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Issue 365 • September 28 - October 4, 2006



New Turf, Same Problem

Even with the new field at the high school, Beverly Hills may still fall short on playing space.

cover story • pages 12



letters & email

City Proposes Deal for Animal Hospital

This coming Tuesday, October 3, our City Council will be accelerating the eminent domain or "taking" of the property leased by the Amanda Foundation on Foothill Road in the Industrial Area. While our city officials and Mayor Webb have claimed that there is no plans as yet to re-develop our city's industrial zone, the reason for this fast track taking is because of Proposition 90, which is on the November ballot. Additionally, the council does have plans to redevelop our industrial area.

City Officials have been meeting with many developers, including

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WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

You can write us at:
140 South Beverly Drive #201
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

You can fax us at:
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email us at:
editor@bhweekly.com



SNAPSHOT



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Corrections, Issue #362

The cover story "The Battle on North Bedford Drive" incorrectly stated that a judge required an inventory of missing items from Marian Seabury's Estate. The judge has required an accounting.

Rudy Cole's column on page 8 incorrectly stated the number of years Jeff Hubbard served as Assistant Superintendent. It was two and a half years.

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BHUSD Names New Assistant Superintendent

Santa Monica High School Principal Comes to Beverly Hills.
By Shanna Green

Former Santa Monica High School Principal Dr. Ilene Straus has been chosen as the new Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services for the Beverly Hills Unified School District. The announcement was made at the Board of Education meeting Tuesday night.

Straus will be working with new Superintendent Kari McVeigh replacing Interim Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Richard Malfatti and Interim Superintendent John Fitzpatrick, whose last days in their respective positions are Friday.

Straus has spent the last 20 years at the Santa Monica-Malibu School District and the last four and a half years working as the principal of Santa Monica High.

From 1986 to 2002, Straus was the Principal of Lincoln Middle School in Santa Monica, and before becoming principal of the high school, Strauss was next in line to become the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services. When the District decided they did not have any satisfactory applicants for the principal position, Straus was approached and accepted the job.

During her time in Santa Monica, Straus faced controversy over both increasing racial tensions in the school district and the restructuring of the campus.

When Straus took the job as principal, then Superintendent Dr. John Deasy had secured almost \$500,000 in grant funding to break up the high school into smaller learning communities or "houses," which would each have their own principal.

Deasy put Straus in charge on this task, which had the goal of creating smaller working classrooms where students could receive more personal attention and have a better learning experience as well as a more direct interaction with their teachers.

Much of the criticism also came from what some parents and community members called inadequate response by Straus and the District Superintendent Deasy as a result of growing racial tensions at the high school, including a graffiti incident.

On April 15, 2005, the high school was put on a lock down as a result of several fights at lunchtime between African-American and Latino students. The police were called, and as a result, became a permanent fixture on campus.

Then, on February 3, 2006, tensions flared once again when students arrived at campus to find derogatory and racially centered graffiti on buildings. The school set up a mediation session, where eventually, another fight between an African-American and Latino stu-

city and schools cont. on page 4



NOTICE OF COMMISSION VACANCY

CITY CLERK
BYRON POPE, CMC
455 N. Rexford Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90210-4817
(310) 285-2400
FAX: (310) 385-0862

NOTICE OF COMMISSION VACANCY:

SOLICITATIONS ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Beverly Hills City Council is seeking qualified residents to fill two vacancies on the Solicitations Advisory Commission. The initial term of office for the position is two years. At the discretion of the City Council, the Commissioner may be reappointed to a second term of four years. The appointees will be required to file an initial and an annual "Statement of Economic Interests" financial disclosure.

In order that we may preserve the integrity of the application and interview process, please direct all inquiries to the City Clerk, City Manager or the Chief of Police. Please DO NOT contact the City Councilmembers or the members of the Solicitations Advisory Commission regarding the vacancy.

Application forms for the Solicitations Advisory Commission, along with a description of the duties of a Commissioner, and filing details are available for pickup in the City Clerk's Office, Room 190, 455 N. Rexford Drive, or call 310.285.2400 to receive an application and information by mail or by email.

The deadline for filing applications has been extended to Friday, October 27, 2006 at 5:00 p.m.

BYRON POPE, CMC
City Clerk



NOTICE OF VACANCY

CITY CLERK
BYRON POPE, CMC
455 N. Rexford Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90210-4817
(310) 285-2400
FAX: (310) 385-0862

NOTICE OF VACANCY: METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DIRECTOR

The Beverly Hills City Council is seeking qualified residents to fill the upcoming Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Director vacancy. The initial term of office is four years. At the discretion of the City Council, the Director may be reappointed to a second term of four years. The appointee will be required to file an initial and an annual "Statement of Economic Interests" financial disclosure.

In order that we may preserve the integrity of the application and interview process, please direct all inquiries to the City Clerk, City Manager or the Director of Public Works. Please DO NOT contact the City Councilmembers or the members of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Board of Directors regarding the vacancy.

Application forms for the Metropolitan District of Southern California Director vacancy, along with a description of the duties, and filing details are available for pickup in the City Clerk's Office, Room 190, 455 N. Rexford Drive, or call 310.285.2400 to receive an application and information by mail or by email.

The deadline for filing applications is Friday, October 27, 2006 at 5:00 p.m.

BYRON POPE
City Clerk



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: October 12, 2006

TIME: 7:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard

LOCATION: Commission Meeting Room A
Beverly Hills City Hall
455 North Rexford Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90210

The Planning Commission of the City of Beverly Hills, at its regular meeting on Thursday, October 12, 2006, will hold a public hearing beginning at 7:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, to consider:

A request for a Zone Change and Conditional Use Permit to allow the creation of a Commercial Hotel Overlay Zone for the property located at 133 Spalding Drive. The overlay zone will allow a four-story, four-unit condominium building currently under construction in an R-4 Multi-Residential Zone at the subject location to be used as a hotel in conjunction with the existing Mosaic Hotel located adjacent to the north of the subject property at 125 Spalding Drive in the C-3 Commercial Zone.

The creation of the overlay zone will allow a limited number of R-4 multi-residential sites to accommodate hotel uses subject to certain development standards and limited lengths of time set at the Planning Commission's discretion.

This project has been assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City, and no significant environmental impacts are anticipated; therefore, a Negative Declaration has been prepared.

Any interested person may attend the meeting and be heard or present written comments to the Commission. Comments on the proposed Negative Declaration may be submitted in writing to the Planning Department within 20 days from the date of this notice and written or oral comments will be accepted at the Planning Commission meeting at the date and time noted above.

If you challenge the Commission's action in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City, either at or prior to the public hearing.

If there are any questions regarding this notice, please contact the Planning Department at 310.285.1123. Copies of the applications, plans, Negative Declaration, and all documents referenced in the Negative Declaration are on file in the Planning Department, and can be reviewed by any interested person at 455 North Rexford Drive, Room G-40, Beverly Hills, CA. 90210.

Tony Kim
Associate Planner

city and schools cont. from page 3

dent broke out, where both students were suspended.

On behalf of the African American student, one of the parents appealed the suspension, saying that he had acted in self-defense. The appeal eventually came before Straus and the suspension was lifted.

Still, at a meeting one week after the graffiti incident, members of the high schools African American Parent Student Staff Support Group unanimously passed a resolution which stated "We request the termination of employment of Dr. Ilene Straus CEO/Principal of Samohi and that she not remain in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District because she is a clear and present danger to our children."

Then at a school board meeting in May, roughly 300 people showed up both in protest and support for the "houses" and the handling of the graffiti incident. Many of them were students who had been offered extra credit by one of their teachers in they attended the meeting. The meeting was held in City Hall, but the crowd was too much for the City Council's Chambers and when the overflow refused to leave, the Fire Marshall shut the entire meeting down.

Despite the criticisms, in July, the Santa Monica School Board appointed Straus the Senior Director of Secondary Education where her tasks included evaluating the performance of secondary teachers, analyzing current curriculum and how it is taught, and coming up with ways to bridge the achievement gap of students of color.

Straus's appointment was again challenged

by some African-American and Latino parents who cited the incidents earlier in the year, but the School Board continued to support her.

Straus has been replaced as principal by Dr. Hugo Pedroza who comes from the predominately inner city Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles. Pedroza also has experience working in what his district termed Small School Learning Communities, similar to Santa Monica's "houses."

Santa Monica also has a new District Superintendent. In July, Dianne Talarico was named superintendent for Santa Monica-Malibu. Talarico previously was a superintendent in her hometown of Canton, Ohio, and before that had worked in San Francisco for 20 years, the last few as assistant Superintendent.

Before working for Santa Monica, Straus was an elementary school principal in the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District.

Straus received her B.A. in Sociology from UCLA, her M.A. in Educational Administration and Supervision from CSU Northridge, and her Ed. D in Educational Leadership from USC.

Straus has received many top honors including California's Secondary Principal of the Year in 1991, Distinguished School Principal; in both 1994 and 1999, and was named Santa Monica YWCA Woman of the Year in 1996.

Straus grew up in Beverlywood and still has family in the area, including her parents who live nearby, her fiancé Tom Quinn and her sister Dr. Andie Kay who also happens to be a new music teacher at El Rodeo this year.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

I represent a 16 year old minor, the housekeeper's daughter at the former Jose Iturbi/Marion Seabury estate located at 915 N. Bedford Drive in Beverly Hills. Jose Iturbi died in 1980. Marion Seabury died in January without having any known relatives.

If anyone knew Jose Iturbi or Marion Seabury, or has knowledge of their valuable assets, most of which have been removed from the home, please call me to discuss this estate and their personal property.

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people & profiles

Katie Lichtig Deputy City Manager

After moving from Malibu City Manager to Beverly Hills Deputy City Manager, Katie Lichtig spoke with the Weekly about her work for the city and the differences between Malibu and Beverly.

You've been here for almost a year now. How do you like Beverly Hills?

Beverly Hills the city and community have been a great experience for me. People have welcomed me warmly both on the staff and in the community and so it's been a great eight months.

Why did you come to Beverly Hills?

I was interested in returning to a full service city [with its] own police and fire departments. I also fit the profile.

Prior to Beverly Hills, you were city manager in Malibu. How does Beverly Hills differ from your experience in Malibu?

Beverly Hills is a much more sophisticated and complicated organization just in its size and its budget. Beverly Hills has about 1,000 full-time and part-time employees. Malibu has about 60. Malibu had a budget when I left of about \$15 million a year. Beverly Hills has a budget of about \$437 million. Beverly Hills is a full service city, that means it has its own police and fire department. Malibu contracted with Los Angeles County to provide law enforcement services from the sheriff's department and fire services from L.A. county fire department. So the size, scope and scale of Beverly Hills is much larger than Malibu.

Since Malibu is a contract city, what are some of the advantages and disadvantages of contracting out as opposed to having your own services in the city?

Some of the advantages of being a contract city are that you can have access to the resources of the entire [L.A. County] fire department or sheriff's department through the channels within those organizations as opposed to asking for mutual aid which the city of Beverly Hills would need to do, so there's a lot of resources available to deal

with disasters and other emergencies that might exist. The disadvantage is that there's not quite as much direct community contact with a contract service as there would be with an in-house service like the police department or the fire department. The members of the staff in the city of Beverly Hills have been here a very long time which is a great asset to the community.

Tell us about what your job actually entails. Can you give us an example of an average day?

The beauty of my job is that there is no such thing as an average day that replicates itself over and over again. It's very diverse and varied in terms of day to day. I'm the chief operating officer for the city, so my objective is to ensure that the departments are operating in collaboration with the department heads and all of the staff as efficiently and effectively as we possibly can. When we find areas where we need to be focused on improving those particular services, I'm helping to facilitate those changes and acting as a change agent within the organization to help ensure that the community is receiving the absolute best possible service at the absolute best possible cost that we can provide.

How do you interact with the City Council?

My responsibility with the city council is as a second chair to [City Manager] Rod Wood. I am the liaison on a couple of the subcommittees. I'm helping to move some security and technology efforts forward and so I'm interacting with councilmembers in that regard. I also deal with all of the concerns and inquiries and complaints that they get from the community. I'm involved in monitoring that we're being responsive to their inquiries to the city about services that we're providing.

interest, for seizing this land.
domain is used in cities that have redevelopment agencies. However, Beverly Hills does not have or need a redevelopment agency because we do not have blight. Our industrial area must be preserved for future city needs, including a water reclamation facility.

There should be no "taking" of the Amanda Foundation's property until there are full hearings to determine the need. To date, the city has said they need the land for improved circulation. But, this writer believes that this is just an excuse. We really don't know a valid reason, in the public



What are some of the issues that are coming up right now?

We [have] a General Plan update. We've got more development applications in process than the city has apparently had in a very long time. We are working to try to process those in a timely and efficient manner that engenders the community input that's necessary. We also have the appropriate amount and scale of information that they need to make those decisions. The city is undertaking an evaluation of the Public Works and Transportation Department to determine the efficient way of operating. We are really trying to move to a program based budget so that the council and the public know what they're getting for their tax dollars and that gives us an opportunity to ensure that it's the most efficient operations that we have. And of course our economic development effort as it relates to how to continue to be able to afford to provide the exceptional level of customer service and quality of life services that we provide can be maintained.

Tell us about your management style compared to Rod Wood's.

My responsibilities are the details; the day to day operational details. While Rod is from a management perspective, looking at the big picture, I'm looking at the more focused picture in terms of what services are we providing, and how are we providing them. How do we ensure that we're communicating the services and the policy issues that are being provided in the best way possible? Rod is really interacting on a day in and day out basis with the community and the council and those outside of the

organization, where my focus and management style is more directed towards the internal of the organization.

What goals do you have for the city for this next year?

I think that the council has given us a charge with making sure that we're focused on providing exceptional customer service in every aspect of the city's operation. It's really one of my goals to make sure that [I am] learning about all the services that the city does provide and being a facilitator for the department to make changes that are necessary to make sure that we're providing the highest quality of customer service that we possibly can.

A lot has been written recently about the granite sidewalk project. Why do you feel it is important for the city to pursue this?

It's a policy decision for the council to make. We need to make ourselves the elite of the elite and if that's the path that the council feels will get us there then I'm here to support them and to implement the policy decision that they're endorsing.

What do you like most about working in city government?

I love the fact that what we do on a day-to-day basis means something to thousands of people who live here, work here and recreate here. It's just so fabulous to be in a place where you can provide service and it makes a difference. It's pretty spectacular. I worked for the federal government early on in my career. I actually started [in a] competitive federal government management intern program. I spent two years with the Department of Treasury [and] seven years working as a specialist [in] white collar crimes. The distinction between working in a local government and working at a higher level in government is really quite astonishing in terms of knowing that day in and day out, we're making a difference in people's lives. I'm not in the world of a police officer or a firefighter where they're tangibly protecting the public's health and safety. In my world, I'm an administrator and I'm a management leader, still I get that thrill from being able to provide that level of service and make a difference every day.

Interview by Heather Hampton.

letters cont. from page 2

friends of council members, who are interested in building high-rise housing and other things, such as hotels on the city's industrial area land. The development of the Beverly Hills Sports Center has been put on the back burner because of controversy, costs and the up-coming March election. Mayor Webb is running for re-election, so nothing will be resolved until after the election.

If Proposition 90 passes in November, our city will be more limited with their eminent domain powers. Normally, emi-

interest, for seizing this land.

**Betty Harris
Beverly Hills**

The Battle on North Bedford Drive

There was an error in last week's cover story about the Marion Seabury/Jose Iturbi home on N. Bedford. Donelle Dadigan's attorney stated that the maid is getting \$200,000 from the Marion Seabury Trust. This is absolutely untrue!

After 25 years of devoted service and promises by Marion Seabury that the disabled housekeeper could live on the N.

Bedford estate forever, the housekeeper will soon be unemployed and homeless, all thanks to the actions of a Seabury non relative, Donelle Dadigan.

The truth is that the housekeeper and her daughter will only receive "interest" on \$200,000, which might be a total of \$850 monthly. I suggest that Ms. Dadigan try living on about \$850 monthly. \$850 might just pay for the gas and insurance for Ms. Dadigan's new Bentley.

**Larry Larson
Beverly Hills**

briefs

August 2006 Home Prices in the 90210 Up; Condominium Prices in the 90212 Down

Sale prices for single-family residences increased in the 90210 on eight homes by 4.6%, and decreased on one home in the 90212 by 9.5% according to a report published by Data Quick Real Estate News (www.dqnews.com).

Condominium prices in the 90210 decreased on one condo by 49.8%, decreased in the 90211 on two condos by 1.7%, and decreased in the 90212 on four condos by 10.9%.

The median price for single-family residences in the 90210 zip code is \$2,343,000, in the 90211 \$1,463,000, and in the 90212 \$2,049,000.

The median price for condominiums in the 90210 zip code is \$630,000, in the 90211 \$766,000, and in the 90212 \$775,000.

In Los Angeles County as a whole, sales of single-family residences are up 4.4% to a median price of \$548,000, and condominium prices are up 1.7% to a median price of \$410,000 since August 2005.



Beverly Hills firefighters investigate a ruptured gas line in the alley between the 400 South blocks of Camden and Peck Drives.

Evacuation on Camden and Peck Drives

Residents of the 400 blocks of South Camden and Peck Drives had to temporarily evacuate due to a ruptured gas line on Monday afternoon. Janet Roston, of Camden Drive, said she heard a hissing sound coming from the alley behind her home and then smelled the odor of gas. She then called both the Beverly Hills Fire Department and the Southern California Gas Company. The fire department found that a meter behind a Peck Drive home had been struck by a vehicle, causing the line below the pavement to rupture. The meter had been covered with a cardboard box.

Traffic control officers closed both streets to incoming cars and the firefighters went door to door to warn people. As a precaution, they also had three fire trucks and two paramedic units stationed close by. The Gas Company brought in a special truck with the necessary digging equipment and repaired the line.

D.A.R.E. Class Graduates

Twenty-eight law enforcement professionals from the Western Region of the United States graduated from a Dare Instructor School put on by the Beverly Hills Police Department on Friday Sept. 22.

Last year, the Beverly Hills Police Department was designated by D.A.R.E. America as the State Training Center for D.A.R.E. Beverly Hills D.A.R.E./S.R.O. (School Resource) officers now have the responsibility of training and certifying every new D.A.R.E. officer in the State of California.

This graduation marked the final day of an 80-hour (two-week) training class which certified police officers to teach the D.A.R.E. curriculum in schools and communities. Mayor Steve Webb was one of the speakers at the ceremony, along with other D.A.R.E. officials.

This is the fourth class that the Beverly Hills Police Department has conducted as a training center. Thus far, over 85 new D.A.R.E. officers have been certified. Beverly Hills also lends its training services to other states when training in their state is not available.

The newly trained officers will now take what they have learned in Beverly Hills back to their own communities to further the fight against substance abuse.

Wine Tasting Every Friday at Two Rodeo

Every Friday evening during September and October the LearnAboutWine twilight tasting series at Two Rodeo will be going on. Located on the cobblestone Via of Two Rodeo, loyal wine enthusiasts and newcomers will have the opportunity to taste wines from various regions around the world.

For \$50 a tasting, attendees will sip exquisite wines, listen to live music and sample light appetizers from Two Rodeo's McCormick & Schmick's and 208 Rodeo. Reservations can be made at www.LearnAboutWine.com.

Class of 1956 Alumnus Makes Donation to Beverly High

At the Beverly Hills High School class of 1956's 50th reunion at Paramount Studios Saturday, Sept. 16, former student body president Shep Cutler and his wife Joni made a donation in order to name the oak tree and seating area in the courtyard of the new Science and Technology Center in honor of the Class of 1956.

The donation will help to fund the interior needs of the award winning designed Science and Technology Center at the high school.

After graduating from Beverly High in 1956, Shep Cutler moved to South



BHEF President Devorah Hankin presents the Shep Cutler with a BHEF Apple Plaque and a schematic of the proposed Science and Technology Courtyard at Beverly High.

Carolina, but said he returns often to visit his hometown as well as many longtime friends.

"Beverly Hills High School has always been a great part of my life and although I've been away for so long, it was very important to make a contribution," Cutler said. "My wife and I are so very proud to be a part of the new generation and to make this gift for the Science and Technology Center."

For information on contributions or naming opportunities, please call (310) 557-0651.

Blindsided Premieres at the La Femme Film Festival

The award-winning documentary film *Blindsided* will be making its West Coast Premiere at this year's La Femme Film Festival, October 6 at the Fine Arts Theatre at 8556 Wilshire Blvd. The film is the story about 13-year-old, Jared Hara, who slowly loses his eyesight due to a rare hereditary disease, and the journey he and his family endure from loss to acceptance.

Director Talia Osteen first heard about La Femme Film Festival while finishing her final year at USC Film School. This will be her directorial debut.

Blindsided will be presented at 10:00am, at the Fine Arts Theatre, immediately following the short documentary film, *Look us in the Eye*.

For more information on *Blindsided* and to view the trailer, visit the website at www.blindsidedthemovie.com.



John Quinn

Beverly Hills Resident Named "Top 100" Lawyer

Longtime Beverly Hills resident John "Jack" Quinn was named by the Los Angeles Daily Journal as one of "Top 100" most influential lawyers in

California in the Sept. 21 issue. Quinn, who has received this award before, is a

partner at Arnold & Porter LLP. Quinn is a graduate of the University of Southern California Law School and a former President of the Los Angeles County Bar Association.

Salvatore Ferragamo To Be Honored at Rodeo Drive Walk Of Style

Actresses Anjelica Huston and Eva Mendes have been announced as presenters, along with a musical performance by Kanye West, for the fifth Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Awards ceremony in Beverly Hills on Sunday, Oct. 8.

The Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award, inaugurated in 2003 by The City of Beverly Hills and the Rodeo Drive Committee, honors style legends for their contributions to the worlds of fashion and entertainment. This ceremony will be honoring designer Salvatore Ferragamo. Members of the Ferragamo family will be present to accept the award on behalf of the house of Ferragamo, and as with the previous honorees, Ferragamo will be honored with a permanent plaque in the sidewalk along the world-renowned street, featuring his quote and signature.

Salvatore Ferragamo will be the eighth recipient of this award. Past recipients include Giorgio Armani (2003); Tom Ford (2004); joint honorees Herb Ritts and Mario Testino (2005); and Edith Head, James Acheson and Milena Canonero (2006).

Maple Counseling Center Presents Parent Lecture Series

The maple counseling center will present a parenting lecture: "Educational Philosophies: Different Approaches in Working with Young Children" on Monday, October 9 at 7:30-9:00 p.m. at The Peninsula Hotel, located at 9882 Little Santa Monica Boulevard.

The Lecture is part of a series that will help parents understand and positively impact their children's mental and emotional development by focusing on exciting new scientific discoveries and clinical experiences involving child development.

It will be a panel presentation with Carol Bovill of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Patty Britton of Turning Point and Rita