

Letters of 2013

The Malibu Times selects memorable letters from throughout the year.

Treachery at Charmlee

A few years ago, the Malibu City Council thoughtlessly decided to trade away management of Charmlee Park to Joe Edmiston and The Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy, which planned to 'modernize' the parking and Nature Center and allow overnight camping at the park. An uproar ensued and finally Council Member Barovsky joined with the people of Malibu and helped turn the tide. The plan was halted.

Presumably armed with the knowledge of how the people of Malibu feel about camping in Charmlee Park, Lou La Monte has now made another offer to the SMMC to trade away our park. Suspiciously, the City Council plans to rush the deal through in January before the Malibuites can gather any momentum. So much for representing the people!

Every year the Charmlee Nature Preserve Foundation works to gather grant money to finance bus trips for children at under-served schools to visit Charmlee Park. We have 14 trained docents and on Thursday mornings during the school year we sponsor a busload of kids, usually 6th graders, on a nature hike. This is a bragging point for the City of Malibu. Our dedicated group has no doubt that we are doing good work.

The Charmlee Nature Preserve Foundation works well with the Parks and Recreation Department in Malibu, but I must say, as an active docent and board member of the Foundation, I suspect I would have heard if Mr. LaMonte had ever visited one of our school hikes or had shown any interest in what we have accomplished there.

If you believe Lou La Monte should not just casually trade away our Wilderness Park and most likely kill a program that thousands of children have benefited from, please attend the City Council Meeting on the 14th and let your voice be heard or at least let the City Council know by sending emails demanding that they show some respect for the residents' wishes and the kids.

Frank Rich, President, Charmlee Nature Preserve Foundation

Dam useful

Your editorial from Feb. 14, "Out, out damned Dam," welcomes Senator Pavley to the State Parks and Recreation Commission. Her presence may turn out to be welcome pressure on State Parks to avoid their penchant to spend taxpayer dollars foolishly, lavishly and wastefully.

As to the specific Rindge Dam project to tear it down, Senator Pavley is advised the dam qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. To be fully informed about this engineering marvel of the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area, she should obtain a copy of the report to the Army Corps of Engineers Report 04-72 by Statistical Research, Inc., Tucson AZ June 2005 (Contract No. DACWO9-03-0-0005).

Decades ago, reasons were presented to government and fish representatives to save the dam, besides it being a historical landmark, rather than destroying this asset of taxpayers. Two of several reasons are:

-Use the dam as a massive trap of pollution runoff or sewer breaks in the 100-square-mile upper watershed, thus protecting down

stream animals, people, properties and Surfrider Beach.

-The aquifer behind the dam holds 10 million gallons of water. Pump it out to tanks above the old Honor Camp site, for convenient access to pumpers fighting the periodic fires coming down this historic fire corridor or in residential areas north or south of the tunnel.

The total cost of this 40-plus year project is unknown to me, but must be in the millions of dollars when adding all the federal, state and local agency contracting and personnel costs.

Ronald L. Rindge

Lying in wait

I've worked in Malibu for more than 10 years and I've noticed that although there are multiple signs specifying that from 6-9 a.m. there is no left turn onto Civic Center Way from southbound Malibu Canyon Road, these signs are so ineffective that almost on a daily basis there is at least one sheriff officer waiting just out of sight so people turning left can be ticketed.

Clearly the signs are ineffective at keeping people from turning left between 6-9 a.m., but they are very effective at trapping otherwise law-abiding citizens into getting very expensive moving violation tickets. Now if the City of Malibu sincerely wants to prevent people from turning left at the intersection for safety reasons, they could easily implement very simple improvements to the intersection like a red left turn arrow, red warning lights on one of the "no left turn" signs that would be timed to go on between 6-9 a.m., lane markers that light up along the entrance to the left turn lane, that would be effective at preventing people from accidentally making the illegal left turn whether or not a sheriff officer is present.

After years of ignoring this issue, I hope Malibu will consider simple safety improvements to the intersection of Malibu Canyon Road and Civic Center Way to prevent visitors to Malibu from mistakenly breaking the law and at the same time improving safety for the children who attend school along Civic Center Way.

Kevin Holabird

Site an eyesore

The Malibu Times reports a draft environmental impact report found the Crummer Site Submission, contiguous to Malibu Bluffs Park, will have "minimal negative effects on the environment." ["Draft EIR released on Crummer project," published April 11] Huh? You're kidding, right? The story poles for the project provide compelling evidence to the contrary: the bluff-top project is a visual eyesore for miles around. It will negatively impact the scenic and serene sense of place at Bluffs Park, where the children of Malibu play soccer and baseball and learn to ride bikes. It is an aesthetic and land use disaster of the first order. The owners of the project could give 10 times the 1.74 acres they're giving to the city as a quid pro quo for approval and it would not mitigate the visual violence they are imposing on the site and the city.

Dominic Surprenant

Safety first

Health and safety should be the primary issue in Malibu. We are a city that is more than 21 miles long with only one major

road. The Pacific Coast Highway, which already can't accommodate the existing traffic, and has only two significant crossroads out of the city.

The following are a few of the construction projects contemplated for Malibu in the next few years (all of which significantly impact the most culpable safety area in Malibu). They are near Civic Center Way, which accommodates approximately 800 children who attend Webster Elementary School and Our Lady of Malibu School. Cross Creek Road and Civic Center Way is also the primary ingress and egress for the 115 properties in the Serra Retreat Canyon.

1. Pepperdine University has already been granted authority by the county and the California Coastal Commission to expand the Student Life Project of 465 additional housing facilities, as well as the right to expand their sporting facility to accommodate approximately 5,000 to 6,000 visitors, with ingress and egress on Civic Center Way.

2. We will be installing a sewer system in the Civic Center, the Malibu Colony, Serra Canyon, and the Knolls and a wastewater treatment facility on Civic Center Way.

3. We may build a 27-acre hotel on Civic Center Way opposite the two schools [Webster and Our Lady of Malibu].

4. We may build five, 10,000 square-foot homes and a ball field at Bluffs Park.

5. A shopping center is currently being built at Cross Creek Road and Civic Center Way.

6. We will build a Santa Monica College satellite campus in Malibu with 135 parking spaces by the courthouse on Civic Center Way.

7. We will build approximately 125,000 sq. ft. of commercial properties (with parking) on Civic Center Way (the La Paz shopping center).

8. We may build a Whole Foods facility on Civic Center Way and Cross Creek Road.

9. We will build additional parking facilities by the tennis courts which must cross Civic Center Way. How will we be able to evacuate the children in the event of a fire? Do you believe that the health and safety issue of Malibu is being addressed appropriately?

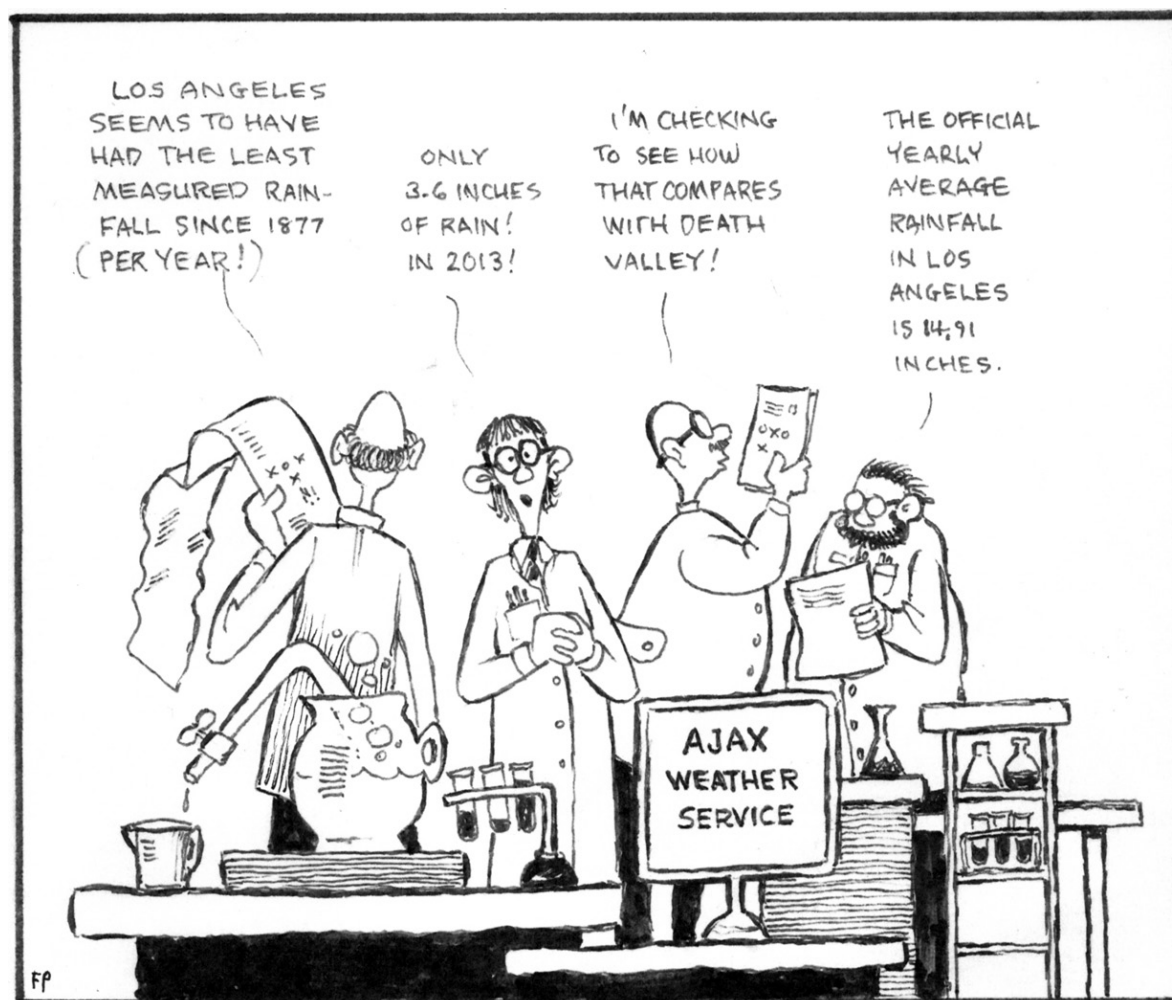
Ozzie Silva

Make things happen

Two words to describe the closure of the Malibu Courthouse: sick and sad.

Anyone concerned with public safety in this town and the surrounding areas should be up in arms over this closing. The recent public safety study for the area highlights several hotspots that need addressing, and hopefully they will be. One element of safety is, of course, the continued enforcement of traffic violations. Guess what, Santa Monica is the new venue for traffic trials (and other infractions) originating here (the Van Nuys courthouse gets the criminal). Anyone who has driven back from Santa Monica recently in the midafternoon or, perish the thought, rush hour, knows it's a battle, even for a black and white. Not only will officers be more reluctant to enforce here—after all, they're only human, but they'll be totally out of commission while attending court hearings away from town. Ouch.

As the saying goes, "There are three types of people in this world: those who make things happen,



those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened."

Prediction: there will be many folks who knock on the Malibu courthouse door next month and "wonder what happened." If enough of those wondering people with local justice concerns become "those who make things happen," maybe Malibu court can be resurrected.

Michael Shultz

Building bridges

Driving down Pacific Coast Highway to the Getty last Sunday, dodging pedestrians running half-way across, pausing for a second, then darting the rest of the way to the beach, it occurred to me that tragedies might be averted with a series of well-placed footbridges arching over the highway, enabling pedestrians to cross without danger. The footbridges could be artfully designed and constructed, adding to the city's charm and character while saving lives.

How would they be paid for? By naming them for individuals who pay for them, for instance, The Arnold York Bridge. Benefactors would receive a permanent legacy in Malibu, and the self-knowledge they would continue to save lives long into the future.

Just a thought.

Chuck Wintner

Suspicious behavior

I applaud Mayor Joan House, City Councilman Lou La Monte, and Malibu City Attorney Christi Hogin for beginning to expose the scandal of Malibu's drug and alcohol treatment centers. However, I ask them to also examine how these operations are named. What are the licensing differences between a drug and rehab treatment center and a sober living facility?

Malibu Beach Sober Living currently operates four facilities in Malibu, including one on my street. What gives these people the right to turn a single-family home, in an area not zoned commercial by Malibu law, into a for-profit sober living facility? Their brochure describes their Broad Beach facility as "the world's most elegant and beautiful sober living environment located in exclusive and private Malibu." It's not private anymore when day and night staff and "guests" hog the parking on our neighborhood street and hold meetings which attract dozens of cars.

I encourage our city attorney to look closely at the Malibu Beach Sober Living staff. Kimberly Jones, the owner-executive director, was previously the National Director of Business Development at Passages Malibu, the rehab facility currently under investigation.

According to the Malibu Beach Sober Living webpage, five of their staff are "obtaining certification as an alcohol and drug abuse counselor," but not one staff person is currently CAADAC certified.

Why is the City waiting year after year to hear from the State's Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs? I have a hunch the City Council has the zoning authority to shut down these bogus businesses now. Please start with the one on my street.

Jo Giese

Free to disagree

A developer is quoted as saying "The economic future of Malibu will be decided by the free market." Will someone explain that to me?

Is that the free market that destroyed the savings of millions of Americans and evicted them from their homes? The one that drives gas prices and prescription medicines out of reach?

Exactly 100 years ago, President Wilson said, "There is an invisible force, over and above the U.S. government, that is running the country. They are three special interests—the banks, insurance companies and big business."

Ike warned us about the military industrial complex. Jimmy Carter recently lamented that so

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Guest Column | Duna DiVito

Dangers of biking on PCH (from Sept. 3)

Ever since I was 4, I have known how dangerous Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu is. Now I am 8 years old and PCH is worse. I guess this problem is a lot more complicated than I thought, so I asked the help of my parents to produce this article with a video.

We rode along the Malibu coast to see the dangerous spots.

The PCH in Malibu has many bicycle traps. A new one is located in far west Malibu.

Due to the recent Springs



brush fire that burned near west Malibu, Caltrans has installed a concrete barrier alongside the road, which is in some cases too dangerous for cars and bicyclists. Bicyclists get trapped. There is not enough room between the wall and the vehicle lane.

Be careful, bicyclists! I made a video to warn you guys. Check it out at malibu-times.com.

Duna DiVito is an 8-year-old from Malibu who loves journalism.