

Police Reports

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were recycled.

Petty theft report was taken at 1258 hours from Whiting Street and Holly Avenue. Taken were recycled.

Traffic accident with no injuries occurred at 1452 hours at Main Street and Walnut Avenue, two vehicles involved.

Stolen vehicle report was taken at 1547 hours in the 300 block of West Grand Avenue. Taken was a 2008 GMC.

Two male adults and one female adult were arrested at 1702 hours in the 700 block of

East Imperial Avenue for receiving known stolen property, conspiracy to commit a crime, burglary, and possession of burglary tools.

Petty theft report was taken at 2033 hours in the 2100 block of East Mariposa Avenue. Taken was a bicycle.

Traffic accident occurred at 2039 hours in the 300 block of North Sepulveda Boulevard, two vehicles involved.

Burglary (vehicle) report was taken at 2224 hours in the 2100 block of East Mariposa Avenue. Taken was a laptop carrying case.

Water

from front page

open ground if it's raining outside. Water from your sprinkler system can't run down sidewalks, driveways, gutters, v-ditches or roadways. Also, you can't use a hose to clean a vehicle (car, boat, truck, trailer, etc.), equipment, machinery, building or structure exteriors unless there is an automatic shutoff nozzle. Any water from such cleanings can't get into the storm water drainage system.

Restaurants

Though it is common practice at eateries everywhere, it bears repeating that restaurants cannot automatically bring water to your table. You have to ask for it first.

Additional Limitations

Depending on the continued severity of the drought and scarcity of supply, the El Segundo City Council could also decide to impose specific water usage restrictions in the future. These could include prescribed percentage reductions in water consumption per household and further limitations on landscape watering, among other measures.

Penalties

The ordinance specifies that "at least one written warning" must be issued to someone who violates the ordinance. But according to City officials, enforcement will be a little more lenient than that—with a verbal warning (or

two) to precede any written communication. While repeated, egregious violations may result in a citation and/or fine, the City's goal is to encourage water conservation rather than impose penalties. According to data from last year, El Segundo's City Attorney office ran through more than 100 code enforcement cases, of which only two were prosecuted.

"Imposing mandates is something we avoid in El Segundo to the maximum extent that we can," said Mayor Kelly McDowell. "But the severity of the current statewide drought—which is in its fourth year now—and dramatic increases in water rates charged to everyone have changed everything. I promise that the City will be both understanding and pragmatic in enforcing the new law. And because our City has such an impeccable record concerning reuse and recycling in every category, I am confident that compliance with the new standards will not be a burden to our community."

The City plans to launch an outreach campaign in the coming weeks to familiarize residents with the new ordinance and to provide helpful tips. The program will include various advertisements and water conservation-related events. For more information, contact Lauren Mahakian at 310-524-2359.

Power Plant

from front page

All systems seemed to be go in March 2008 when Southern California Edison inked a 10-year power purchase agreement with NRG to proceed with the modernized facility and begin construction in early 2009. All the approvals were in place and the only matter left to seal the deal was an amended air permit from the CEC. But a Los Angeles Superior Court ruling in November 2008 invalidated the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) system for handing out emission credits, thus impacting the El Segundo plant as well as thousands of other public and private projects in the region that need those credits in order to fulfill environmental criteria. The ruling came in response to a lawsuit brought by environmental groups challenging the way AQMD made credits available from its internal bank for new power plant construction.

The El Segundo plant redevelopment has remained in limbo ever since, but may finally see the light of day thanks to new legislation that lifts the moratorium on air quality permits. Signed in October by Governor Schwarzenegger, Senate Bill 827 becomes law on January 1. "The [new] legislation reestablished one of the rules that if you shut down or retire something, you can replace it with something of equal size for a one to one credit," explained NRG Regional President Steve Hoffmann. "We have units that are still actively operating. By retiring one of those two, we'll be able to get our permit." Though not happy about shutting down one of its existing units, it may be the lesser of two evils for NRG. Some types of emission credits from the open market are difficult to come by, and if available, are often cost-prohibitive.

NRG mothballed two of its 1950s-era units (1 and 2) almost seven years ago. Units 3 and 4, built in the mid-'60s, have a combined capacity of 670 megawatts and can continue to run as needed. "Our license from 2005

affords us the ability to demo the plant over time," said NRG director of environmental business George Piantka. "The [older] units, if retired as part of the amended permit, would continue to operate up to the point of commissioning the new unit."

However, the imminent loss of a unit will mean less overall power capability at a time when the basin's grid is tighter than ever. "All these environmental policies, air and water, are threatening existing coastal units essential to maintaining the grid and yet there are no replacements in sight," said Hoffmann. "This means more megawatts off the grid. The older units have a unique attribute in that they can ramp up and down quickly and follow a load much better than any new technology. We would rather not have to retire a unit if there's another method to get these air credits. We hope between now and 2013, we'll have the path to acquire the credits without retiring one of our units." For now NRG plans to submit an application to the AQMD and, if all goes well, could receive an amended air permit from the CEC by the middle of 2010.

In the meantime, the loss of tax revenue (down 50 percent this year compared to last year, according to City officials) from sporadic plant operations along with the uncertainty with the facility's future prompted El Segundo Mayor Kelly McDowell to consider rezoning the property to accommodate a beachfront resort hotel.

While confident a hotel could generate up to \$3 million per year in transient occupancy tax revenues for the City, the Mayor indicated he would be happy to see the power plant project proceed. "I wish NRG all the hope in the world for their project," he said. "The City needs the revenue and the region needs the power. It has been a long, long haul for NRG, but I hope that the light is at the end of the tunnel—without a locomotive behind it..." •

Duane

from page 6

by the has-been actor Ted Bessell. Hollinger was a writer. Small world, eh,

Anyway, other than the complainer *RJ*, none of the true identities of the *Plank* cast of characters will be intentionally divulged. And speaking of the cast, shout out to the *Soccer Coach*, who attempted last week to make up for the fact that he hosed me out of Galaxy soccer tickets this season. He called to offer me some seats for a Kings' hockey game, but I had a prior engagement. He claimed that the seats were "good," but I gotta believe that they were way up in the rafters with the unwashed masses who are forced to sit in the nosebleed section at Staples. Wasn't able to attend, but thanks for the offer, Coach.

Week 14 of the NFL schedule is upon us, and features games between Cincinnati and Minnesota, San Diego and Dallas, Philadelphia and the NY Giants, and the Monday night game between the Kurt Warner-led Arizona Cardinals and the hanging-on-the-edge San Francisco 49ers. And the winners will be... Minnesota, San Diego, Philadelphia and Arizona. Take it to the bank, folks.

Back to the puck. There was some mayhem on the ice in the NHL last week. Which shouldn't surprise some of you non-hockey fans out there, who think hockey is all about fists and fighting fury. But here is a different twist. Seems that Florida Panther defenseman Keith Ballard was undressed by Atlanta Thrasher superstar forward on Ilya Kovalchuk on the way to a Kovalchuk breakaway goal in the Thrashers 4-3 win over the Panthers.

Nothing to be ashamed of for Ballard. Kovalchuk is a fantastic talent, who has made many a defender look foolish before he deposited the biscuit in the basket. But Ballard was so distraught that he decided to take out his frustrations on the defenseless net, attempting to whack the poor twine with a two-hander. But alas, the twine was spared because Ballard's baseball-like swing connected, instead, with the head of his own

goalie! Yup, Ballard pole-axed goalie Tomas Vokoun. Hit him in the head, which was fortunately covered with a mask. Vokoun was carted off the ice on a stretcher and taken to the hospital, where he was treated for a nasty ear laceration and, thankfully, released.

Working on the column one evening, work, work, 24-7, and who pops up on the front-room TV, which is finally back online? One Ex-MB resident Rod Stewart. Dude used to live right up the street from the folks, cohabitating with the much younger hottie Rachel Hunter. Rocket Rod was crooning some tune on some taped show that was emanating from New York. Think it was the Rockefeller Christmas Tree lighting show, but who knows? Mr. Stewart, who looked to be about 80-ish, was vamping some tune called "Love Train." Good for him, we all need to pick up a paycheck in this holiday season, right?

And finally, mercifully, some may say, like to thank reader Julia Tedesco, who responded to a recent column that mentioned garages. And the fact that some of us don't actually use the garage to store our vehicles. As I thought about it a bit more, I was struck by the fact that we protect our garage garbage behind lock and key and/or remote control opening device, but put our valuable vehicles out on the street, making them easy prey for the criminal riffraff of the world.

Ms. Tedesco wrote, "I am a Neighborhood Watch captain and almost every week we get a report on problems in our area. What are they? Vehicular burglary! Why? Because people do NOT park in their garages for the most part. My neighbor got his cars, both of them, broken into all in one today." Thanks for reading and taking the time to write, Ms. Tedesco.

Your response to my somewhat cheeky riff about garage space will make me reconsider trying to squeeze the limo inside the garage, where it rightfully belongs. Read and support, folks. •

Curbside

from page 7

modern features like direct injection. This engine is good for 182 horsepower. For real get-up, a turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine will be available next year that has 220 horsepower.

While you might associate Buicks with the local retirement village, their newer vehicles are starting to appeal to people who only read about World War One instead of experiencing it first-hand and are trading in imports for vehicles like the Enclave. According to a company spokesperson, Buick's conquest rate (people moving to Buick from a different brand) has tripled recently.

Other than it's marketing, the Chevy Volt had no turbos but Chevrolet's significant vehicle was officially introduced at the show. Bearing an electric traction motor (like a locomotive) the Volt promises 40 miles of driving on electric power only, which is about what most drivers need.

Beyond the range of the electrical system, a small gasoline engine driving a generator kicks in, providing additional range. According to GM VP Bob Lutz, this helps Chevrolet overcome the fear that most people have of being stranded in an electric car.

While Toyota recently announced that Lithium Ion batteries didn't meet their standards for the Prius, those are exactly the type of batteries in the Volt. Lutz credited electric carmaker Tesla with showing how to do LiIon batteries in a car.

Speaking of the Prius, Toyota showed the plug-in hybrid version of that car.

Toyota: Minivans Are Cool.

It used to be that minivans were very popular, but somehow it became uncool to have a vehicle that offered good fuel economy and a very flexible, capable interior wrapped by a very drivable package. So, we started buying large SUVs that offered poor fuel economy, less comfortable seating and lousy

handling. How is that cool, again?

Toyota indicated that the 2011 Sienna was intended to counteract the uncool factor by wrapping a minivan in a cool package and adding more fun to the driving experience. The auto giant showed off the 2011 Sienna minivan and, frankly, it's a nice upgrade of the old Sienna but I don't see people suddenly changing their perception of the minivan.

Looking like a Toyota version of the Honda Odyssey, the new Sienna is larger and more capable and offers a third-row 60/40 seat that can be folded up or down with one hand. Neat. There are various versions including a sportier SE version that is one of the cooler minivans I've seen.

But is it cool enough to change perceptions? Well, there is either a 2.7-liter four-cylinder engine or a 3.5-liter V6 that offer improved fuel economy. The vans are built in Princeton, Indiana and are available with a radar cruise control that also offers preemptive braking if it senses an accident. Toyota's sales are up ten percent over last year.

In Summary

More than ever fuel economy was a topic at the auto show with manufacturers, or at least those that could afford to show up, demonstrating interesting technologies that are real-world solutions. The combination of diesels, hybrids and plug-in hybrids are all now tech that can help us reduce our dependence on oil. We also have hydrogen in future tech and other potential solutions as well.

But, as Bob Lutz said, demand is the biggest factor and Americans actually have to buy these vehicles in order to foster future investment in them. Lutz advocated slowly but steadily raising gasoline prices over time as a way to encourage conservation as was done in Europe in the 1950s. Maybe he's been reading Curbside too. •