



THE DUDE RETURNS
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Santa Monica Daily Press

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE IRREVERENT HEADLINE ISSUE

A going problem on promenade

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN Barbara Nagel was browsing the racks in American Eagle Outfitters when she felt the urge.

"I need a restroom right away and I don't know where to go," Nagel said as she exited the Third Street Promenade store on Thursday.

The world-famous promenade, with its brand-name stores, high-end restaurants and street performers, is also known for a less than laudable reputation — a lack of publicly-accessible bathroom facilities.

The scant supply of wash closets in one of the biggest draws Downtown has to offer has long been a problem as there are only a handful of restrooms operated by City Hall, and few stores allow their customers to use

their own. Aggrandizing the problem in recent months is the closure of Santa Monica Place where there were a number of restrooms available.

The Bayside District Corp., a public-private management organization that oversees Downtown for City Hall, is expected to analyze what steps could be taken to encourage some of the larger business owners on the promenade, such as Borders, Barnes &

Noble and Banana Republic, to make their bathrooms available for patrons. All three retailers have shut down their bathrooms in the last few years, the most recent being Banana Republic, which is located at the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard.

Carolyn Brown, a spokeswoman for Barnes & Noble, said that the bathroom was

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SMC is on the road once more

BY DANIEL ARCHULETA
Managing Editor

LANCASTER A 1-3 record doesn't sound like much, but in the Western Division of the American Conference its good enough to remain in the hunt for a league title.

Santa Monica College takes to the road to take on new league rival Antelope Valley College on Saturday to determine which 1-3 team takes a somewhat commanding lead in a conference that has struggled for wins this season.

"A win this week puts us in the drivers seat," SMC head football coach Robert Taylor said.

A promising 38-24 win during the Corsairs' league and home opener last week against Los Angeles Valley College has the veteran coach optimistic heading into a game against a team that he predicted during the preseason would vie for a conference championship.

"We should be in pretty good shape in this game," Taylor said. "Being on the road is not going to be new to us."

The game will be SMC's fourth road game of the season, a place the Corsairs have had trouble winning ball games. The team was forced to take to the road early in the season while an artificial playing surface was installed at Corsair Field. All three previous road games have resulted in

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NEW GROWTH

Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

Construction crews have planted ginkgo biloba trees on Second Street, replacing ficus trees that were cut down or transplanted in recent weeks as part of a controversial streetscape improvement project that has garnered national attention.

Measure T creates rift within CEPS membership

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN One of the most active educational advocacy groups has come out in opposition to a controversial ballot measure that would restrict commercial development, a decision that might have cost it some of its longest-serving members.

The Community for Excellent Public Schools (CEPS) on Friday announced a series of endorsements and positions on various races and ballot measures for the November election, included within it opposition to Measure T, which would place an annual 75,000-square-foot cap on commercial growth.

Those in opposition to the measure, which includes numerous city and school officials, have argued that it would have numerous downfalls, such as possibly impacting the amount of revenue flowing from City Hall to the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

The pro-Measure T side has countered that there will be no impact on education and that the issue is about traffic, not schools.

Rochelle Fanali, who has volunteered for the district and served on several committees, and Maryanne Solomon, who was the CEPS Webmaster, resigned earlier this

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CEPS backs council and school board candidates

FROM ELECTION PAGE 1

week. Both women declined to comment on their exit, but Solomon did provide a copy of her resignation letter to the Daily Press.

"Despite contentions of the developers funding the campaign against it, you must know that [Measure] T will not harm our schools," Solomon said in the letter. "Everyone knows that if you can make a 'schools' argument you can get the sympathy of voters.

"And everyone knows the argument here is nothing more than a scare tactic."

She continues in the letter that education groups are under pressure to support the City Council because of the school funding allocations under the Master Facility Use Agreement in which the district and City Hall exchange money for access to school facilities.

The majority of council members have come out against Measure T.

"I know that people aspiring for local office do not want to face the ire of developers and their deep pockets, which one risks by refusing to do their bidding here," she said. "However, we should not allow ourselves to be blackmailed into opposing a ballot measure that has nothing to do with schools just to help the developers and appease the City Councilmembers."

She concludes by urging the organization to reconsider its position on Measure T.

Shari Davis, the chairwoman of CEPS, said the organization decided to oppose the measure because one of its highest priorities is to maximize resource for the schools.

"It was a very difficult decision and the majority decided that ... there was a chance that funding for the schools from the city could be taken into consideration that we decided on an opposing position," she said.

She added that there are good and intelligent people committed to the community who are advocating on both sides of the issue.

"Both sides presented data and we do the best we can to objectively take the information," she said. "As evidenced throughout the city, this is an issue on which many disagree."

The opposition by CEPS, which was made last week, is a departure from the decision the Santa Monica-Malibu Council of PTAs made last month, voting to take no position on Measure T, formerly known as the Residents' Initiative to Fight Traffic (RIFT). Following the announcement of the PTA's positions on the various measures, its supporters pointed out again that it has nothing to do with education.

"The impartial experts agree 'T' will have no effect on any funding for public education," Diana Gordon, the co-chair of the Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City, said. The coalition is sponsoring the measure.

Councilmember Ken Genser, who is opposed to the measure, said while he can't say for sure that school funding would be cut in the future, he is certain it will reduce funding to City Hall's general fund significantly over time.

"The general fund is the source for paying for things like police, fire, library, parks and schools," he said. "If that fund takes a

large hit, something has got to be cut."

CEPS also decided to back the \$295 million Santa Monica College bond measure and the update to the Utility Users Tax.

The college bond, known as Measure AA, would pay for capital projects on campus. Measure SM would update the telecommunications portion of the Utility Users Tax, which has not been touched in decades. The UUT would be expanded to tax T-1 Internet service. City officials argue the measure is needed to protect itself from litigation and \$12 million in existing revenue.

SUPPORT FOR INCUMBENTS

All four City Council and three Board of Education incumbents who are running for re-election received the backing of CEPS. The organization also backed newcomer Ben Allen for the fourth school board seat.

CEPS interviewed the school board and council candidates over the past few weeks, including hosting a candidates forum in late September. The endorsements were all made last week.

The endorsees include Ralph Mechur, Maria Leon-Vazquez, Jose Escarce, and Allen for the school board. CEPS also backed incumbents Bobby Shriver, Mayor Herb Katz, Mayor Pro Tem Richard Bloom and Genser for the council.

"We think the incumbents have shown the leadership has been good and they have gotten our district to high achievement," Davis said. "They realize they have problems to tackle and are committing themselves to tackling them and have shown themselves to be aware of the challenges."

Escarce, who currently serves as vice president of the school board, was previously endorsed by CEPS in 2004.

"CEPS is a grassroots organization that got together to try to enhance the resources to our district and I think their involvement in candidates speaks to the desire to speak out on who they think has done an excellent job," Escarce said.

Both elected bodies came under scrutiny in the past year — the school board for issues in financial accountability and special education, and the council for withholding roughly half a million dollars from the district. The money, which is part of the Master Facility Use Agreement, was held up because of concerns over the special education department.

"We would prefer the money not be withheld," Davis said. "We are hopeful and optimistic the \$529,000 will be released in the near future."

She added that the organization decided to back the council incumbents because they have verbally committed to supporting the full amount of funding under the agreement.

Katz called the support of the parent organization a "huge boost" to his campaign.

"It tells people ... that school parents do understand that I have done a lot for the schools," he said.

Genser said he feels strongly that City Hall needs to continue partnering with the schools.

"I'm glad the city is able to backfill the funds the state is not providing to the district," he said. "We can't afford to lose a generation."

melodyh@smdp.com



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October Is Disabilities Awareness Month In Santa Monica

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Center for the Partially Sighted and Westside Center for Independent Living
for their dedication to assisting people with a disability in
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The October Disabilities Commission meeting will be held:
Monday, October 6, 2008
6:00 pm
Ken Edwards Center
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For more information, or to request a special accommodation, call Janet Hand at (310) 458-8701 or email janet.hand@smgov.net