



Rain likely, with temps around 57°

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City Council Caps Pot Dispensaries at 70

Decision on Final Ordinance is Postponed

BY EDWIN FOLVEN

The Los Angeles City Council approved a cap on the number of medical marijuana dispensaries on Tuesday, but postponed making a final decision on the permanent ordinance.

The council set the cap at 70 dispensaries, to be distributed equally throughout the 35 Community Planning Districts of the city. The council added the provision, however, that the 137 existing dispensaries that were already approved before the temporary moratorium went into effect four years ago would be allowed to reapply to become licensed. If all of the exist-

ing dispensaries meet the new guidelines, they would be allowed to stay open, and the number of dispensaries permitted would be 137. If several dispensaries do not apply or do not meet the guidelines, and the number dips to 70 or fewer, only 70 dispensaries would be allowed.

Los Angeles City Councilman Ed Reyes, 1st District, said he is confident the new guidelines would require a majority of the 800 to 1,000 dispensaries currently operating in the city to close.

"I would say eighty percent would be out of compliance and probably would be shut down," Reyes said. "Then we will start citing them and we will start enforcing the ordinance in Los Angeles to close them down. I think we are almost there."

The city council postponed the decision until next Wednesday because members wanted more time to consider another provision that would have forced dispensaries to be located 1,000 feet from sensitive places such as schools, churches, community centers and other public buildings, but would also require them to be 1,000 feet from private homes. The council is waiting for the planning department to provide maps of places where the dispensaries could exist within 1,000 feet of homes before making a final decision.

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photo by Edwin Folven

The permanent ordinance could require most of the dispensaries to close, including this one on Melrose Avenue.



photo by Amy Lyons

Approximately 1,000 people demonstrated outside LAUSD headquarters on Tuesday to denounce budget cuts.

Teachers Voice Opposition to LAUSD Budget Cuts

Board Approves Budget That Cuts 5,000 Jobs

BY AMY LYONS

To the dismay of hundreds of teachers, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board on Tuesday approved a 2010-2012 budget that calls for more than 5,000 job cuts and an increase in class sizes from 24 to 29 students. The

LAUSD board voted 6-1 – with Marguerite LaMotte, LAUSD District 1, weighing in with the sole opposing vote – to approve budget balancing measures that some say will have a huge negative impact on public education.

LAUSD is facing a \$470 million shortfall for the 2010-11. See Cuts page 20

Officials at Tar Pits Object to Fossil Sales

Volunteer's Uncommissioned Project on La Brea Woman Shelved

BY EDWIN FOLVEN

Some controversy has arisen over the upcoming sale this weekend of fossils that were removed from a tar pit in western Kern County that is similar to the La Brea Tar Pits.

The I.M. Chait Gallery in Beverly Hills is holding an auction of natural history items on December 13, and the sale includes a collection of fossilized bones that its brochure claims are "fossil bones from the La Brea Tar Pits".

Josh Chait, an I.M. Chait spokesman, said there are two lots of fossils from the McKittrick Tar Pits in Kern County that are being auctioned, one containing a single vertebrae from a saber-toothed cat or similar animal of that size, and a collection of small fossilized bones from a deer, juvenile elk, or another animal of a similar size. Chait said the fossils are from private collections and originated from the La Brea Formation, which encompasses a large region stretching from the Los Angeles basin into the San

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Fairfax Band Sounds Off in City Competition

Group is Hoping for Second Title in Three Years

BY IAN LOVETT

At lunch on Tuesday, room 502 at Fairfax High School brimmed with noise and excitement, as members of marching band ate, played instruments, and danced alongside their band director, Raymundo Vizcarra, who played a trumpet.

"Some of them come during lunch to practice," said Vizcarra, who has served as band and orchestra director for the past four years. "Others just come to hang out, but they all like to be here."

Before Vizcarra was hired, it had been 20 years since Fairfax High School had a marching band. But this Saturday, just four years after it



photo by Ian Lovett

Members of the Fairfax High School Band are excited about competing to be the top band in the LAUSD.

was re-formed, the Fairfax High band will compete in the Los Angeles Unified School District City Championships, going for its second title in three years.

"They hired me because the foot-

ball team was pretty good, and they wanted a band to pump up school spirit," Vizcarra said. "Colleagues across the school system told me, 'Just be happy if you can get them to

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Hotel Employees Protest Against Lack of Contract

BY IAN LOVETT

Last weekend, hundreds of hotel workers gathered outside the Andaz West Hollywood, a Hyatt hotel, to demonstrate their opposition to cuts in salary or benefits, as their union works to negotiate new contracts with the hotels that employ them.

Rocksand Ramirez, who has worked as a room attendant at the Hyatt Century Plaza for the past 13 years, joined many of her coworkers at the protest. When Ramirez began working at the Hyatt, she made \$7.20 per hour, a wage she has since doubled.

"I'm excited that my coworkers and our supporters were there, because I know that this is going

to be a tough fight," Ramirez said.

The protest, which began around 4:30pm last Friday, swelled to almost 600 people by 6:00pm, and brought traffic along the Sunset Strip to a crawl, as drivers slowed to gawk, honk horns, and snap pictures.

Local 11 of Unite Here, the union that represents the hotel workers, bused in members from all over Los Angeles to join the demonstration. Five thousand Local 11 members are up for new contracts.

"Twenty-one Local 11 union hotel contracts have expired this year," said Leigh Shelton, communications coordinator for Local 11. "Eight contracts

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At the heart of the image

Cuts Mean Thousands of Job Losses

From page 1

school year. In June, the LAUSD board attempted to identify revenue alternatives to address the then \$800 million shortfall from the 2009-2010 school year. That deficit was reduced in part by cuts, in part by the State Fiscal Stabilization funds (SFSF) and by other federal or one-time funds that have since dried up, according to LAUSD officials.

An estimated 1,000 people rallied outside LAUSD headquarters while the board was considering the budget. First on the minds of many in the crowd, including hundreds of teachers, was the impact of larger class sizes on learning. The people who usually brandish chalk and impart lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic, instead waved protest signs and chanted angry pleas on a cold afternoon. The chant of the day was "Enough is Enough".

Chants of "U-T-L-A!" erupted as United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) president

A.J. Duffy addressed the crowd, urging them to continue uniting against layoffs, salary cuts and overcrowding. UTLA is the union representing 48,000 public school teachers and health and human services professionals in Los Angeles.

"Those of us who have been around more than an hour and a

half in this district know that we always fight for everything," Duffy said. "Everything we have we've had to fight for and this is no exception. But this time, everything is on the line. Our jobs, our homes and our professions...but the students always suffer the most."

Patricia Don, a school psychologist at Jefferson High School, said that if her job is cut, students will suffer.

"I provide support services to students that are very desperately in need of mental health help, because there are no mental health services that are affordable in the area," Don said. "Our democracy is built on an educated society and it starts early on. We will not stand for any more cuts."

Lorraine Motza has taught for more than 30 years at Saticoy Elementary.

"I don't want the classroom touched, in terms of size," Motza said. "I certainly feel for people who are fighting for salary, but I also know that throughout California in almost every industry there have been cuts... I would rather see that than an increase to our class sizes to the point where children can't learn."

Pamela Francisco, who has taught for 12 years at Saticoy

Elementary School, said she will no longer be able to teach effectively with the larger class sizes.

"I teach first grade. You cannot teach those children to read with thirty children in the classroom," Francisco said.

Though not a budgetary issue, another topic protested at the rally was the School Choice Resolution, a plan approved 6-1 by the Los Angeles School Board in August. The plan calls for bids from private entities and charter schools to take over schools that are low performing. Francisco commented on the resolution, which was authored by Los Angeles School Board member Yolie Flores Aguilar, District 5, and which UTLA opposes.

"When you have private people taking over public education, they end up putting restrictions on people who come to their schools," Francisco said. "The concept of public education will be destroyed by this takeover."

Wendy Perez, of the Alliance for a Better Community, a policy and advocacy group, said the School Choice Resolution will help the state of education.

"We feel it provides more options for quality education," Perez said. "It pushes people to create a plan for these schools that are failing. If people are competing



photo by Amy Lyons

United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) president A.J. Duffy vowed to fight the budget cuts approved by the LAUSD Board.

for schools, then there is motivation to come up with the best plan."

Opponents of the resolution say public schools need to remain public, and that as soon as private money starts flowing into a school, the school is no longer public. Perez said that could be an issue, but that oversight would be the key to averting it.

"If a business has the best plan

for a school, then they should be able to run that school, but we still want it to be public education, so strict oversight and accountability standards would need to be set," Perez said.

Voter polling is currently taking place for LAUSD's plan to place a parcel tax initiative on the June or November 2010 ballot, a measure they hope will offset the cuts.

Museum Officials Object to Sale of Fossils

From page 1

Joachim Valley. The McKittrick Tar Pits are located in a vast oil field in Kern County that is owned by Chevron and AERA Energy. Chait called the brochure's listing of the fossils as being from the La Brea Tar Pits a "matter of semantics", but added that there is nothing illegal about selling the fossils. Representatives of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County concurred that the sale is not illegal, but contend that such fossils should be housed by museums or scientific institutions, not in private collections.

"McKittrick has no relation to the oil field in Hancock Park, and providing this fossil was taken with the knowledge of the land owner, it is legal to sell them," said John Harris, chief curator for the Natural History Museum and the George C. Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits. "I'd like to see them held in a museum, so they would be available for public viewing and research. But no, we don't have jurisdiction, and the law in the United States is such that if you own the property, you can sell it."

Chait said the auction house has sold many similar fossils over the past several years, including a saber-toothed cat skull that was found in the 1960s during excavation of a private construction site near 6th Street and Hauser Boulevard. He said the skull was almost lost forever, if not for a private collector who kept some of the blocks of tar that were removed from the construction site and later sifted through them and found the skull, among other fossils.

"The museums don't like any sale for profit, but there are two sides to the story. For example, with the saber tooth cat skull, if this guy hadn't come along and



photo courtesy of Melissa Cooper

Forensic artist and former Page Museum volunteer Melissa Cooper created a drawing based on human bones found in the Tar Pits known as La Brea Woman. Museum officials said the project was meant to be Cooper's personal endeavor, and was never intended to be displayed.

had an interest in paleontology and asked for the block of tar, it would have likely been sent to a city dump and lost forever," Chait said. "The law says if you find it on private property, it's OK to sell."

Representatives of Chevron did not return calls seeking comment about fossils taken from the McKittrick site, but Lori Wear, curator of collections for the Kern County Museum, said many fossils originated from the site decades ago. She agrees with Harris that the fossils remain in a museum instead of being sold to private collectors.

"It would be great if the public could enjoy them and have access to them for educational purposes," Wear said. "We have some of the fossils from an excavation back in the '40s. It's mostly remains of horses or other animals like that."

Chait estimates that the fossils in

the current auction, which are small, assorted pieces, will sell for approximately \$800 to \$3,000. A previous sale of a saber-toothed cat skull in 2005 that was intact and in good condition brought in \$282,000.

Another recent controversy at the George C. Page Museum has surfaced over a partial skeleton in its collection known as the La Brea Woman, which has never been displayed publicly. The fossils of the La Brea Woman, which were discovered in 1914 and are estimated to be around 9,000 years old, are the only human bones ever found at the La Brea Tar Pits. The remains include a partial skull and some fragments of limbs.

Earlier this year, Melissa Cooper, a volunteer at the George C. Page Museum, embarked on a research project to do a facial reconstruction

of what the La Brea Woman may have looked like. Cooper, a forensic artist, used measurements of the skull to create a drawing of the La Brea Woman. Cooper claims Harris and other museum officials gave her permission to complete the project, but when she was finished, would not let her display it publicly or use it in conjunction with the museum. Cooper has since published the drawings on her website, and is hopeful that someday they may be displayed. "I think [having it displayed at the museum] would be most beneficial. You go there to learn about what is found there. In a perfect world, I would like to give her some exposure," Cooper said. "It's really just a history lesson. I am far, far from a commercial artist. I just wanted to get her face out there. I think it is great just to know her local history."

Cooper resigned as a volunteer at the Page Museum in October following the disagreement.

Harris said a cast of the La Brea Woman fossils had been displayed in the past at the Natural History Museum, and that information about her was also included in a timeline that had once been displayed at the Page Museum. He declined to address the issues surrounding Cooper's work. "[Displaying it at the museum] wasn't thought to be appropriate," Harris said.

Kristen Friederich, a spokesperson for the Natural History Museum, said museum officials had always thought Cooper's work was only for a personal project, and Cooper was never given any assurances that her drawings would be displayed in the museum. Friederich added that museum officials are still considering what might be done in the future in regards to the La Brea Woman, but nothing has been decided.

Plummer Park Plans to be Reviewed

From page 3

tion and expansion of Fiesta Hall, a large auditorium in the park, into a multi-purpose performance venue for the community that can accommodate between 150 and 200 people in theater-style seating. The project also would create 33,000 square feet of new open space; and additional parking for park patrons and the public.

Francisco Contreras, of the City of West Hollywood's Community Development Department, said the historic preservation commission will look at two preservation issues, the potential for Fiesta Hall and Great Hall as places of historic importance.

Captain Eugenio Plummer was a homesteader who came to present-day West Hollywood with his parents in 1868. Eventually, his ranch became known as Plummer Park.

The County of Los Angeles purchased Plummer's land in 1937, intending to establish a historical park centered on early California life. The county planned a new building for the park to house group events, and that building is now known as Great Hall. The county moved to expand the facilities at Plummer Park in 1949 with the construction of Fiesta Hall. Thus, the two buildings are linked with a person of historic significance and contain historic architectural elements.

The complete Draft Environmental Impact Report outlining the park overhaul can be found at www.weho.org/planning. Monday's meeting will be held at 7:00pm at Plummer Park Community Center Art Rooms 5 and 6, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. Call (323)848-6409 for information.