

## Penguin

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start looting the expense account piggy banks, will it? Seems I heard of a story of a money lady who was canned recently because she hosted a lavish, over-the-top corporate gig? Lemme see...Trying to reference it, but I am struggling with it? Who is the gold-digger? I mean who was the corporate executive trying to drum up some more business? Do you remember? Lemme know at franklyplank@gmail.com.

## Buyer's Market

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amount of new housing construction, along with sub-prime mortgages.

Still, the South Bay's higher-end communities have been pinched by lenders still reluctant to extend so-called jumbo loans, even to buyers with solid credit and investment histories.

Jumbo loans ---- loans above \$417,000 --- accounted for nearly 40 percent of all home purchases before the market meltdown two years ago. They accounted for 15.6 percent of all loans in August. That's from January's low of 9.3 percent.

Some market watchers like Tim Iacono, a regular contributor to the online market blog site seekingalpha.com, see a lot of similarities between the today's buying trends and those three or four years ago.

"Investors are said to be snapping up homes at a blistering pace, accounting for some 20 percent of all sales, up from 18 percent last month," Iacono wrote on his blog last week. A surge in buyers who are

Do you listen to the talk radio stuff? Specifically, the political/newstalk stuff? Limbaugh and his ilk? Just wondering. I listen a bit to the guy on KABC, Doug McIntyre. Used to listen to the old show on the same station with Ken Minyard and Bob Arthur. *Ken and Bob Company*, they called it, I believe. Guess my radio dial is stuck on AM790. And to think some say I may be stuck in the 70s... •

looking to take advantage of the soon-to-expire \$8,000 home buyers tax credit, the seasonally lower mix of foreclosures sales, the inventory of foreclosed homes now in the pipeline but still kept off the market, and the rise in overall median prices heavily influenced by higher-priced units "may all be contributing to a picture of rising prices that is not consistent with reality," according to Iocono. "Maybe it's just me," he added, "but this is starting to feel like 2005/2006 all over again."

For his own part, Clark, owner of the Dale S. Clark Co., agrees the market will likely "reset" and go through at least one more period of slowed growth before it fully gets back on the track to positive growth. And then he continued, "I think it will take all of next year for it to fully recover."

In the meantime, Clark said, "For someone ready, willing and able, the time to buy is right now...I really think it's going to be a good year." •

## API

from front page

addition to the students themselves.

Developed as a cornerstone of the state's Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999, the API is California's system for measuring school performance and tracking improvement, and is based on standardized testing. The index assigns a score for each campus, ranging from a low of 200 to a high of 1,000. By state mandate, schools that have yet to reach 800 are assigned annual growth targets. If a school doesn't meet its target growth, it is put on a list of low-performing schools and may get special assistance or grants to foster improvement. Schools that fall short consistently can be subject to strong local or state sanctions, including re-assigning the principal, reorganization or even school closure.

El Segundo schools continued their upward momentum despite significant state academic budget cuts. "At the beginning of every school year, each school site disaggregates all the test scores in order to zero in on areas of concern that need extra support," explained Janice Hickey, District Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services. "That way, they are able to pay particular attention and emphasize, for those who need it, that area of the curriculum."

As an example, El Segundo High targeted Hispanic/Latino students as well as those considered socio-economically disadvantaged. That focus led to gains of 37 and 44 points respectively for those subgroups. "You can see from the scores for those subgroups that we had some amazing results," said Hickey. "We couldn't be happier about our progress, but of course there is always room for improvement, which is what we are always after."

As was the case in the previous year, the District partnered with UCLA, hiring a consultant for writing programs in the elementary schools and working intensively with teachers to support instruction. Middle school and high school teachers also received training

on MyAccess, which allows students to type essays directly into a software program that instantly scores and assesses their efforts by giving them pointers and suggestions for improvements. A constant diagnostic for students and teachers, MyAccess can be used at the schools and/or at home. Teachers can even input prompts for a specific topic. Students without home computers can use the program during class time (at one of the schools' computer labs or at the library).

"UCLA and MyAccess were certainly helpful and we hope to have both of those programs implemented again next year," said Hickey. "Our fourth and seventh grade writing scores increased phenomenally and we will continue to pursue writing across the curriculum as a District goal, as well as the implementation of 21st Century skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. And of course, we will continue to focus strongly on math."

Meanwhile, the District faces the prospect of even more severe budget cuts over the next year—a scenario that worries Hickey. "For example, we won't get funding for after-school intervention classes to help those students who need it most, and that could potentially show up on test scores," she said. "So the money to a certain extent does influence the outcomes."

The next set of standardized tests will take place in late May, with the results published at the beginning of the 2010/11 school year. "Which is not optimal, since kids sometimes have difficulty seeing the connection between performance and scores with that huge a lag period," Hickey noted. "A lot of people hope the budget cuts will mitigate some of the excessive testing all the kids are put through. But regardless of what transpires due to budget problems, we will do everything in our power to help our students succeed and to maintain their high level of academic achievement."

## School Board

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graduated from Arena in 2004, sang its praises, stating, "Arena is one of my favorite programs in the district."

After a report from Student Representative Maples, the meeting moved forward to discuss the topic of film ordinance. El Segundo High School Principal Jim Garza addressed issues and possible changes. He stated that the proximity zone will change from 300 to 275 feet. Furthermore, if a day's filming is completely enclosed within the North Quad, it will not be considered a filming day. A monitor will also be added, though the Board noted Principal Garza's excellent abilities in handling matters on his own thus far.

The consent agenda included the contract for outdoor space camp in 2010, a Mattel internship program approval, and the renewal of a contract for EduServe Consultant Services. All items were approved four to zero. Board member Tammy Tagami-Reeves was not present.

## Frankly

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Beantown. Just received a text from *Brother Chris*, who commented after seeing Tito gag again: "WOW, Angels will be swept in the playoffs!"

And to think, my kid Phillip says that I am negative when it comes to my Angels, Rams, and Kings. Really?

But one of the great things about the very long MLB regular season is that there is usually another game to be played the next day. So you can "turn the page" after a crushing loss, as Angel manager Mike Scioscia says. And turn the page the Angels did the next day, edging the Red Sox, 4-3, with the struggling Fuentes recording the save.

The Yanks are the wife's team, so I must be cautious when verbally running down the Bronx Bombers, or any of their zillion-dollar athletes. But she has said nary a word about the Yanks this season. Either she is not paying close attention cuz she is a busy lady, or she realizes that the regular season doesn't mean squat. What happens in October, that's what matters.

But I would hate to end up playing the Bombers in the playoffs, because we know who always wins in that scenario, right? My team wins, my wife not happy. Understand the scenario, folks? Course if the Angels tangle with the Yanks, it will mean that they had dispatched the Rojo Sox. Win-lose situation?

It looks like the Halos and the Bosox will square off in the first round. All right, I will be positive, and say bring on the Sox and their (sometimes) obnoxious fans. Angels will sweep in tres. Ha, ha.

## Bruins

from page 6

song "Don't Stop Believin'" as their late-inning, comeback anthem.

Said the aging crooner with the throwback hairstyle: "It tweaks me to know they're using the song as a rally song. I really wished we'd have hijacked it first. I think the song is about hope and power, and it is working for them, damn it!" Course it doesn't hurt Los Dodgers to have the amazing Andre Ethier come to the plate in the late innings with the game on the line. Say what you will about Man-Ram, Ethier is *the* man who has been the difference-maker this season.

Finally, mercifully some would say, the LA Kings have begun tuning up for the upcoming NHL season, pointing towards opening night on October 3 when they host the bankrupt Phoenix Coyotes in their regular season opener. The Kings PR machine will do their jobs diligently, as always, touting their young talent, trying to keep fan interest up as the squad, coming off a 14th place Conference finish in '08-'09, attempts to make it to the playoffs for the first time since the '01-'02 season.

The time is now for the Kings to take the next step forward. Much like I did when playing pool the other night. And the Kings

On tap for the action items were the acceptance of gifts, disposal of equipment, Algebra II (MRC) course approval, Board Policy/Administrative Regulation 1230, and approval to accept field turf CMAS proposal for purchase of Measure M athletic field monofilament. The field turf item passed with Robin Funk's caveat of later discussion regarding a possible change of the Eagle head at the 50 yard line. Apparently, some concerns had been expressed as to its similarity to that of the Philadelphia Eagles. The rest of the action items passed without complication.

Finally, the Board members gave brief remarks and Superintendent Geoff Yantz gave his report before adjourning. Meetings are held in the Board Room at the District Office, 641 Sheldon Street. For the complete agenda to Tuesday's meeting, go to <http://boarddocs.com/ca/esusd/Board.nsf/Public?OpenFrameSet>.

Watching your Raiders right now on the huge plasma in the mansion, and the corpulent QB, JaMarcus Russell, is playing horribly. Offense seems better off handing the ball to Michael Bush. Russell just threw a pick. Shocker! There are quarterbacks, and then there are "physical specimens" who can't play QB with the big boys, but Russell must have impressed some foolish scout somewhere? But I will opine this: I would almost take Russell over Ram QB Marc "Tinman" Bulger, who has been stealing money from the St. Louis organization for the past 2-plus years. Talk about useless. The Rams alleged offense has tallied a whopping seven points in two games. I assume that the Packers will work them on Sunday.

Just received a text from golfing buddy AA, who mentioned that he was celebrating, belatedly, the 80th birthday of Arnold "The King" Palmer. Arnie's birthday took place a couple of weeks back, but I never got to it because of all the other incredibly important information that I needed to disseminate to the fans.

Did you know that you can buy a beverage concoction in the local supermarket called Arnold Palmer lemonade? And that I have heard that there also might be an Arnold Palmer cocktail available for those who frequent the adult establishments? Learn something everyday, if we pay a bit of attention.

Keep paying attention, folks. I met a couple of supporters this week for the first time. Keep it going, fans. Spread the word about *FP*. Why the heck not? •

