time and resources on a fight like this,” O’Day said. “But the proponents of T have put us in this position and we’re making up ground from the year’s worth of head start they had.”

melodyh@smdp.com

Santa Monica Police Officers and Firefighters care about our community. We entrust our elected officials to make important decisions that protect us. That is why we participate in the political process. We ask you to carefully consider your choices. We have reviewed the records of these candidates running for City Council and recommend them for their dedication and support of public safety.



Richard Bloom

As current Mayor Pro-Tem, Richard Bloom has proven leadership skills and has worked hard to preserve and protect Santa Monica neighborhoods. He maintains responsible fiscal policies, all while bringing new community programs such as music, art, parks and schools. Richard Bloom responds to the community.



Herb Katz

Mayor Herb Katz has strongly supported the Santa Monica Police and Fire Departments to enhance public safety. He is dedicated to reduce urban blight and has expanded the city’s park system. Clearly, Herb Katz is devoted to our city and has spent many years protecting the quality of life here. He is the right choice for City Council.

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Ken Genser

As an incumbent Council Member, Ken Genser has served the citizens of Santa Monica well. He has demonstrated time and time again his dedication to protecting our community. He has expanded services for seniors, our youth and the park system. Ken Genser listens to his constituents and pays close attention to the details.



Bobby Shriver

Council Member Shriver has worked hard to provide city services and programs to house the homeless population. He works tirelessly to support police and fire to ensure public safety, giving the departments the tools needed to deal with gang violence, emergency operations and disaster preparedness. Bobby Shriver has been instrumental in efforts to clean Santa Monica Bay.

YES on measure SM

NO on measure T

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 Mayor **Herb Katz**
 Council Member **Bobby Shriver**

FOR 23RD STATE SENATE
Fran Pavley

YES on SM
NO on T

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4