

Year in Review

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MARCH

■ Malibu High School expansion clears the Planning Commission despite an ongoing battle with some of the neighbors about the amount of lighting on the playing fields and the expanded 150 space parking lot, ultimately agreeing to limiting the parking lot light to 31 nights per year.

■ The newly redesigned, modified and replanted Malibu Lagoon, previously the scene of many pickets and an ongoing controversy, opened to high praise from the State Parks Department, which declared a victory in the face of considerable skepticism from many Malibu neighbors. Time will tell if the park is going to be a long-term success.

■ The ever-controversial proposed Malibu Chain Store Ordinance, pushed by its proponents to protect and keep Malibu “mom and pops” in business, continued slowly wending its way through the Malibu political process. Shopping center owners charged the ordinance would have the opposite impact intended and make it harder for small businesses to survive. The ordinance eventually went through several iterations this year and will probably end up as a local ballot initiative or, ultimately, in front of a judge.

■ The Malibu water system, which brings drinkable water to Malibu, is old, tired, worn out and provides an inadequate supply of water for fire protection in many areas of Malibu. A study by the county estimated it will take \$266 million to update the Malibu/Topanga water system. The proposed project is long-term, estimated for construction over the next 22 years.

APRIL



■ John Clark Gable, 51, son of actor Clark Gable, was arrested for DUI after his truck collided with seven cars alongside PCH and an alleged hit-and-run episode a few minutes earlier.

■ Plans were unveiled for Santa Monica College satellite campus to be constructed on the site of the former Malibu Sheriff's station near the courthouse. Plans include a 27,500-square-foot environmentally friendly community college building and a 5,700-square-foot Sheriff's substation. A bond measure passed in 2004 is expected to cover the \$25 million cost.

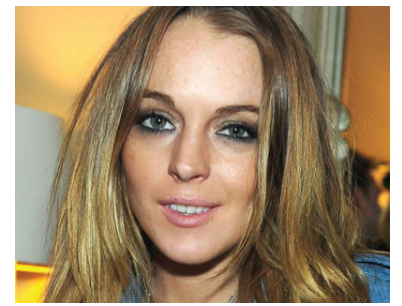
■ The proposed swap of the city-owned 532-acre Charmlee Wilderness Park for 83 acres of

2012 Dolphin Award winners

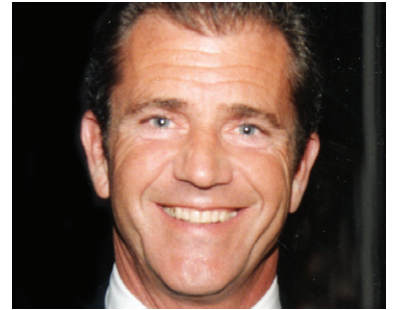


The 2012 Dolphin Award Winners: Back row, from left: Daniel Forge, Daniel Villefort, Michael Espinoza, Martha Templeton, Cantor Marcelo Gindlin and John Johannessen. Front row: Luciana Forge, Craig Foster, Karen Farrer, Seth Jacobson and Oscar Mondragon. Not pictured: Bruce Karatz, Joseph Evans and Michael Miller.

Julie Ellerton / TMT



Lindsay Lohan



Mel Gibson

■ The Malibu Courthouse, along with many other smaller courthouses, closed as a result of large budget cuts in the judiciary system brought on by a shrinking state revenue flow. The courthouse, often the subject of media coverage for celebrity misdeeds that often ended up before local Superior Court Judge Lawrence Mira, saw a procession that included Robert Downey Jr., Mel Gibson, Nick Nolte, Gary Busey, Charlie Sheen and, of course, Lindsay Lohan.

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Two fire engines from Fire Station 88 on Malibu Road responded to a camper fire last February in the parking lot of the Ralphs supermarket. No injuries were reported.

Traffic collisions in Malibu, 2010-2012

	2010	2011	2012
Fatal collisions	4	3	3
Injury collisions	110	107	133
Property collisions	262	252	253
Private property collisions	50	39	46
DUI collisions w/ injuries	5	10	14
DUI collisions w/ property damage only	10	17	15
Pedestrians killed	2	0	0
Pedestrians injured	2	4	2

Statistics courtesy of Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Malibu Bluffs Park, controlled by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, came under legal attack in a lawsuit filed by the Malibu Township Council. Attorneys for the Township Council allege the City Council violated the Brown Act, a state open-meetings law.

■ Another nighttime fatality occurred on PCH when a limousine struck a 21-year-old woman who was crossing the highway with her boyfriend after leaving Moonshadows Restaurant.

MAY

■ Two men died after a midair plane collision over Malibu Creek State Park. Three others were injured when the two Cessnas collided. Both had both taken off from Santa Monica Airport. After the collision, one crashed into a Calabasas hillside, setting off a one-acre brushfire in a remote area near Mulholland Highway and Las Virgenes Road. The other plane force-landed on a golf course in Westlake Village.

Dancing queens (and kings)



Julie Ellerton / TMT

Dancing on their daddy's shoulders, Dominique, left, and Isabella, right, had a free ride while actor Cary Elwes, left, and cinematographer Ulf Soderqvist, right, worked up a sweat at the Father Daughter Valentine Dance in February.



From the Publisher
Arnold G. York

Politics in another arena

There was a time when voters went to the polls to elect their governmental leaders, and the political battles of the days were fought out before those leaders, ultimately had to publicly declare where they stood. If you didn't like what your leaders did, you voted them out and brought in a new set of leaders. In America the ballot box ruled. That was then, this is now.

Today, if you don't like what your leaders are doing, you don't try for the ballot box. Instead, you call your lawyer. The courtroom in many instances is just politics in a different arena.

Currently, the Malibu Township Council (MTC) is a community organization that is bitterly opposed to whatever the City Council does or contemplates doing. It doesn't even appear to be related to any particular issue, but it's more of a general mindset, which says if you, the council, are for it, we, the Malibu Township Council, are against it.

Actually, it's not really that surprising since the ranks of the MTC are filled with frustrated wannabe leaders who just can't quite get the voters to go along with them, so they have turned to the political court of last resort, the legal system.

Recently, they filed a lawsuit against the city alleging that the city had violated the Brown Act, which essentially says that public decisions must be made in public and not behind closed doors. The MTC wants the court to set aside the City Council's decision to pursue negotiations for a possible Bluffs/Charmlee swap and make them start over, and judging from some of the language of the pleadings, if the court wanted to draw and quarter the City Council, that would also be all right with them.

So what is this great crime, this outrage, they think is being forced onto an unsuspecting Malibu electorate? The MTC charges that some members of the City Council have been talking to Joe Edmiston and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (known as the SMMC) about swapping the 532-acre Charmlee Park, which is owned by the city, for 83 acres of land

up in Bluffs Park, owned by the SMMC. Those Bluffs Park acres might be used for ball fields, which the city needs. I say might because this is a potentially complicated deal. The State Attorney General's office is involved, as well as the board of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the California Coastal Commission, the L.A. County Fire Department and probably an alphabet soup of other agencies I don't yet know about.

Now I could understand the MTC's angst if the city was going to turn Charmlee Park over to some developer who planned to build a bunch of condos, but that is simply not the case. I have had my differences of opinion with Joe Edmiston in the past, but I can absolutely assure you that Joe is not in the business of developing land; he's in the business of holding raw land in perpetuity for the public good. That's his charge from the legislature and that's also his personal mission.

It seems to me that the deal is a no brainer. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain. What the City Council voted to do was to pursue negotiations with the SMMC and do some fact-finding, which seems a very sensible way to proceed. Ultimately, the council will have to decide whether or not to go ahead with the deal. As they say, the devil is in the details, and any one of those multiple agencies could torpedo the deal by saying “no” or by adding conditions that make the deal unworkable. The only way to find out is to move forward.

What the MTC is trying to do is tie the council's hands so they can't move forward with the deal even if it turns out to be workable. Nobody elected the MTC, although they do claim to be representative of districts in Malibu. However, I've lived here since 1976 and have never received a letter inviting me to vote for my so-called local representative to the MTC, so I can only assume they represent no one but themselves.

I can only hope the court exercises some common sense and deals with this petition as summarily as I believe it deserves.