

Manhattan Beach Sun

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Inside This Issue

Business &

Professional.....21

Business.....9

Calendar.....2

Classifieds.....20

Crossword.....20

Dear Carol.....5

Food & Dining.....8

Frankly Plank.....6

Pets.....18

Real Estate.....10

Sports.....6

Weekend Weather Forecast

Friday

Mostly Sunny

73°



Saturday

Mostly Sunny

72°



Sunday

Mostly Sunny

70°



Shuttle Services Launched



See Shuttle page 3

City Parking Meters May Experience Change

By Evan Ortega

In an effort to make parking less painful, the Manhattan Beach City Council is promoting its cash key program and implementing an experimental electronic parking system for the pier parking lot. The City hopes that arming drivers with cash keys and possibly switching to electronic parking machines may reduce expenses and make parking more convenient. “We want to give people more alternatives than what they currently have,” Finance Director Bruce Moe said. “That’s what’s really driving this—it’s the technology and convenience.”

At a recent meeting, Moe briefed Council members on the cash key and experimental electronic parking payment programs. He said the City would be able to use \$600,000 in state funds to test different pay machines in the pier parking lot for a nine-month test period beginning at the end of the year. “Some of the solution goals that we had were to find a cost-effective solution; certainly make it user-friendly... alternative payment forms such as credit card, cell phone,” Moe said. “I want to make sure enforcement is efficient and also the climate is considered.”

The City is also improving its cash key program to make parking a little easier, particularly in downtown where it recently installed a cash key recharge station at the corner of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Highland Avenue. The station allows customers to add money to their cash keys, which are devices that people can insert in meters in lieu of coins. “This is our baby that we started in 2005, 2006,” Councilmember Richard Montgomery said. “We’re finally getting to where we want these things out and about and we can use them.”

In the past, City Hall was the only place that sold cash keys, which the City buys from the manufacturer at \$20 each. In order to encourage more people to buy them, the City has agreed to sell merchants the keys for the same price, but add \$5 worth of parking to create a profit incentive to sell them. “Initially we agreed to a maximum quantity of 500, so the subsidy would be \$2,500,” Moe said.

Seven downtown businesses now sell the keys, and Mary Ann Varni, president of the Downtown Business and Professional Association, credits the City for creating a profit incentive to sell them. She thinks the new recharge station will encourage more people to use them. “What’s great about the businesses selling them is it makes them more accessible to the community,” Varni said. “For the last few years, you could only purchase them at City Hall or the Chamber, and on the weekends, they’re closed.”

According to the City, downtown businesses currently selling the cash keys are: Current Events, Elleni Designer Shoes, Manhattan Beach Creamery, Tabula Rasa Essentials, Shade Hotel, Subway and Wright’s. “I’ll talk to more businesses about carrying them because it’s a fairly simple thing for them to have and it’s just another service that we

provide to our customers,” Varni said.

Vanessa Kelterborn of Wright’s estimates about one or two people come in daily to ask for change for meters. She said the cash key program that Wright’s participates in is fairly new, but thinks more people will buy them. “Were happy to give change,” Kelterborn said. “We get a lot of locals in our store. We want to do whatever we can for our customers.”

Jessica Lersch of Mosaic said parking downtown has always been frustrating due to limited spaces and people having problems getting change for the meters. She estimated that about 10 people a day ask for meter change, and when she runs out she can’t leave the store to go to the bank. “Can we please get some quarter machines around here...I think the only people that have a

See Parking page 17

Tranquility vs. Energy

By Karen Russo

Every summer when we leave Manhattan Beach to spend a few weeks in Durango, Colorado, people are astonished. “How could you leave the beach in summer?” Then any friends who visit us in Durango all say, “How could you ever leave this beautiful place?” Aren’t we lucky to be able to enjoy two of America’s treasured spots? I love both the beach and the mountains, but for different reasons. As I see it, the mountains offer tranquility and the ocean energy.

Being in Durango, nestled in the midst of the San Juan Mountains, means being wrapped in a continuous blanket of green. Pine forests and aspen forests abound. Meadows of bright-colored wildflowers measure the seasons. Mountain peaks, standing tall and silent, hold you in the palms of their hands with the assurance of eternity. The humility one feels when in nature is pervasive.

The ocean, on the other hand, is never still, never silent, thrashes about, and swallows us up in its energetic fervor. And nowhere is that energy more infectious than in Manhattan Beach.

In Durango, people reflect the serenity of the mountains in quiet pursuit, hiking or biking along the trails in solitude, or patiently anticipating a trout at the end of a line. Space is plentiful. Traffic is sparse. Noise comes merely from the flutter of the wings of Canadian teese.

Friendly company and community activity are available, but you have to reach out for it. Classical concerts, bluegrass or brass band concerts, rodeos, art classes, gallery walks, county fairs, and Indian dances all go on, but usually one at a time. You read the paper to find that week’s events. You may take part in what is offered, or not. But there are not a lot of choices. Even tee times are

See Tranquility page 22