

FREE

# Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

## LOTTO

### SUPER LOTTO PLUS

13, 11, 3, 33, 16  
Meganumber: 11  
Jackpot: \$13 million

**FANTASY 5**  
20, 22, 24, 28, 34

**DAILY 3**  
Afternoon picks: 1, 9, 7  
Evening picks: 9, 6, 8

**DAILY DERBY**  
1st Place: 07 Eureka  
2nd Place: 11 Money Bags  
3rd Place: 03 Hot Shot  
Race Time: 1:40.07



### NEWS OF THE WEIRD by Chuck Shepard

■ **Cardinal Rules, Broken:** (1) Don't Carry Around the Holdup Note: Christopher Alexander Fields, 42, was charged in Hillsborough, N.C., in January after police found him acting suspicious in front of a Central Carolina Bank branch. The only real evidence of his intention was a note in his backpack reading "I want \$10,000 in \$100 bills. Don't push no buttons, or I'll shot (sic) you." (2) If You're Paying With Counterfeit Money, Pay and Go: Anthony Lee Lamb, 20, and two alleged accomplices were arrested in Berea, Ky., in March after Lamb paid for a meal at a McDonald's and then sat down to eat it, thus giving the manager a chance to examine Lamb's \$20 bill more carefully.



### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"You're not drunk if you can lie on the floor without holding on."

— Dean Martin



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Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

**Locanda del Lago executive chef Davide Vedovelli on Wednesday directs high school students Regan Baumarten, Jessa Sidlo, Ayla Raro, Barry Taft and Sklyar Nathanson (not pictured), on how to fill homemade ravioli. The culinary lesson was part of a student field trip.**

## Chef adds a pinch of flavor to Samohi menu

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON  
Daily Press Staff Writer

**PROMENADE** — High school students have learned a new word in biology class — "slowcook."

It sums up the lost experience of cooking and eating together — a rarity for many families these days. That's why Santa Monica High School teacher Eileen Hiss took 20 of her students to Italian restaurant Locanda del Lago at the corner of Arizona Avenue and the Third Street Promenade on Wednesday.

She wanted them to see firsthand what it means to share a culinary experience with each other. Together, with the help of Lago's executive chef, Davide Vedovelli, the students made their own pesto ravioli from

See EATS, page 6

## Backed into a corner, city finds cash for schools

Controversial charter amendment averted

BY JOHN WOOD  
Daily Press Staff Writer

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS** — Local school supporters abandoned their campaign for an unprecedented amendment to the city charter Tuesday after elected officials narrowly agreed to back a compromise that will guarantee \$6 million a year to the school district.

Before casting the deciding vote in favor of the compromise, City Councilwoman Pam O'Connor demanded school leaders do a better job of financial reporting. She also lashed out against district offi-

cials and members of the Community for Excellent Public Schools, the group that drafted the proposed charter amendment.

City Council members felt CEPS backed them into a corner with its ultimatum — either increase funding voluntarily, or be forced to by the charter amendment.

"Frankly, I have a lack of confidence," O'Connor said. "I have a lack of confidence in the leadership of the school district and the so-called advocates of public education ... The school yard bully's approach to public policy is one of using misrepresentations and threats. It's one that says, 'Hey, extortion is a way to make policy.'"

See CEPS, page 5



## CITY HALL: DOLLARS & SENSE

A month-long series examining Santa Monica City Hall finances

## Gov. reaches accord with local officials

SM stands to lose \$2.7M in revenue next year

BY JOHN WOOD  
Daily Press Staff Writer

**CITY HALL** — Officials here reacted with "cautious optimism" Wednesday to a proposal unveiled by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger intended to spare local governments from the state budget ax.

The agreement — reached between Gov. Schwarzenegger and local officials from around the state — proposes protections for California's cities and counties, but allows for the state to hold onto \$2.6 billion in local revenues over the next two years.

"Sacramento looks to local government as the fall guy."

— SUSAN MCCARTHY  
City Manager

For Santa Monica, that means losing an estimated \$2,716,305 in the coming fiscal year and the same amount in 2005-2006, according to an analysis performed by the California League of Cities. In 2007, Santa Monica will receive an estimated "back-

See BUDGET, page 6

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**LOCAL**



# District will be held accountable for extra cash

BUDGET, from page 1

So the CEPS school yard bullies — the leaders — their ethics are grounded in the ends justifying the means. They threaten an illegal charter amendment. They start ugly name calling, pitting the merits of school teachers against police and fire, school janitors versus city sanitation workers. That's how school yard bullies do it and that's what the CEPS folks have been doing."

**THE NEW DEAL**

The agreement, which was hashed out behind closed doors, calls upon City Hall to give local schools at least \$6 million annually for the next five years, and significantly more if the economy blossoms. The charter amendment would have lasted indefinitely, and likely forced larger donations.

In presenting the compromise to the City Council, City Manager Susan McCarthy — who negotiated the details with John Deasy, superintendent of schools — said both sides made significant concessions. School interests gave up indefinite funding that likely would have continually increased, while City Hall interests agreed to hand over the money without designating a new revenue source, something they'd pushed for.

"Negotiations are, by their nature, a delicate business and these discussions were intense," McCarthy said. "I can tell you that absent goodwill on both sides and the prospect of economic recovery for Santa Monica, an agreement might not have come to fruition. Compromise was essential on both sides."

Five members of the public spoke on the compromise, including Deasy, current and former school board members, and a representative for City Hall workers, who adamantly opposed the school charter amendment. Union representatives feared that by forcing City Hall to give \$6 million annually to the district, it would have translated into layoffs and cutbacks in services. All groups urged the council to accept the alternative compromise.

**CLOSE VOTE AFTER ALL**

With City Councilman Bob Holbrook out of town and City Councilman Kevin McKeown unable to vote because he works for the school district, there were only five eligible voters. In order to pass, the compromise needed at least four votes.

City Councilman Ken Genser and Mayor Richard Bloom responded to O'Connor's arguments, agreeing the charter amendment was poorly thought out, but praised CEPS leaders for having good intentions and using the democratic process to realize their goals.

City Councilman Herb Katz said the alternative wasn't ideal, but it was the best the two agencies could do after a "long haul" — discussions started six months ago.

Those comments apparently weren't enough to win the support of City Councilman Mike Feinstein, who declined to vote. Feinstein said he couldn't bring himself to vote against the compromise because it would mean voting against students. But Feinstein also didn't vote for the compromise, which he called the result of "slash and burn politics."

"I feel ripped off by this agreement," Feinstein told his colleagues. "This is a complete contradiction of how we've done business in this community."

**FOLLOW THE MONEY**

Under the agreement, City Hall will double for the next five years the \$3 million it gives annually to the school district in ongoing funds, with a 2 percent to 4 percent annual adjustment based on inflation. The agreement also include loopholes for extraordinary circumstances, and options for both sides to reassess and renew the deal through 2014.

A group of school and city leaders will meet in January 2007 to reassess the agreement. That group will decide whether to adjust the base funding by \$1 million, at most.

In making that determination, officials will look at the "big eight" revenue generators, including property tax, sales tax, utility users tax, transient occupancy tax, business licenses tax, real property transfer tax, parking facilities tax, and fines and forfeitures.

If the cumulative growth of the big eight exceeds inflation growth by 4 percent in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 combined — and exceeds 1.25 percent in both years — the group will discuss adjusting the base payment by an additional three-fourths of 1 percent of big eight revenues, up to \$1 million.

If growth doesn't meet those levels or declines, the group will discuss whether base payments should be increased anyway, held constant, or reduced by a maximum of \$1 million, according to the agreement. They also will consider whether to withhold inflation adjustments.

In what's dubbed extraordinary circumstances — where big eight revenue shrinks or grows by at least 7.5 percent in any two consecutive years — the group will consider increasing payments or suspending

the contract altogether.

At the request of O'Connor, school district officials also will be required by the terms of the agreement to present an annual financial report, and make copies of the complete budget available online and in local libraries. District officials said at the meeting the added conditions seemed acceptable and appropriate.

**THE CAMPAIGN ENDS**

Leaders from CEPS agreed after the vote to abandon their drive for the charter amendment, which has called upon hundreds of volunteers who have contributed thousands of hours to gather some 15,000 signatures to force the issue onto the November ballot. The campaign — organized by a resourceful, diverse group of school parents — also employed paid

strategists and paid signature gatherers.

"CEPS' goal all along was to obtain stable, ongoing funding for our public schools and the negotiated agreement closely mirrors the structure of our charter amendment," said CEPS co-chair Shari Davis. "It's not exactly the same, but in the big picture, this agreement accomplished in a collaborative way — rather than in a controversial one."

Still, Davis said her group will hold onto their signatures — for now.

"The signatures are carefully boxed and we'll hold onto them until they expire," Davis said. "We don't perceive the need to submit them, of course, but the filing period lasts until sometime in July. Too much went into collecting them and they represent the community in such a strong way that we'll keep them in a safe place."



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