

The Laguna Beach Independent

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Laguna Beach, California

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Contract negotiations

Police employees, City talks stall

By STU SAFFER

Negotiations between the City and the Laguna Beach Police Employees Association (LBPEA) have reached a critical stage according to information received this week. Negotiations have been underway for the past month without success.

"Our concern is that sworn officers have what every other police agency in Orange County and our own fire department already have - a retirement package of 3% at age 50," Sergeant Guy Miller, LBPEA President said. "There are 22 police agencies in Orange County and 21 have that retirement. We are not asking for a big raise or any other added benefit."

3% at age 50 would mean that a retiring sworn police officer would have a pension based upon 3% of their final pay rate for each year they have worked.

Currently, Laguna has a 2% at 50 benefit.

"One percent is a major difference," Miller added.

An example would be a retiring officer earning \$5500 per month with 20 years on the job. At 2%, the retirement benefit would be \$2200. With the 3% in place, the monthly amount would rise to \$3300.

LBPEA includes both sworn and non-sworn employees such as animal and parking services, dispatchers and records employees. The non-sworn employees have the County standard 2% at 55.

"Police officers and firefighters are at risk physically every workday and have one of the lower life expectancies of all professions. This is why we feel so strongly about having the 3% at 50 package," Miller said.

Miller also said that the Laguna Beach is currently in the lower third of pay scales in the County. "Since we are not asking for additional raises beyond the normal City employee annual increase levels, we project that by 2006, our pay scale will be at or near the bottom of all Orange County police agencies. We accept that because we are adamant about the 3% at 50 retirement."

City Manager Ken Frank said yesterday that the City's policy is to make "...no comments about employee negotiations."

We have learned that the City proposed this Tuesday that the LBPEA agree to continue its current agreement until for nine months until January, 2004 in order to have a clearer picture of the City's long term budget considerations.

The LBPEA voted unanimously Wednesday to reject that proposal.

It is unofficially projected that with the 3% at 50 for the police officers and the retirement packages of the fire department and other City employee associations, there could be an increase of as much as \$2 million annually in retirement payouts to City employees.

Projected increases in City revenues would be generated from spiraling real estate property tax income and bed tax revenue from the new Montage Resort and Spa.

A major concern for the community could be the effect that a lack of the 3% at 50 for the police officers might create.

It is probable that many experienced officers would be inclined to look at other departments and leave Laguna Beach.

That would mean a substantial increase in less experienced police officers hired to replace the veterans.

History suggests that the greater the number of lesser experienced officers in a community, the greater the probability for mistakes.

ACT V will remain out of own... for now

The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) informed the City that construction of the Corporation Yard on the ACT V lot in Laguna Canyon could go forward with the planning process if the City provides 'will serve' agreements for sewer and water. The City would provide sewer services and the Laguna Beach County Water District the water.

The Council voted 3-2 to do as LAFCO requests - Mayor Toni Iseman and Councilman Wayne Baglin opposing.

LAFCO is involved because the ACT V property is in Orange County - not the City of Laguna Beach. LAFCO's sole mission is to reduce the pockets of County property through annexation by nearby cities.

The City Council previously voted 3-2 to construct the Corporation Yard at ACT V and process planning through Orange County with the City's Design Review Board recommendations.

The rationale on the part of the City is that annexation prior

See ActV, page 3...

Police negotiate safe ending for barricaded suicide threat

Laguna Beach PD Sergeant Jason Kravetz is a trained crisis negotiations expert and the importance of his training paid off last Thursday. He was able to successfully communicate with a man who had threatened suicide after barricading himself inside the garage of his home in the 900 block of Oriole Drive.

Police received a call from the man's pastor who was talking to the man on the phone. The pastor said the man had said he was inside the garage with a .357 magnum handgun and had threatened suicide, apparently over domestic problems.

Police dispatchers quickly ran a check of the man as well as the address and relayed critical information to responding officers according to Sergeant Guy Miller.

"There had been a history of many previous responses to the address and several guns were

registered to him. We knew we had a potentially serious situation," Miller said.

On scene, officers shut down all traffic from Bluebird Canyon to Oriole Drive and set up a perimeter around the address. The home of one neighbor potentially exposed to fire was evacuated.

Once the necessary resources, including fire department paramedics close by, were in place, Sergeant Kravetz made contact with the man on the phone.

After reassuring the 55-year old man, Kravetz was able to convince him to come outside with his hands raised, walking backwards. He was taken into custody without incident and subsequently transported to the VA Hospital in Long Beach for psychiatric evaluation.

Police searched the home and booked four rifles and ammunition into the police property room for safekeeping.

STU SAFFER

Firefighters Quest Rally benefits burn victims



Staff photo by Jennifer Welch

If you were downtown Tuesday afternoon, you may have wondered what all the fire trucks, police cars and motorcycles from other cities were going. They came down Coast Highway from Newport Beach, turned left on Forest Avenue (above) and stopped at Fire Station 1 on the way to the Irvine Spectrum.

They were part of "Firefighters Quest for Burn Survivors," a caravan that travels throughout California in the month of June. It is an annual event to raise awareness for burn survivors. Tuesday was Orange County's turn.

Dan Stefano of the Laguna Beach Firefighters Association explained, "One of the unique aspects of this event is the joint sponsorship/support from the respective fire departments and associations. The

See Fundraiser, page 3...

Sacha Tebó at Art Affair Gallery 1951

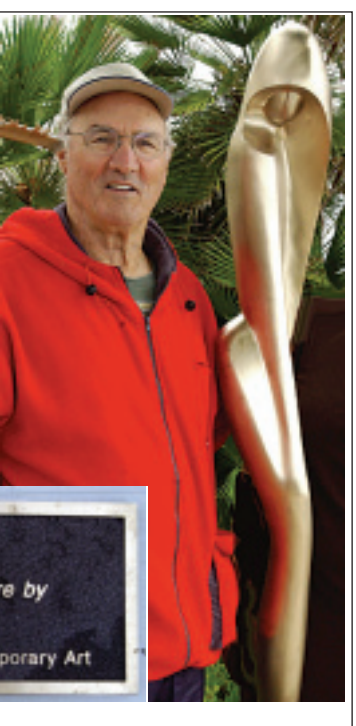


Art Affair at Gallery 1951, a gallery where artists promote artists, proudly presents Caribbean-born American artist, Sacha Tebó, who will be exhibiting his new paintings from through June 21. Meet the artist at the gallery's next First Saturday of the Month Reception at the gallery/home overlooking the ocean on June 7th from 6 - 9PM -1951/3 S. Coast Highway, 715-1842.

Working in encaustic, a hot wax-based medium, and mastering the application of this technique since the 1950's, Tebó creates horses, turtles, fish, pelicans (which he began including after his 1998 visit to Laguna's shores), boats, archetypal symbols, and the female form. They float, brightly pigmented, on luminous ground. Inscribed into the malleable color, his strong and deft use of line animates the figures, which virtually dance across his canvases.

Braslow cements

Internationally renowned sculptor Paul Braslow cemented his bronze Wednesday as part of the City of Laguna Beach rotating statue program. It was unveiled last evening and can be seen in the south part of Heisler Park behind the Inn at Laguna (211 N. Coast Highway).



Staff photos by Cliff Getz



"...hard hitting play..."

gene warech reviews...

The Secret Order at Laguna Playhouse

Page 16

Sea of Debris

2 Parts Ocean, 1 Part Plastic ...and the gap is narrowing

By RITA ROBINSON

Everything in the ocean used to be edible. Or, at least, if it was eaten, it wouldn't end up killing you. That may no longer be the case.

"The unintended consequence of our marvelous technology is accelerating at an unheard of rate," states Captain Charles Moore of the Algalita Marine Research Foundation of Long Beach. Moore, a lifelong surfer who financed and built the oceanographic research vessel Algalita, spoke to a group of ocean enthusiasts at a Surfrider meeting here last week. He compared what's happening to our ocean to drug side effects.

"It's a subterfuge. It's not on the side. We're being fooled into thinking that it's okay for sickness to go along with health. It makes the side effect acceptable because it's just 'on the side.'"

The side effect of technology Moore is referring to is the state of the Pacific Ocean, namely the contents of the sea that don't belong there. "The side effect of industrialized civilization is not on the side. It's right in the middle of our surf."

Specifically, Moore is talking about the amount of plastic in the Pacific. "The ocean is the first place to get polluted. It's downhill from everything and it's the last to get cleaned up."

Moore, a local surfer for 45 years, compares himself and other surfers to "...canaries in the coal mine. We're an

oceanographic sampling tool. They want to know the condition of the water where we wipe out, where the sewage discharges. Surfers are becoming political and we're not a team sport." Moore said it doesn't benefit surfers as a whole to

become political; they have nothing to gain as a group. "We don't need anything but a wave. But we're in the water so much we're becoming comparable to

See Plastic, page 3...

This is where we live...or is it?



Staff photo by Jennifer Welch

If anyone can tell us where "Gleeneyre" Street is, let us know - maybe that will explain how a north-south street can have an eastbound side? Just goes to show you that we all make mistakes - this paper does, the City of Laguna Beach does from time to time and maybe even you do! One thing is for sure, they are mostly harmless and definitely good for a chuckle on a gloomy June day!

News Flash! Website reconstruction successful (and no hassles from Design Review Board) - so visit us at www.lagunabeachindependent.com!

...Fundraiser, from front page

Laguna Beach Firefighters Association and the Laguna Beach Fire Department share support for this worthwhile cause. This is definitely one of those "Feel Good" contributions that any organization can make."

"Firefighters Quest for Burn Survivors" holds several fund raisers throughout each year to raise funds for those affected by burn injuries. The largest and most popular fund raiser is known as the *Quest Rally*. This

rally is a week long event where an all volunteer staff travels caravan style and visits Fire, Medical and Law Enforcement agencies throughout California. Traveling with red lights and sirens, they transport their celebrity spokespersons via emergency response apparatus.

Traveling from city to city they utilize the celebrities as human batons placing them on local jurisdictions' apparatus for a ride thru their city. In each city visited the *Quest* stops at predes-

tinated points where celebrities accept donations from the local Fire, Medical or Law Enforcement agency.

"Firefighters Quest for Burn Survivors" is a non-profit organization managed by firefighters and civilians who volunteer their services and are dedicated to assist those that have been affected by burn injuries. The organization hosts several fund raisers throughout each year in which donations are received and distributed on behalf of each donor to local burn centers and foundations as well as burn survivors and their families. Burn injuries are devastating, and the majority take a lifetime to heal.

The physical and emotional pain the victims suffer is something firefighters see on a regular basis. As a result, the organization was founded in 1996 following the Southern California Malibu Brush Fire in which six firefighters were injured due to burns received while being entrapped in a

"Firestorm". Glendale firefighter Bill Jensen received the most serious life threatening burns sustaining third degree burns to 70% of his body. After three months of surgeries, care and treatment and the miraculous efforts of those who cared for him, Bill beat the 5% chance of survival and was released from the burn center on his birthday. Today, Bill along with the other firefighters injured that day, are well on their way back to "normal" lives.

Through Bill's experience and that of other burn survivors, it has been noted that while the patients care and treatment is being managed and monitored by doctors and nurses, it is usually the families whose lives are thrown into disarray. Through the efforts of this organization, support ranges from family and patient visits to providing material and/or monetary donations to the patients and/or immediate family to assist during the critical time of recovery.

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Too Much Stuff

Stephanie Barger, the second speaker at the Surfrider meeting, feels there is a solution. And it starts with the small stuff. "You have to pick one thing," says Barger. She picked plastic bags.

The first thing we need to do, according to Barger, is reduce our usage, which means to eliminate, as much as possible, the use of plastic. "There's just too much stuff," she says. From there, she said, we need to "reuse, reuse and reuse again." And then, recycle.

"All of us in California think we're so environmentally savvy," she said. "We need to raise the bar. Most of our plastics are not recyclable" because the quality's poor to begin with. In Sweden, she continues, "each resident pays a certain amount per pound of trash." People there, she said, started to take all the packaging off the product before they bought it. This forced the stores to return the packaging to the manufacturer. When Portland, Oregon, banned styrofoam, she said Berkeley, California, followed suit.

"It only costs five to 10-cents more for an environmentally friendly product," she said. Which isn't much, she added, when you compare it to the "\$375 million spent per year by the state of California to clean up trash with \$99 million for the beaches. It's an economic issue. We're throwing away a lot of money to pick up trash."

According to Barger, it's not only an economic issue, but a health, social and business issue as well. "We need to get people to shift just a little bit," she said, which she believes will make a huge difference to our environment and our health. The solution: ask for paper bags instead of plastic, bring your own cloth bags when shopping and buy bags made from natural products such as cornstarch and soy, which are biodegradable, edible and available at most health food stores. "Plastic manufacturers shove it down our throats," she said. "We need to get to them if we're ever going to make a difference."

...Plastics, from front page

seals."

And surfers, like seals, are getting sick from the pollutants in the sea. "The only time I've been sick enough to go to the hospital is when I surfed the mouth of the San Gabriel River a few days after the La Habra sewage spill" a year ago. Moore got strept throat with the streptococcus bacteria lodging in his elbow. A few days later, he was delirious and "out of my mind" with fever from the infection. His condition was so severe and indicative of the declining condition of our sea that it made the *New York Times* in a feature on urban run-off.

Moore began serious research on plastic pollutants in the ocean when he built his research vessel in 1995 and tested it in the 1997 *TransPac*, the biennial transpacific yacht race from Palos Verdes to Honolulu. On the way back from the regatta, he woke up to his worst nightmare. "The largest landfill in the world is in the middle of the ocean," he said.

Moore is referring to the slow-moving maelstrom created by the Mid-Pacific Gyre, the circular California-Japan current. The "Great Pacific Garbage Patch," as it's acerbically known, is "roughly the size of the ozone hole, which is about 11 million square miles, or the size of Africa," said Moore. The highest concentration of trash was found in the patch's two eyes, which, together, cover an area the size of the continental U.S.

"For every one pound of zooplankton (animal plankton that feeds on phytoplankton or plant plankton, the first form of plant growth from which all sea life is derived), we found six pounds of plastic," he said. Bottles, bottle caps, toothbrushes, the ubiquitous styrofoam cup, fishing floats and, of course, plastic bags of every sort floating in the middle of the sea, miles from nowhere. "The ocean is filling up with trash."

PLASTIC SOUP

"This marine food web winds up in people," Moore said. The bad part is petroleum-based

plastic, also known as polymers, attracts PCB's, DDT, and nonylphenols, oily toxins that don't dissolve in saltwater, and becomes a biotoxin. "If we could turn off the plastic switch by magic, the side effects of plastic would still be showing up 30 to 40 years from now."

Specifically, the side effect for humans could be sterilization, according to the research of Dr. Michael Baker, a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Diego, who is featured in a video presentation Moore showed the group called *Our Synthetic Sea*. The side effect of ingesting PCB's from eating fish or shellfish is endocrine disruption, according to Baker, which blocks the production of hormones.

Because the monomers, the toxins attached to the plastic pieces, are estrogenic, they replace estrogen, the hormone responsible for the development of ovaries in the animal, including the human animal, that ingests them, Baker states, adding, "we're a small family of animals on this planet. With the side effect of ingesting estrogenic plastic, in a few generations, human beings may not be able to reproduce." Because of the endocrine-disrupting nurdles are pervasive and ubiquitous, said Baker, everything in the ocean is becoming feminine, which means reproduction could eventually stop.

"You have to look at the small stuff," says Moore, specifically nurdles. Nurdles are tiny beads of plastic from which all plastic is made. It's what every piece of plastic breaks down to, but it never goes away. They form the basic component of styrofoam, which Moore describes as "not only the bane of the beach but of the ocean."

Plastic doesn't biodegrade, it photodegrades, which means the sun breaks it down into smaller and smaller pieces, says Moore, but, no matter how small, they're still too tough for anything to digest. These plastic polymers resemble krill, which is what fish eat. "Nurdles," according to Moore,

"never go away. Soon we'll have beaches full of nurdles instead of sand."

We need to make up for our "bad behavior," according to Moore, but he's not sure it's possible. "I'm all bad news. There's no ownership. No one takes responsibility for this. The ocean will try to spit it out but we're pumping it in so fast she can't spit it out fast enough. The problem is accelerating and getting worse faster and faster."

Moore's not talking about over the last 10 years, five years or even one year. "It's gotten worse in the last 10 weeks. The line on the graph showing the rate of plastic consumption is almost straight up now. It's plastic seduction." Moore says he's not optimistic for any kind of change in consumption. He believes "the average American is kind of glad we're losing

because they don't have to worry. We'd be taking away their convenience and comfort and they're threatened.

"Our fixes are very expensive for our mistakes," he adds. "We're not able to afford it. We're going to be scraping for

survival." Of the 75 billion tons of plastic produced each year, only three percent is reused in recyclable material, according to Moore. "There's no such thing as good plastic. Polymer accumulates forever."

...Act V, from front page

to construction would delay the completion because the City would be required to amend the local coastal plan and go to the Coastal Commission. The City suggests that would delay construction from 9 to 18 months.

Public hearings would be the project would be in Santa Ana, the county seat. That is the complaint of those favoring prior annexation.

Baglin said he believes there will be lawsuits and/or a "...citizen's initiative..." started to block the project.

Councilman Steve Dicterow indicated that he would agree in the future to entertain the possibility of requiring that the project be "...subject to City rules..." while the property remains part of the County.

City restrictions would be more stringent than County requirements and it can be assumed that a Laguna Beach stamp of approval (if it were to occur) would stream easily through the County process.

Stu Saffer

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HEALTH SCREAM

June 6, 2003

"Big"

A good quick fix for being overweight is big clothes. Collecting an oversize wardrobe gives you some breathing room while you ponder the myriad of weight loss diets, tricks, hot items and scams. After all, the simplest program for dealing with ninety percent of obesity is juggling calories in, calories out with diet and exercise. But that approach doesn't sell books or nostrums. It's free, and therefore doesn't work.

If you buy big clothes, you have at least taken the first step in dealing with the problem. Either you will grow into them and stop looking funny, or you will shrink back into your old favorite clothes when your program yields results. You can't lose. Your wife and friends will constantly be telling you how much thinner you look, and even you will begin to believe it.

If you carry extra weight with normal blood pressure and blood lipids the condition is more cosmetic than pathological. If over or under weight is affecting your health, see your doctor before heading to the haberdasher.

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