



an insider look at city hall

CITYWATCH

CITYWIDE EDITION

April 3, 2006
Volume 4 Issue 13

CityWatch Today-This issue in a word: Timely.

The Education and Neighborhoods Committee will conclude their work on the NC Review ... or 912 ... Commission next week. On Pg 2, Brady Westwater attempts to handicap the result.

Immigration protests by thousands of LA school kids dominated headlines the past few days. James Preston Allen provides a think piece.

And, the independent audit is in on the DWP and the Encino NC President, Vice President and Treasurer step down. We've got it covered.



All of that and more. We hope you find it helpful and provocative.

Thank you for stopping by.

--Editor

Say What?

“Reforming our public schools is not only the central challenge facing cities like Los Angeles—it’s the civil rights issue of our time.”

**--Antonio Villaraigosa
Los Angeles Mayor**



NC Watch

Encino NC Officers Resign After Failed Attempt to Remove a Member

David Lowell

Three Encino Neighborhood Council officers resigned last week after their attempt to remove a board member was determined by the City Attorney to be illegal.

The Board President, Vice President and Treasurer, at an Encino Board Special Meeting, accused a board member of harassing people at Lake Balboa Park and led an effort to have that member tossed. It is illegal, the City Attorney ruled, for any Neighborhood Council to remove an elected board member on the purely subjective opinion that that member was acting in a manner detrimental to the Council.



Their action, according to some observers, appeared to be the culmination of an ongoing controversy. The same trio of officers led a movement a year ago to change the Councils bylaws to remove two of the boards “selected,” as opposed to elected, seats and failed. Those two selected seats belonged to long standing homeowner organizations. The third, which was to be left intact, belonged to the Chamber of Commerce. What they tried to do, one board member said, generated a lot of hostility and division.

See Page 9. “Encino Officers Resign”

Perspective

Mayor Appears to Like Neighborh’d Councils ... In Their Place.

Mayor’s staff reverses DONE promise. Puts lid on LANCC

The body is still warm. Greg Nelson hasn’t cleaned out his desk yet. But already, it appears, the Mayor’s people have taken over the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

**By
Ken Draper**

With orders from the Mayor’s office, soon-to-be Interim DONE General Manager, Lisa Sarno, told the fledgling NC Congress they were off the program of the June 17 Congress of Neighborhoods. The decision reversed a commitment to the NC group, by Nelson, that they could not only be on the program, but would have whatever time and space they needed.

The decision is loaded with irony. The Mayor has touted himself as a fan of LA’s neighborhoods. The LA NC Congress (LANCC) is the outgrowth of a USC-facilitated workshop at the October 2004 Congress of Neighborhoods ... scheduled and arranged by DONE. And, of course, the LANCC formation group was on the program, and offering presentations all day, at the last DONE Congress a year ago.

See Page 8. “Perspective”

CityWatch Op & Ed

Insight

Handicapping the 912 Commission Race

By Brady Westwater

The 'who' and the 'how' of the commission that will review the entire Neighborhood Council system will be decided by the City Council on April 21. Some design is scheduled to exit the Education and Neighborhoods Committee on April 11. Here's how I handicap the look of that commission.



Here are the proposals in the race: The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners has asked that the Mayor have the sole authority to appoint five people – with a preference for out of area academics with no first hand knowledge of the system. The Mayor's office has asked that the Council and the Mayor appoint the commissioners with no direct input from the NCs. E & N Committee Chair Alex Padilla, has suggested that the Mayor and the Council appoint and that Neighborhood Councils be allowed to select one commissioner from each of the city's seven planning districts.

Padilla's Concept Has an Edge

Since both the City and the NCs are going to be reviewed – having a commission selected by only the city itself is clearly unfair and such a commission would not have any credibility with the Neighborhood Councils. And, obviously, the idea of having out of the area academics review a system they have no first hand knowledge of – is going to go... nowhere. This is why I think that Padilla will get support from both Janice Hahn and Jose Huizar, the other two members of the E & N Committee, for his idea to have seven representatives directly selected by NCs to then be appointed by the Mayor at the June 17 Congress of Neighborhoods.

See Page 9. "Handicapping 912"

Greg Nelson

One of the Most Creative People I Know

By Mark Siegel

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Reading the tributes to Greg Nelson brought to mind the friendship we have maintained over the years. He gave me my first City Hall job in 1981, as a Council Aide to Joel Wachs. I was working with tenants on rent control and condo conversion ordinances. Four years later he took his first retirement and I took his desk. Four years after that, I was ready to leave and talked Greg into coming back to Joel's staff. So he hired me and I returned the favor and hired him.

Greg is one of the most creative people I know. He does not think outside the box, because there is no box in his mind. His ideas know no boundaries. He is tireless in his pursuit for solutions to city problems. That became evident to all, during the first year, after he was appointed by Mayor Hahn to replace Rosiland Stewart. He would work 18-20 hours a day seven days a week building his department. He has a keen sense of politics and is adept at finding common ground between those with opposing points of view.

He was always encouraging with the projects I became involved with: The formation of the Citywide Alliance and City Watch. I wish him the best of luck and good health and am confident that he will find something to get over-involved in. *(Mark Siegel was the founder and first Editor of CityWatch.)* ■

CITYWATCH

The E-Newsletter for LA's NC's

April 3, 2006

Volume 4 Issue 13

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CityWatch Op & Ed-2

GuestWords

Teach the Children Well

By James Preston Allen



There has been a lot of public hand wringing lately by the "Authorities" over public school students choosing to walkout of classes in protest of the anti-immigration bill HR-4437 sponsored by Sensenbrenner and King in the US Congress. Even Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has proclaimed that the truancy laws will be fully enforced, with punishments and fines meted out to those who skip-out on school to exercise their essential right of "redress of grievances." This seems odd considering he was once the leader of the local American Civil Liberties Union, the infamous ACLU, which is sworn to protect the civil liberties of all citizens with the first amendment being the most cherished. Antonio took part in the historic 1968 student walkout that is now the subject of an HBO film, directed by Edward James Olmos. The police, politicians and school administrators have taken an awkward at best hard-line on this because they lose their State ADA (average daily attendance) funding with every child missing from role call. This, however, is cloaked in the acceptable parental concerns of safety (and perhaps) civility of these demonstrations, but what comes first?

Learning Responsible Dissent

UTLA president AJ Duffy takes the two prong approach saying, that the teachers union, "Applauds the students who are participating in civil disobedience in protest... [what] the students are doing is an activity as American as the Constitution." However in the next breath he says that the students taking to the streets are, "a threat to the safety of students and our city." And I would add to the authority of the school to maintain discipline controls, which at best seems somewhat tenuous, on a daily basis.



These protests are straight from the heart, passionate responses, to the oppressions of a government gone wrongly out of control with little or no checks and balances to what is either right or fair or ultimately Constitutional, and the students have every right and liberty to protest. Not only do the school districts or the city or anyone else not have the right to prevent them. I would argue that they don't have the right to determine the time or place of such demonstrations, except when it comes to pedestrian safety laws and violence. These are the laws that the authorities should be enforcing, *not truancy*. Why? Because safety of our students is important and we should teach them how to safely organize and protest for political redress, that's what responsible elders would do.

However, the authorities will take every opportunity when confronted with an assault on their reason for being, to squash dissent, even to the extent of enlisting the Unions and the press, like the *Daily Breeze*, to quell it! It is

See Page 12. "Teach the Children"

Legal Tips

Whose Fence?

Q: No one knows who built the fence between my home and my neighbor's, or when. We both thought it was our boundary.

Recently, he hired an engineer who said the fence is a foot inside his property line. My neighbor insists I move it back a foot. That will force me to dig up my roses. Can he force me to do that after all these years?

A: He can probably force you to move the fence, if you accept his survey. Before hiring a contractor, consider obtaining your own survey. Not all engineers reach the same conclusions.

If you eventually do move the fence, perhaps you can induce your neighbor to share the cost. It would be a neighborly thing to do.

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Water Rate Increase

Long Awaited DWP Audit In; NCs Now on the Clock

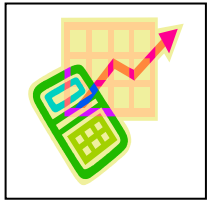
By Sara Epstein

The long-awaited independent audit of DWP's financials has finally arrived. The review was done by Barrington-Wellesley Group and is now required whenever the Department of Water and Power wants to propose a rate increase. The City Council action establishing that requirement was part of the fallout from the Neighborhood Council-DWP agreement (MOU).



Also part of the NC/DWP MOU is the requirement that NCs be given 90-days to study, act on and then advise the department on any proposed rate increase. That 90-day opportunity kicked in on April 4.

The MOU Oversight Committee, the NC Congress ... and now the DONE, as a result of a motion introduced on April 5 by Councilwoman Jan Perry ... will facilitate hearings and one-on-one meetings with the DWP to help Neighborhood Councils try to grasp the BWB report and



DWP's rationale for the proposed increases.

DWP has asked for water rate increases of 3.9%, effective July 1 of this year and a 3.5% increase beginning July 1, 2007.

As one Oversight Committee member noted, "Time is now of the essence for Councils and it is important that, after all of the work on the MOU, they weigh in whether they oppose ... or support ... the increase."

(Info: CityWatch will provide a brief analysis of the BWG Review and the proposed increase in upcoming issues. The independent audit and the DWP response can be read and/or downloaded from the LADWP website: www.LADWP.com. CityWatch, the NC Congress and the Oversight Committee will keep you informed of upcoming hearings and meetings.) ▣

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We've Got Mail 

Holding Successful NC Elections Like Hitting Moving Target

Add the Hollywood United, Central Hollywood and DowntownLA Neighborhood Councils to your list of delayed elections. (*"Election Glitches-CityWatch March 27."*) And all have had multiple elections before.

NC elections have now become as easy and understandable as trying to hit a moving target with changing rules, in the dark, after a St. Patrick's Day Happy Hour.

(Or maybe the reasons we entered Iraq are clearer).

--Russell Brown
DLANC and HUNC

◆◆◆

Thinking Retro

I was at that Hollywood United board meeting. (*"Holly NC Changes Mind"-CityWatch-March 27.*) What a bunch of retro thinking. I especially liked that board member comment, I don't care about LAX—unless I'm flying. Hello!

LAX expansion, street closures, trash removal, cheaper housing, high water rates are local matters even though the fact that they affect all LA neighborhoods makes them citywide issues. Hard to grasp? I don't think so.

There was a lady there concerned about street closures because she had a small business and these constant closures are costing her money. Most street closures in Hollywood are citywide issues. Guess who asks for those closures? Do they think that the only people in the city bothered by closing down Hollywood or Highland have businesses in Hollywood?

This is Stone Age thinking by people who forgotten what the Charter reformers were thinking when they created Neighborhood Councils.

--Keith Bright
Hancock Park

◆◆◆

A Council Divided?

Regarding the Westchester Playa del Rey election (*"Election Glitches"-CityWatch-March 27*), this is less about DONE vs. the Council Board and more about the Chamber gang vs. the homeowner gang.

--Name withheld on request



CITYWATCH DayPlanner

WEEK OF APRIL 3, 2006



City Council

April 4, 5, 7 (10 a.m.)
City Hall (Council Chamber)

Education & Neighborhoods-Special

Wednesday, April 5 (3 p.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1070)

◆ 912 Commission—Final discussion before April 11 deadline.

NC/Planning MOU

Saturday, April 8 (10 a.m.)
DWP Bldg
Hope & First Streets

DWP Commission

Tuesday, April 4 (1:30p)
DWP Building (Rm 1555-H)
Hope & First Streets

◆ Presentation of independent audit results

PLUM

Tuesday, April 4 (2 p.m.)
City Hall (Rm 350)

Human Relations Commission

Thursday, April 6 (10 a.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1060)

OTHER

CD 4 Community Congress

Thursday, April 6 (5:30 p.m.)
LA Zoo (Witherbee Auditorium)

◆ Planning Director Gail Goldberg first appearance

Proposed-Central Region High School #14

Wednesday, April 5 (6 p.m.)
Mt Vernon Middle School Auditorium
4066 West 17th St

◆ Site selection update meeting

Landmark THIS Workshop

Saturday, April 8 (10 a.m.)
National Cntr Preservation of Democracy
111N Central Ave

◆ Put on by LA Conservancy—Learn how to protect important historic sites in your community



CITYWATCH SuperPlanner

NC Review Commission PROPOSED TIMELINE

| <u>Action</u> | <u>Latest Date</u> |
|---|--------------------------|
| E&N Cmte Mtg | April 5, 2006 |
| <i>Committee to (1) finalize details relative to the commission's submission of its initial and final reports with recommendations; and (2) finalize the appointment process and commission composition</i> | |
| Approved by E&N Committee | Apr 11, 2006 |
| <i>Committee to (1) finalize all aspects of the charter-mandated 912 Commission and move the entire matter to City Council.</i> | |
| Vote/Approval by City Council | Apr 21, 2006 |
| <i>(Allow for first and second read) April 28</i> | |
| Ord Signed by Mayor | April 25/26, 2006 |
| <i>May 1 or 2</i> | |
| Ord Publication Date | April 27, 2006 |
| <i>(Must be published in local newspaper for 1 day)</i> | |
| Ord Effective Date | May 29, 06 |
| Appointments to Commission | June 23, 06 |

FUTURES

Education & Neighborhoods

April 11
City Hall

◆ NC Review Commission

LA Housing Dept/Rent Adjustment Com

Thursday, April 13 (12 n)

Hearing Room
1200 West 7th Street (Ste 100)

◆ Discussion: Reduction of rent where there is a reduction of services

North Hills West Arts & Crafts Fair

Sunday, April 22 (10a-5p)

VA Campus
16111 Plummer Street

Admission Free

Details: NorthhillswestNC@aol.com

Note: Valley Alliance April 13 Canceled.



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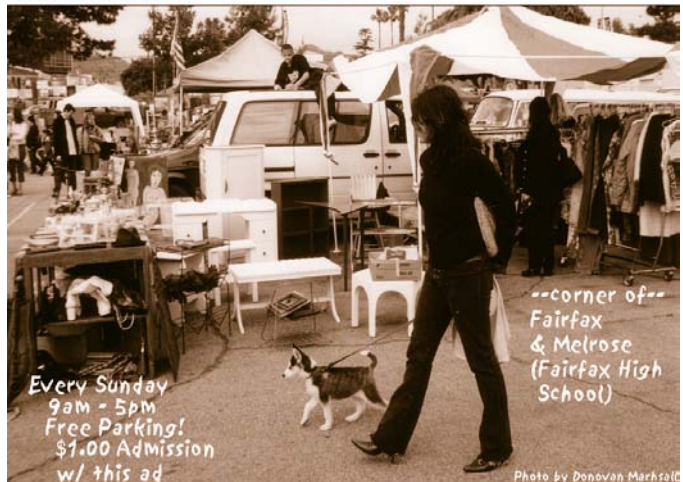
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-New Times BEST OF LA

"LA's Hottest Scene!"
-Los Angeles Magazine

The Melrose Trading Post
Antiques & Collectibles Market



CityWatch 2006 Assignments

- ◆ The NC Congress Liability Debate
The views and the passion
- ◆ Independent Audit/
DWP Rate Increase
CityWatch provides some answers
- ◆ Protecting LA's Animal Population
One of the day's sexy issues
- ◆ Top Six Requirements
for Running the DONE
CityWatch offers a job description
- ◆ The Best LA City Council Ever?
Our panel and our readers have opinions

Next CityWatch:

April 10 ...

...ON A COMPUTER NEAR YOU

Need to Know

Consideration of the
"LADWP Revenue Requirements Study"
(Barrington Wellesley independent audit)

Board of Water & Power Commissioners

Tuesday, April 4 (1:30 p.m.)
DWP Building (Rm 1555-H)
Hope & First Streets

(The NC/DWP MOU prompted the City Council to require this independent audit before the DWP can propose a rate increase. The DWP is proposing increases in water rates of 3.9% and 3.5%, over two years, beginning September 1, 2006. In accordance with the NC/DWP MOU, Neighborhood Councils have 90 days to consider, act upon and advise on any proposed rate increase. That 90 days begins April 4.)



Need to Know

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

“COMMUNITY PARKING PILOT PROJECT”

**Thursday, April 13 (89:30 a.m.)
City Hall (Rm 1010)**



Adv

LANCC Status Report

The LA Neighborhood Council Congress membership continues to grow at the rate of a little more than a council a week. There are now 38.

The following Neighborhood Councils have joined the LANCC as of April 3.

- Arroyo Seco
- Atwater Village
- Bel Air Beverly Crest
- Canoga Park
- Central San Pedro
- Coastal San Pedro
- Del Rey
- Downtown Los Angeles
- Encino
- Granada Hills North
- Grass Roots Venice
- Greater Echo Park Elysian
- Greater Griffith Park
- Harbor Gateway South
- Historic Cultural
- Historic Highland Park
- Mar Vista
- Mid City WEST
- Mid-Town North Hollywood
- North Hills West
- Northwest San Pedro
- Northridge West
- Pacoima
- Pico Union
- Reseda
- Silver Lake
- South Robertson
- Studio City
- Tarzana
- United Neighborhoods
- Valley Village
- West Hills
- West Los Angeles
- West Van Nuys / Lake Balboa
- Westchester / Playa del Rey
- Westside
- Winnetka
- Woodland Hills-Warner Center



Conserve Water and Save Money!

**Los Angeles Department of
Water and Power Offers
Water Conservation Rebates***

**Get Cash Back When You Buy
and Install in Your Home:**

- Ultra-Low Flush Toilet for a rebate of up to \$100
- High-Efficiency Clothes Washer for a rebate of \$150



**When you conserve water,
you lower your utility bill,
and preserve water resources
for the future.**



For more information,
LADWP customers should call the Rebate Program Direct Line at (800) 203-7380. Get more water tips at www.ladwp.com and also at www.bewaterwise.com.



Los Angeles Department of Water & Power

**We're Working for LA!
Water for Life, Power to LA**

*This program is available to eligible LADWP residential customers. Restrictions apply. Before making a purchase, get the rebate program guidelines online. Go to www.ladwp.com, then click on Rebates and Programs.

CITYWATCH:KNOWMORE

Perspective-From Page 1

Mayor Appears to Like Councils .. In Their Place

To be fair, after pulling the rug completely, the Mayor's people did capitulate. They offered the LANCC a room for the June 17 affair. But no more. No mention on the program or in the advance literature, as before. No announcement in the main room. No table space on the main corridor, as before. Leaving pretty much a stealth appearance as the lone option. Looking to some, like an attempt to put a lid on the upstart NC Congress. Sarno told the LANCC representative she wasn't authorized to provide more.

Which, of course, begs the questions: Not authorized by whom? And, why?

One answer, provided by Sarno, was that the DONE wanted to appear even-handed. Yet, the practice of allowing wide and diverse participation ... the Citywide Alliance, the Gay and Lesbian Caucus are examples ... hasn't been a problem at any of the first eight or 10 Congresses.

Because the Mayor loves neighborhoods doesn't mean he likes Neighborhood Councils

Then there was the suggestion from the Mayor's staff that the LANCC does not represent all of the Neighborhood Councils. Neither, of course, did the Gay and Lesbian Caucus or the Citywide Alliance or numerous other issues and groups on previous Congress of Neighborhood programs.

And, of course, neither did the respondents to the Mayor's Budget Process, the results of which were touted by the Mayor as a citywide NC consensus. Only 20 Neighborhood Councils took any board action on the Mayor's budget. Only 466 NC board members returned surveys. Compare that to 38 board actions to establish the current membership in the NC Congress ... involving over 700 board members. So, what's really going on here?

Seems Out of Character

The move by the Mayor's representatives, and DONE, seemed out of character for this Mayor. Antonio Villaraigosa was publicly proud of the fact that he had visited most of LA's neighborhoods during his campaign. He has spoken at both the Citywide and Valley Neighborhood Council Alliances and at some Neighborhood Council meetings. He has publicly told NCs that he supports the funding they receive and the work they do.

Hard to believe as well, that this Mayor would be trying to muzzle Neighborhood Councils. He was, after all, the President once of the ACLU of Southern California.

This Mayor was a union organizer in another life. One would expect a healthy respect then, from this Mayor, for the grassroots organizing that symbolizes the NC movement. So, again, what's really going on here?

Mayor Doesn't Know

One high-level source in the Villaraigosa administration says the Mayor doesn't know what his staff is doing. Staff are making these decisions believing they are serving the Mayor's interests. That's one opinion.

Marc Haefele, columnist for LA Alternative News suggests that because Villaraigosa loves neighborhoods doesn't mean he likes Neighborhood Councils. This is not a leader who cottons to too much dissent and has no affinity for things he cannot control.

Haefele says he's beginning to suspect that the Mayor "may not like these little panels. To a strong, populist mayor, empowerment starts with him."

See next column

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From previous column

From a former Villaraigosa campaign worker comes yet another thought. "This Mayor is a control freak," she offers, "and, things that he can't control become an issue or a threat. He can't control this new congress so staff will make an effort to contain them or to remove the threat."

There are some who believe that the appointment of Sarno to the Assistant GM position at the DONE, was an attempt by the Mayor to control that department. They also suggest it was the reason for Greg Nelson's decision to leave.

NCs are a Resource

As some City Councilmembers have discovered, Neighborhood Councils can be an important and strategic resource. As popular and powerful as this Mayor has become, it's hard to imagine him perceiving them as a threat. Even the NC Congress. Pests maybe. But not a threat.

It's more likely that the Mayor sees Neighborhood Councils as a necessary but minor burden. That he even likes these Councils ... in their place.

Deputy Mayor Larry Frank is quoted by Haefele: "There is a significant role for Neighborhood Councils." The problem is that Neighborhood Councils and the Administration have different visions of what that role is and how "significant" it should be. The odds are that some of these recent actions by the Mayor's staff are an attempt to help NCs revise their vision. And, to discover their place.

□□□

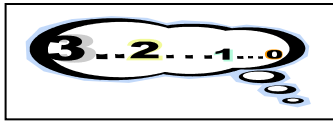
Encino Officers Resign-From Page 1

The Encino Board was scheduled to hold a Special Meeting Wednesday to elect replacements for those who stepped down.

■ ■ ■

Signs of Life Again for NC's Council File # Proposal

The Council File Number Issue is wending its way through the system. Word is that it is set for the Rules and Elections Committee agenda on Wednesday, April 12 at 3 p.m.



Best inside estimates are that it will get through the Committee, which is chaired by Council President, Eric Garcetti, and stands a fair chance of getting City Council approval. What is not clear, is what form it will ultimately take.

The key to passing, and the main issue from early on, is how many "Seconds," or co-signors, the bill will require. Most City Council members favor a higher number ... say 10 to 20 ... than most Neighborhood Councils which tend to support numbers in the three to seven range.

More than 45 Neighborhood Councils have submitted Community Impact Statements supporting the right for NCs to request a Council File Number.

■ ■ ■

LANCC Meeting: From Clean \$\$ to Elephant Rights

The NC Congress Senate met and took on ranging issues from Clean Money to the treatment of elephants at the LA Zoo.

Among the meeting results: a) A motion to urge NC boards to consider taking a stand on the Clean Money the campaign finance reform issue); b) Assigned the coordination of the independent audit and DWP water rate increase information to the Communications Committee; c) Discussed the 912 Commission; d) Heard a presentation on the need to save the elephants at the LA Zoo.

Next LANCC Senate meeting: May 6. For meeting minutes or other info: www.LANCCongress.org ■

Handicapping 912-From Page 2

I suspect the commission will end up with seven members from the NCs, 15 from the Council and two to four from the Mayor for a total of 24 to 26 members. One year seems to be the consensus on the commission's working term.

Wide-ranging Scope

As for the scope of the commission, the draft handed out at the last E & N committee meeting called for a full review of every aspect of the system and every department of the city – and not just the Neighborhood Councils. I expect the E & N committee and City Council will also agree with that.

Those are my picks in the 912 Commission race. But, as any good handicapper will tell you, you have to watch out for the long shots. My advice to Neighborhood Councils: There's still time to let your voice be heard. Don't leave any room for a long shot. In person on the 5th or the 11th, or with a Community Impact Statement, get your advice on the record. (Brady Westwater is a writer and sometime contributor to CityWatch.) ■



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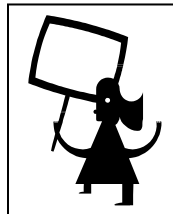
Teach the Children Well-From Page 3

perhaps too forward thinking, but perhaps not, to suggest that UTLA and the progressive unions of the Harbor Area be enlisted to actually teach our students *how to protest*. They are uniquely qualified to do so. Our schools should take this specific point in history to diverge from the State mandated straight-jacket-curriculum to teach a course on living history, using the life and works of such historic figures as Henry David Thoreau, Gandhi, Mother Jones, Upton Sinclair, Harry Bridges, Martin Luther King and obviously Caesar Chavez on whose birthday the protests started. Offer the students a place on every campus to organize and assemble peaceably, to speak out uncensored on their issues of dissent and to promote the legitimate uses of democracy rather than have them blindly utter the pledge of allegiance every morning without having a clue to the meaning of "liberty and justice for all."

*James Preston Allen
Is the Publisher of
Random Lengths News*

Clearly these student protesters made a few mistakes in pursuing their right to dissent and they should be taught, not tormented, for their actions practicing civil disobedience against an oppressive regime. But just like the student who has never taken a class in trigonometry, you can't expect them to pass the first test in that subject no matter how hard they try. So, we as the parents, elders, mentors and leaders of this community should teach our children, in both words and actions, the meaning of responsible dissent. Every day in school, they get lessons in how to obey instructions. However well-intentioned, however important the subject matter, these are lessons suited to an authoritarian culture. How often do they get lessons in democracy? In self-organization, self-direction and self-governance?

The LAPD for the most part did a reasonable job in trying to keep our young people safe without causing bigger enforcement problems, the Sheriffs were less so, but both should have declined, on legal grounds, to cite demonstrators for truancy. Our schools could have immediately called in teachers to monitor these wildcat demonstrations, possibly even taking attendance and urging students to maintain safe and orderly conduct. They could have laid the foundation, out in the streets, for deeply engaging discussions when classes resume. They could even have given out homework assignments, studying the 1968 Walkouts or writing a paper comparing their own demonstrations with those going on simultaneously in Paris, or perhaps even how this compares to the Boston Tea Party. The walkouts we're witnessing are the ultimate "teachable moment," and unfortunately, once again, our schools and those who preside over them have failed to recognize and take advantage of a tremendous gift, misperceiving it as a threat. And that, unfortunately, is the lesson the authorities are teaching: we see your thirst for democracy and self-determination as a threat.



It's time to help these young people learn the lessons of empowerment through democratic self-determination and political action—it's something we should remind all our leaders, particularly our President—that liberty starts at home. (*James Preston Allen is Publisher of Random Lengths News – www.RandomLengthNews.com.*) ▣

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