

## News Briefs

### Fifth-graders to be honored for SeaWorld activism

Fifth-grader Kirra Kotler and classmates at Point Dume Marine Science School who reportedly protested a SeaWorld field trip are set to be honored by the Malibu City Council on Monday for their activism.

The field trip was cancelled in December after Kotler brought the documentary “Blackfish” to the attention of her classmates. The documentary tells the story of a massive orca whale named Tilikum, a male with a history of aggression that killed a trainer at the Orlando SeaWorld theme park in 2010. Prior to the 2010 incident, Tilikum had already been associated with the deaths of two other people.

After a survey of parents found that several students would not participate in the annual trip, which is typically scheduled for March, Principal Rebecca Johnson said she decided to cancel and instead search for a trip that would include every student.

The City Council on Monday will present Kotler and classmates with a commendation for “taking a stand against mistreatment of killer whales in captivity,” according to the agenda report.

### Blocker Beach project up for approval again

After being delayed at the last Planning Commission meeting on Jan. 6, permits to begin construction on the Dan Blocker Beach Access Improvement project were up for approval by the commission on Tuesday night as The Malibu Times went to press.

City staff is recommending approval of permits for the county to begin construction on the project, which calls for 14 parking spaces with 90-minute metered parking, one ADA-compliant parking space, a 242-square-foot public restroom, concrete picnic tables, three public viewing areas and concrete benches along the one-mile stretch of beach near Pacific Coast Highway and Corral Canyon Road.

The project is estimated to cost \$5.5 million and should improve access at a publicly owned piece of beach that has sat encumbered by fencing and overgrown brush for more than 30 years.

Check malibutimes.com for more coverage of Tuesday night’s meeting.

### Stranded climbers rescued in Malibu Creek State Park

Two climbers were safely rescued last Tuesday night from Malibu Creek State Park during a four-hour operation by rescue crews after becoming stranded on a cliff face after sunset.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Malibu Search and Rescue (SAR) Team responded to a 911 call at around 6:20 p.m. and were able to locate the two hikers, a 21-year-old male from Agoura Hills and a 20-year-old female from Pasadena, in the middle of “Goats Butte,” a cliff face in the park.

Guided by the cell phone light of one of the climbers, three Malibu SAR teams, consisting of eight deputies in total, found the hikers on the cliff. They were perched approximately 500 feet from flat ground and 20 feet from the summit of the mountain.

The hikers, who were clad only in shorts and t-shirts, were first provided with helmets, gloves, warm clothes and rescue harnesses. The Malibu SAR personnel then set up a technical rope system to lower the climbers safely down the cliff, at which time they received medical assessment and were reunited with family members. Both climbers were safely rescued with no reported injuries.

### Cops arrest five suspects in Santa Monica Pier stabbing

Five people have been arrested in connection with a stabbing incident at the Santa Monica Pier on Saturday.

The incident, which occurred at approximately 1:20 a.m., involved five suspects and a pair of fishermen at the west-end of the popular tourist attraction.

An argument escalated to the point where the group of five attacked the other two. During the altercation, both victims were stabbed multiple times in the torso and arms. The suspects left the pier fishing deck and walked east. The victims reported the incident to pier and Harbor Service Officers who immediately began to administer first aid until Santa Monica Fire Department paramedics arrived.

Santa Monica Police Department officers, who were working on the pier at the time, were notified and responded. The officers saw a group of individuals walking east on the pier who

matched the description of the assailants and subsequently detained them. Identifications were later made of the group, implicating them in the crime.

The victims were transported to a local trauma center where the more serious of the two was immediately sent to surgery. Both victims are in stable condition and expected to survive.

All five of the suspects were booked for attempted homicide. Four of them are adults and bail was set at \$1 million for each of them. The other suspect arrested was a minor. He was booked into juvenile hall and no bail has been set for him.

Anyone with information regarding the crime is asked to call the Santa Monica Police Department’s Investigations Division at 310.458.8451 during normal business hours or to the Communications Center after hours at 310.458.8491.

*A version of this story originally appeared in the Santa Monica Daily Press.*

### On the web: Skylar Peak talks Malibu Lagoon and school district separation

In the final installment of a three-part interview for the web series, “Malibu Voices,” Mayor Pro Tem Skylar Peak gave his opinion on the biggest issues facing Malibu, including the creation of a formula retail ordinance, natural disaster preparedness and Malibu’s water infrastructure.

Additionally, Peak said he believes Malibu would benefit from forming its own public school district and thinks the city should work to acquire more



Skylar Peak

public park land.

Peak is also asked about the success of the Malibu Lagoon Restoration Project and says it may be 5 to 10 years before one can gauge the project’s results. The series is hosted by Bob Perkins and produced by Marshall Thompson. To watch the video, visit malibutimes.com.

### California State Parks celebrates 150 years

California State Parks is marking its 150th anniversary this year with events and celebrations spread from January through December 2014.

There are more than 200 State Parks, Historic Parks, Beaches and other protected state-owned areas spread throughout California. Of the two-dozen State Park lands located in LA County, five are here in Malibu: Leo Carillo State Park, Malibu Creek State Park, Malibu Lagoon State Beach, Point Dume State Beach and Robert H. Meyer Memorial State Beach.

The first State Park was Yosemite, which was preserved in 1864 with a bill signed by President Abraham Lincoln. Although the granted land was returned to the Federal Government in 1906, making Yosemite a National

Park, the 1864 proclamation spurred an unbroken tradition of State Parks in California.

For a full list of anniversary events, check out the California Department of Parks and Recreation website at parks.ca.gov.

### Study suggests pollution harming plants in Santa Monica Mountains, increasing fire risk

Initial results from experiments conducted in the Santa Monica Mountains indicate that high levels of nitrogen may adversely impact native plants and, by extension, increase the risk of wildfire, federal officials said last week.

“No one will be surprised to learn that our data shows increased air pollution on the eastern end of the mountains, closer to Los Angeles,” said Dr. Irina Irvine, restoration ecologist for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. “What’s more intriguing about this study is learning how high nitrogen levels affect native vegetation and what that might mean for fire risk in such a fire-prone region.”

The preliminary results are from the first year of a three-year study undertaken by Irvine, UC Riverside’s Dr. Edith B. Allen and the U.S. Forest Service’s Dr. Andrzej Bytnerowicz and Dr. Mark Fenn.

Researchers measured atmospheric nitrogen deposit levels at 10 sites throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and found significantly higher pollution levels in the eastern end. At the two sites with the best

air quality, they added various levels of nitrogen into experimental plots of coastal sage scrub to simulate pollution levels found throughout the mountains.

Higher levels of nitrogen led to a decline in native shrub seedlings and an increase in nonnative grasses. Other studies in Australia and California have demonstrated a link between nonnative grasses, also known as “flashy fuels,” and larger and more frequent wildfires, the researchers said.

Funded by the National Park Service’s Air Resources Division, the \$100,000 study will help scientists better determine the “critical load” when

vegetation shifts, causing alterations to the structure and functionality of ecosystems. Coastal sage scrub once covered much of coastal California and is now an endangered habitat type, primarily due to development.

Generally attributed to vehicle emissions in the Santa Monica Mountains, nitrogen deposition is the air pollution from industry, agriculture and transportation that settles out of the atmosphere and onto the earth’s surface.

For more information about the study, visit [www.nps.gov/samo](http://www.nps.gov/samo).

*A previous version of this story appeared in the Santa Monica Daily Press*

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**Athletics**

**Waves Men's Basketball**

Saturday, Feb. 1 | 3 PM

The Waves will take on the Loyola Marymount Lions in a home game at Firestone Fieldhouse.

[pepperdinesports.com](http://pepperdinesports.com)

**Lectures & Discussions**

W. David Baird Distinguished Lecture Series Presents

**Ellen Gustafson**

Tuesday, Feb. 4 | 5 PM

The sustainable food system activist, innovator, and social entrepreneur will discuss “A New Understanding of Hunger, Obesity, and the Food System.”

[seaver.pepperdine.edu/dean/lectureseries](http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/dean/lectureseries)

**Arts & Culture**

Student Activities Presents

**Dance in Flight**

Thursday, Feb. 6, to Saturday, Feb. 8

Brought together by their passion for the art of movement, this inspiring company consists of students from a variety of dance backgrounds, interests, and fields of study.

[arts.pepperdine.edu](http://arts.pepperdine.edu)

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