



In case you missed it

The top stories on MalibuTimes.com this week



Car rollover, downed power lines shut down Kanan Dume Road



Two candidates drop out of forum



Skylar Peak sworn in as Malibu's youngest mayor



Tiger compound rejected in western Malibu



Malibu Association of Realtors adopts PCH portion

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Guest Column | Seth Jacobson Health issue transcends politics

Why are members of our community playing politics with our children's and teachers' health? Recently, most Malibu residents have been receiving emails from individuals, candidates and organizations who are trying to hijack what is a very serious issue for their own professional and personal gain. As the person responsible for raising the issue of toxic materials at a board meeting in early October, 2013, it distresses me to think that members of our community have decided that they can use this issue, take credit for things that they had no part in, attack a process that has not even begun, and use it for political gain. Shouldn't we say that there are some issues and some concerns that are above trying to score political points or push an agenda.

Even outside interests from Washington D. C. and other communities have decided to use Malibu as a guinea pig for a broader agenda and to gain ground on issues not related to our community's concerns and what we must do. The school district is by no means off the hook for how things have transpired. Many errors were made in their initial efforts and members of the school environmental task force like myself also believed that we needed to move quickly to do testing and remediation. We probably should have waited and gone down a more pragmatic

path. But whether we like it or not, we are part of a larger school district that has finally put together a process, hired a nationally recognized consultant and has made public commitments to engage our community.

Are we going to find answers or play politics? We need to focus on making sure these commitments are delivered and we need the community to focus its attention on supporting the teachers and students. We cannot afford to make this issue a carnival act, or a pawn in a political game. This is too important, there is too much at stake. We need to put aside the past, ignore the politicking, conspiracy theories and call for layers of bureaucratic review and support the local, state and federal agencies that, working with the school district and our city, are trying to find answers. I applaud the members of the community that are pushing for greater transparency and testing, and the teachers that are looking for answers. We need to test air, water and soils, to look at both Juan Cabrillo and Malibu High School, and to get our kids back in safe classrooms. But let's rise to the occasion and be the best we can be. Let's bring a sensible dialogue to this issue and not rant and rave about a flawed process that may be finally moving in the right direction. We cannot afford to look back in anger. We need to look forward in hope.

Letters to the Editor

The Malibu Times requests that letters to the editor be sent by U.S. mail or hand-delivered to The Malibu Times, 3864 Las Flores Canyon Rd., Malibu, CA 90265; e-mailed to malibunews@malibutimes.com or by fax to 310.456.8986. Name, address and phone number must be included with all letters for verification purposes.

Typed letters must use sentence case (please avoid submitting correspondence typed entirely in capital letters or in cursive). Letters should be brief, 350 words maximum, and may be edited for clarity or length. Deadlines are Tuesdays at noon.

Ignoring the issue

When did holding people accountable for their actions become "not fighting fair"? Telling the truth is not "below the belt politics." The actions of our elected officials should be transparent. Showing up at the end of the SMMUSD board meeting last Thursday, Laura Rosenthal spoke to the board, offering to help however she could with the Malibu High School contamination issue. Why hasn't she been prioritizing this issue up to now? Why hasn't she ever come forward with public offers of assistance when, by her own admission, she first learned of this problem at the SMMUSD board meeting on Nov. 4, 2010?

Laura "set the record straight" at this month's city council meeting and stated "half of Malibu" attended the Nov. 4, 2010, meeting and were all informed of the MHS contamination issue at that time. She states "no one was upset or concerned enough to pull it to find out more." That is simply not true. I watched the archived video of that meeting and not a single board member or public speaker addressed BB Item A13 (the item detailing the MHS contamination remediation proposal). Not one. The item was titled mundanely as a Removal Action Workplan.

Despite Laura's fable, what happened at that meeting was as follows: The MHS contamination issue was buried in the agenda, ignored by the board during the meeting and never mentioned during public comment. Everyone went home none the wiser. Laura has been curiously silent over the last three plus years regarding the MHS contamination topic. She, and in all fairness, others too, had a responsibility to inform the community about the toxins found in the soil of MHS and about the remediation done by Arcadis while our children, teachers, and staff were on campus. We should be able to trust our elected officials to bring important issues to our attention so we can make informed decisions. They need to be accountable for their actions and inactions.

Scott Greco

Building in Malibu

We recently received a "Stop Crummer" flyer on our doorstep. This is the last straw!

Who has the right to dictate the use of private property? Apparently the powers that be in Malibu do. Should an owner who purchases land for specific use, pays good money, follows all the rules and regulations, and meets all of the code regulations be able to use their own



From the Publisher
Arnold G. York

Things, they are a-changing

The first change of the week is Malibu's brand new mayor, Skylar Peak, who is serving his first term as mayor. Skylar has come quite a distance after a rather rocky start, but has apparently managed to get his life under control and settled down into the routine of being a city council member. The change is reflected in his council colleagues' comfort with him. John Sibert is the new mayor pro tem. The city council is supposed to be a part-time job, but the reality is, if you're conscientious, it's more than a fulltime job and frequently consumes most of your time.

Come this November, there is a county election for a new supervisor to fill term-out Zev Yaroslavsky's seat. The loss of Zev on the westside and in Malibu is enormous. When it came to budgets and dollars, there was no one on the Board of Supervisors more knowledgeable than Zev, and his clout with the other supervisors helped us get so much done in Malibu over the years. We will also sorely miss his field deputy Susan Nissman, who was always the go-to person in anything involving this part of his district. The election of his successor is looking to be a two-horse race between former State Sen. Sheila Kuehl and former Santa Monica Mayor Bobby Shriver. Normally, Kuehl would be the odds-on favorite, but Shriver carries an illustrious family name, a Kennedy family connection and the ability to raise a great deal of campaign money, so this race will probably be tight. When Wendy Gruel, who had strong Valley connections, declined to enter the supervisor race, everything changed. Both Kuehl and Shriver are liberal Westsiders and there is a good chance that the Valley voters, who are also part of this Third District, are going to be the deciding factor. No one is quite sure how they're going to go.

Henry Waxman, who has been a Dean of House seemingly forever, is quitting after 40 years, much to the relief of many Republicans. And there are 21 contestants who want to be his replacement in a district that includes Malibu. That's not an election, that's a reality show. It's a plum spot because it's a district that votes firmly Democratic, so whoever

takes it can almost stay as long as they like, since Congress has no term limits and incumbents seldom lose. Gruel, a former LA City Council member and a hungry candidate, looks to be the front-runner, but there are several interesting candidates. This race may be hard to handicap.

Nationally, the Democratic Party is throwing a fit because numbers guru Nathan Silver of FiveThirtyEight.com has predicted the Dems are going to lose the Senate majority based on his polling and analysis. Silver, you may remember, was formerly with the New York Times and absolutely spot-on in the Obama / Romney race, when many of the other pollsters were making some predictions that turned out to be very wrong. Silver has enormous political street cred and I suspect that the Dems are worried about raising big bucks with Silver giving them a thumbs down. Of course, in the 2016 presidential race, there are a number of vulnerable Republicans running, so we could have a few years with the U.S. Senate going back and forth.

Closer to home, there are changes going on at The Malibu Times. Knowles Adkisson, our Managing Editor, is leaving the newspaper after four years to get a master's degree in journalism at UC Berkeley. We will miss his southern drawl and manners, as well as his wonderful writing and editing skills.



Melissa Caskey, who has been our city hall reporter and Web Editor, will step into Knowles' slot, as the Managing Editor with additional responsibilities including supervision of the city hall coverage. Melissa got her degree in journalism from USC, where she was also the Managing Editor of the Daily Trojan. She's been with the Times for two years and the change-over will take place beginning in April. Knowles leaves at the end of April.

land? Is this the people's republic of Malibu and we, in essence, confiscate the properties so they cannot be developed?

The endless harassment of property owners in the form of demands, fees, revisions, rejection of the revisions, demands for more compliance, more fees and development costs is in actuality a contrived method to prohibit an owner from building. There is a breach of good faith, allowing owners to pay costs with no intent of allowing the development.

The xenophobia in Malibu has been evident to me since the early '70s when we were considering purchasing a lot and building a home. We became aware of the stalling efforts, high costs to try to develop and overall difficulty in trying to build here.

In the 1970s, the Adamson sisters wanted to build a hotel akin to the Bel Air Hotel. They encountered the usual contrived system of blocking the project. Now, another development group has been attempting to do the same. Are we really so exclusive that a low-rise hotel with sorely needed amenities would ruin the community? Bel Air has no such problem. As far as I can determine, the project is not a Motel 6 or a 30-story high-rise tower hotel. The projected plans are in keeping with

the community and non-invasive.

One of the objections that has been raised in essence lamented the destruction of the natural terrain. Ask your local fire department if dry brush and chaparral, conducive to spreading fire, is preferred to landscaped and watered grounds.

Another stalled project is the Whole Foods Market, planned to be centrally located at the village. Our chain market sells stale bakery goods, does not have a working meat grinder and apparently does not care. The management is indifferent and non-responsive, all the way up to corporate headquarters.

Doris Felts

The word is angry

Arnold, in your editorial "The Politics of Hysteria" you argue the community should be permitted to have its own oversight in relation to the Malibu school contamination issue. I not only agree, but believe this is the single most important thing we can achieve right now as a community to insure the remediation is handled thoroughly and with transparency.

However, I take umbrage with your use of the word "hysteria" to label the behavior of members of the community. Democracy works, but the secret to its success

is that it takes effort. Sometimes, in order to elicit change, you have to expose the underbelly of a situation to help people see truth. That can be difficult.

Political change happens when citizens take a collective stand against wrongdoings and injustice. Historically, some of the most significant, successful political moments have been motivated by indignation.

Your neighbors aren't hysterical; they're rightfully angry that the district, BB committee members, and members of the current City Council made decisions that were not in their best interest. It's inspiring that parents, teachers and community members are now involved and working together diligently to achieve the same result. Your involvement and support, as with any other member of the community, can be the tipping point necessary to accomplish true independent oversight of the district's clean-up. This is democracy working at its best.

The consequences of us not getting this right far outweigh the consequences of any other issue facing this community. If it takes people getting upset to get involved, so be it.

Cami Winikoff
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