

State of the City

from front page

entire library system.

El Segundo loves books; and the annual author fair last June drew more than three dozen writers to talk about their works. Patrons at the main library logged nearly 12,000 hours on the Internet last year, making our investment in twelve new publicly-available computers more than justified. And El Segundo book lovers checked out nearly 250,000 volumes in 2008.

And let me point out Sue Carter, whom the Switzer Learning Center just named one of their women of the year. Her volunteer efforts--and those of the other volunteers in Friends of the Library--the organization that she founded and has led for decades--have made our library system the envy of many, many cities.

On a noisier note, impacts from LAX are always of major concern to El Segundo. That's why we installed a \$45,000 multi-camera system on Imperial Avenue to record airplanes making early turns over the city. So far, we have logged and reported 42 violators to the Federal Aviation Administration thanks to our new equipment.

But our relationships with Los Angeles World Airports and the Federal Aviation Administration have never been better. My thanks to both organizations for working closely with us to resolve issues of common concern. Thanks also to MWW Group for assisting us in these efforts and helping our city reach its goals. There is much yet to be done, however.

The City of El Segundo has partnered with the City of Inglewood in submitting a compromise proposal to make the north airfield at LAX safer--the same kind of safety improvements that we agreed to in 2005 for the south side.

Airfield safety is an airport-wide concern and our joint proposal would dramatically improve safety while creating no new adverse impacts on airport neighbors--including north side neighbors.

Yet LAX neighbors to the north--who agreed to safety improvements on our side of the airport--continue to oppose building similar north airfield safety improvements. We have done our fair share in El Segundo.

Now it's time for our northern neighbors to accept their fair share of responsibility for preventing a disastrous accident at LAX before one occurs, get this program moving and make the entire airport safer!

Planning for the north airfield is still early in the environmental review process. We are insisting that our joint proposal with Inglewood--the No New Impacts Plan, as we call it--be fully analyzed and tested in that process, because we think that it is the solution for safety that works best and can be implemented fastest. I am pleased to say that L.A. City is listening closely and sympathetically to us at the highest levels concerning our proposal.

So what is going to happen in the upcom-

ing twelve months? I don't know--no one does--especially concerning the economy, and I'm not going to try to guess. Some things are clear, however.

Our state government is mired in economic disaster and is not going to get better without fundamental, structural change. California has the worst credit rating in the country, behind Arkansas, Mississippi and everyone else. It is a disgrace.

The voters' message to Sacramento on May 19 could not be more clear: Fix it yourselves. Don't ask the people of this state to do it for you. And don't ask the people, businesses cities or schools of California to pay for it with higher taxes and lower revenues!

But I have little faith and no patience with the ability of Sacramento to make things right and move California in the right direction. High taxes, bad service and strangling regulation in California are chasing business away to other states and other countries at an ever-accelerating, eye-popping rate.

El Segundo and its business community have prospered over time because we work so hard to keep taxes low, service standards high and rules and regulations sensible. It works.

And, at least in the near term, the only way for business and communities in California to succeed will be to rely on local efforts alone.

The state has no money, which means the county has no money, which means that the most basic of services that they provide will suffer greatly, including education and health care, especially.

We have always been a self-reliant city and now, more than ever, we need to realize that self-reliance is the only way we can continue to succeed. That means that we all need to work together--whether in business, government or the nonprofit sector--to keep our community intact and thriving.

One initiative we need to put in place is a set of close partnerships between business, local government and non-governmental organizations. As the incoming Chair of the South Bay Cities Council of Governments, I will help create a network of companies, public agencies and nonprofits throughout our area that assists communities and companies make economic improvement a reality and create jobs for the citizens of our city and our region.

I think that a big part of our economic recovery will be this kind of broad and vital partnership between commerce, local government and non-governmental organizations. I sit on the executive committee of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation.

LAEDC is a nonprofit organization--funded by the county and business both--to help existing businesses in L.A. County prosper and to attract new business to our area. LAEDC's new emphasis on helping cities with their economic development efforts is

welcome and needed.

This Chamber of Commerce, together with other chambers of commerce and other nonprofit, non-governmental organizations in our region, must combine their efforts with cities and other public agencies in ways we haven't seen before in order to get us all back on the right track.

Waiting for Sacramento or Washington to return us to economic vitality won't work. We either have to do it ourselves or wait forever.

Fortunately, in this city we have a proud history of doing most everything ourselves and in our own way making it succeed. That's why we were picked as the first-ever Most Business-Friendly City in L.A. County.

We need to show other cities in our region how we do this so well and how to do it themselves because it will help not just them, but us and our people. You can see why for yourselves by visiting elsegundobusiness.com, our city's new website devoted to business.

On the site check out the new, interac-

tive business map which Geosemble, an El Segundo company, put together for us. It's a great, fun way to learn a lot about our business community in a hurry and is a great reference tool for real estate professionals.

But we need a broader effort than just our city's work to make recovery reality and prosperity permanent in the South Bay.

Please join with me in calling for a regional summit of business, government and non-profit organizations to start making recovery a reality without waiting for Sacramento and hoping for handouts from Washington. We can do it ourselves and in order to preserve our prosperity we must do it ourselves.

If you want to help, please get in touch with me, my colleagues or our staff through the city's website, drop me an email or call me on the phone. That's why we're here.

Thank you for listening today. And thank you once again for the opportunity to be mayor of the proudest little city on the planet--El Segundo. It is an honor and a labor of love. Thank you. •

Frankly

from page 8

and change to its backers. Jockey Calvin Borel, who was atop the Derby winner, had to settle for third place in the finale of the Triple Crown series.

Borel thought he was sitting pretty when his gelding poked his nose in front as the horses entered the long, long, backstretch at Belmont, but it wasn't quite that simple. "I thought I was home free," said the diminutive Cajun jockey, "but the other horses galloped by." Well, two other horses galloped by, as Mine That Bird's backers collected the paltry show money.

Now most folks can forget about horse racing, at least until the Breeder's Cup races that will take place at Santa Anita in October. But if you do have a hankering to see the ponies run in person, you best get down to the soon-to-be-leveled Hollywood Park this summer, cuz the old power plant looks like it is going to be blown up in the not-too-distant future. Something about the land being too valuable to let sit nearly vacant every day.

Gotta give credit where credit is due. Kudos to the A's, who are the champions of the Major Division in the Gundo Little League. Yup, the same division that saw

the Mighty Mariners ousted in two straight inglorious playoff games.

The A's battled back from a huge sixth inning deficit last Thursday night against the Mets, forcing a winner-take-all championship tilt on Saturday, which the A's also won, something like 50 to 10. I say something like because I had to leave the field early to watch the Belmont.

So congrats to the A's and their 11-man coaching staff, who will now be representing Gundo in the Tournament of Champions.

As for the Mariners, we are still involved in the King of the Beach tourney. Loyal readers will remember that I boldly guaranteed a tournament championship. Well, we won our first game rather easily last Sunday, and played contest number two last night, which I am also assuming we won. Confidence is a good thing, right, folks?

Finally, the Little League volunteer party was held last Saturday night, and most of us freeloaders were well-behaved. Started to tell the wife about the night's festivities, but she said she "didn't want to hear about it." Probably a wise choice, all-in-all. Like I said in the open, she has had to put up with "more than a lot" over the years. •

College Access

Lost.

(How most kids feel about preparing for college.)

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This program is being offered by Rich Wealth Management, serving the South Bay since 2004.