



EDIBLE GARDEN—Around 500 El Rodeo students spend time in the community garden, one of three edible gardens on the campus, as part of the school's eco-education program. "We're finding that it really makes a difference on their food choices, El Rodeo Garden Committee Chair Jackie Kassorla told *The Courier*. Pictured clockwise from top left (left to right): 2nd graders Maddie Bilak, Mackenzie Mendelsohn-Bass and Jake Peck; Kindergartners Konstantin Rader and Sophia Omid; and 2nd graders Natalie Antin, Jasmine Vahabzadeh and Sasha Nol.

Beverly Hills School Unified District Will Look Into Creating Public Relations Position

By Laura Coleman

The Beverly Hills Board of Education directed staff to explore creating a public relations position on Tuesday in response to the district Finance Committee's recommendation

that the school district enact a comprehensive communications program.

"Effective coordination of the district's public relations program is non-existent," Finance Committee Chair Mel

Spitz told the board at Tuesday's formal meeting.

It was the first time the Finance Committee had made a resolution Board President Jake Manaster told *The Courier*.

(see 'BHUSD,' page 15)

Board of Education Accepts 2011/12 Financial Audit Report

By Laura Coleman

The Board of Education unanimously voted to approve the 2011/12 Independent Financial Audit Report at Tuesday night's board meeting.

The 82-page report prepared by Beverly Hills accounting firm Moss, Levy &

(see 'AUDIT,' page 15)



PENINSULA—The Peninsula Beverly Hills welcomed its new Executive Chef David Codney this month by hosting a decadent preview of some of his specialties such as smoked gazpacho consommé shooters and bay scallop ceviche with pisco and micro shiso. Pictured above: Codney in The Peninsula's exclusive Royal Patio Suite. *Courier Photo by Laura Coleman*

Human Rights Moves Forward in West Africa

By Laura Coleman

On Tuesday, Senegal publicly declared that 427 communities within the West African country would abandon forced genital cutting and child marriages.

The announcement comes

just weeks after Senegal's neighbor to the South, Guinea-Bissau, publicly announced that 144 communities would no longer force children to marry or mutilate women's genitals, a procedure that the

(see 'HUMAN RIGHTS,' page 15)

Residents Could Decide Fate Of Dog Park At Monday Meeting

Updated from bhcourier.com

By Laura Coleman

Beverly Hills residents can share their opinions about plans for a dog park at Roxbury Memorial Park on Monday, Jan. 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the park's Community Center.

The proposed 14,400-square-foot dedicated space for pooches is expected to take over an "underutilized" area currently used for croquet according to the City's Commu-

(see 'DOG PARK,' page 14)



SWEET AS SUGAR—Sugar is a 4-year-old, 7-pound purebred toy poodle that is full of love. She was abandoned at a local shelter with gallstones. With the help of Shelter Hope and Brent Air Animal Hospital, Sugar had surgery to remove them. She is now healthy, happy and ready for a new home. Those interested in adopting this super sweet pup can contact Kira Lorsch at 4Dogs@RHLGroup.com or ShelterHopePetShop.org at 818-453-5798.

Teen BHEF To Host City Council Candidate Forum On Feb. 6

By Laura Coleman

Beverly Hills students will get a chance to interview City Council candidates on

Wednesday, Feb. 6 at the high school starting at 5 p.m. during a Teen Candidates' Forum put

(see 'TEEN BHEF,' page 14)



BEVERLY GARDENS—The Virginia Robinson Gardens & the Beverly Hills Garden Club joined together for a tour of the soon-to-be restored Beverly Gardens Park with architect Mia Lehrer. Pictured above (front row from left): Holly Kuwayama, Debra Shaw, Kerstin Royce, Vicki McLoon, Maralee Beck, Marnie Bodek, Cindy Feder, Marian Power, Marge Karney, and Susan Rosenthal; (back row, from left): Angela Movassaghi, Saree Gordon, Adrienne Horwitch, Mia Lehrer, Gaby Reims Alexander, Diana Doyle, Worthy McCartney and Vickie Victor.

East West Bancorp Reports Increases Of 15, 18 Percent In Income, Earnings Per Share

East West Bancorp, Inc., parent company of East West Bank, the financial bridge between the United States and Greater China, on Wednesday

reported financial results for the fourth quarter and full year of 2012.

For the fourth quarter of 2012, net income was \$71.9

million or \$0.49 per dilutive share. For the full year 2012, net income was \$281.7 million and net income available to

(see 'EAST WEST BANCORP,' page 14)



HOLLYWOOD SUPPORT—Silver screen legend Kirk Douglas and wife Anne hosted a campaign event at his home Wednesday night for Planning Commission Vice Chair and 2013 City Council candidate Brian Rosenstein. Pictured left (from left): Kirk Douglas, Brian Rosenstein, Anita May Rosenstein and Anne Douglas.

Photo By Zale Richard Rubins

YOUNG MUSICIANS
(continued from page 5)

Stevens with the Living the Legacy Award for her 20-year commitment to the organization.

This year's gala performance will feature legendary composer John Williams conducting the Young Musicians Foundation's Debut Orchestra in a program featuring selections from some of his most memorable and beloved movie scores. The Debut Orchestra is the flagship program of the

BHUSD
(continued from page 4)

The resolution comes after months of Finance Committee meetings where members have criticized the board for failing to effectively educate the community with respect to the endemic budget shortfall facing Beverly Hills public schools

AUDIT
(continued from page 4)

Hartzheim for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 determined that there were compliance issues or material weaknesses, but did identify deficiencies with respect to Associated Student Body (ASB) activities.

Boardmember Brian Goldberg voiced concern that 19 of 20 ASB checks submitted did not have support documentation.

"We've had some substantial progress...but that did con-

cern me," he said. "I know this is a small item, but ASB, it's a lot of money....sometimes close to \$1 million."

Executive Director of Budget & Food Services Mary Anne McCabe suggested that a quarterly review of the audit report would be helpful.

Board VP Noah Margo said he expected to see the fruits of greater internal controls following the implementation of a Point of Sale system last year.

"It's a huge improvement from when I first sat on this board," he said.

and the need to pass a parcel tax.

Boardmember Lewis Hall agreed that hiring an expert would be beneficial for the district but questioned where the money would come from.

"It's a matter of recognizing that this position has priority over one teacher," Spitz said.

that could net a little more than \$4 million for BHUSD. The funds are needed to help the school district plug a \$3.5 million budget shortfall by funneling up to \$4.05 million of the City's \$10 million budget surplus back to City schools.

"Indeed we are a family," Boardmember Lisa Korbatov said at Tuesday night's formal meeting before the Board voted 4-1 to accept the City Liaison's proposal to plug this coming year's education budget shortfall.

Boardmember Brian Goldberg was the lone no vote and cautioned that the onetime solution did not address the endemic challenges facing the school district.

At Thursday afternoon's City Council Study Session, in anticipation of the City Council approving the plan, community activist and BHUSD parent

SCHOOL FUNDING
(continued from page 1)

Stella Serraf presented the Council with a formal petition signed by close to 900 people in support of the City's efforts.

"Our governor has made it crystal clear he intends to take more public funds away from communities like Beverly Hills to go to less privileged cities," she told the Council. "We need to take care of our own."

The idea of using some of the City's surplus funds for the school district originated from Vice Mayor John Mirisch at a council study session in November.

Earlier this month, the City Council/BHUSD liaison committee, which includes Board President Jake Manaster, Board VP Noah Margo, Mayor Willie Brien and councilmember Julian Gold, hashed out a four-part plan on how to allocate funds help alleviate the impending fiscal crisis confronting Beverly Hills schools.

The agreement included:

1.) The City agreed to front

HUMAN RIGHTS
(continued from page 4)

World Health Organization estimates over 90 million African women have undergone. Also in December, 21 communities in Gambia did the same.

Senegal-based non-profit Tostan attributed its Community Empowerment Program for

helping effect such change as a result of social mobilization and awareness-raising activities about human rights.

Tostan National Coordinator Khalidou Sy said the Jan. 22 declaration, which followed months of inter-village meetings and awareness-raising caravans, reinforces human rights

\$1 million in developer fees associated with the 9900 Wilshire Boulevard project, which the BHUSD will receive when ground breaks on construction.

2.) The City will receive access to BHUSD athletic fields currently not part of the City-BHUSD Joint Powers Authority agreement (JPA) in exchange for negotiating a \$1.25 million agreement to go toward programs and avoid layoffs.

3.) The City will release \$600,000 from escrow that it maintains as part of the JPA to go toward school programs and positions; and 4.) , The City agreed to maintain \$600,000 in escrow that it will release on a matching basis with community donations in an effort to engender greater philanthropy.

"The notion of getting the community involved really was a driver," Gold said Tuesday. "This is not the end of the problem for the school district."

in Senegal.

"This is vital for future generations and has given us a basis for new behaviors to protect children and women and their physical and moral integrity," said Cheikh Tidiane Dien, the governor of the Region of Ziguinchor.

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