

Manhattan Beach Sun

The Weekly Newspaper of Manhattan Beach

Herald Publications - El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, Hawthorne, Lawndale, & Inglewood Community Newspapers Since 1911 - Circulation 30,000 - Readership 60,000 (310) 322-1830 Vol. 2, No. 44 - October 29, 2009

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Weekend Weather Forecast

Friday

Partly Sunny

69°



Saturday

Partly Sunny

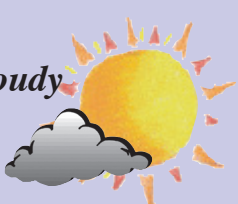
69°



Sunday

Partly Cloudy

68°



Pier-to-Pier Friendship Walk



(Left to right) Lilly Wedbush, Lia Sepanek, Mandy McKeegan, and Tina Stanfill march to the finish. Photos by Shelley Kemp, www.kemp.photorelect.com

See More Walk photos, page 19

Coordinating Council October Meeting

By Karen King Russo

The first luncheon meeting of the season for the Manhattan Beach Coordinating Council drew a full house at Veranda on Rosecrans Avenue. Steward Fournier addressed the meeting by commenting on how membership had "exploded." All had come with eager interest in keynote speaker Bazzel Baz's presentation of the Association for the Recovery of Children (ARC), which he founded and directs.

Before beginning his talk, Baz congratulated the school representatives and Students of the Month who were honored, tying in his obvious passion for the welfare of children with that of the Coordinating Council's efforts to recognize youth. Besides networking, sharing community news and coordinating events, the Council strives to support local youth through scholarships and recognition. Founded originally to assist youth at risk, more recently the Council has strived to acknowledge the accomplishments and characters of those who are excelling.

Student representatives Grace Campbell of American Martyrs, Gurkiran Dhaliwal of Manhattan Beach Middle School (MBMS), and Emilee Graverson and Shelby Adair of Mira Costa High each spoke about what is happening this fall at their schools. Of particular interest was "Walk to School Wednesdays" at American Martyrs; a move for ecology; the music department's recitals at MBMS, and Mira Costa's drug- and alcohol-free programs.

Students of the month were Andrew Wallender of American Martyrs, presented by April Beuder, Stephanie Caridad of MBMS, presented by Ro Schreiner, and Jeff Whelan of Mira Costa, presented by Lisa Claypool. Beuder praised Wallender's natural leadership qualities. "He inspires others," she said, "to work together for a common cause." Of Stephanie Caridad, Schreiner said, "Besides her many other talents, we can look to seeing

her on the great musical stages as a cellist. She was just admitted to the prestigious Colburn School of Music and I only know one other person to achieve that." According to Lisa Claypool, Jeff Whelan is raising the bar for charitable giving. Besides serving as a member of Model United Nations, he led the filling of eight cars with goods for the Richstone Family Center, and raised \$10,000 for children of Africa based on a video he produced of their plight.

Baz began his ARC presentation by saying that 400,000 children a year are abducted and lost in this country or smuggled to a foreign country. Many are victims of human trafficking, of which there is a growing epidemic. Thousands of children are stolen

and sold into slavery and prostitution. Others are abducted and taken away by one parent who does not have custody. And as Baz says, "Normal parents who love their children do not do that. Background investigation nearly always finds them to be engaging in other criminal activity."

Rescuing these children can be beyond the scope, finances, local jurisdiction, and sometimes-political interests of government agencies. Whereas being an under-the-radar operation, ARC can handpick their cases and maintain confidential sources and methods.

Baz has served as a captain in the Marine Corps, and was with special services for the CIA. The talent and expertise he

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Residents Celebrate Halloween Early With Pumpkin Races

By Evan Ortega

Thousands of people showed up for the 19th Annual Pumpkin Race-A-Thon at the Manhattan Beach Pier Sunday to participate in one of the city's fastest growing family events. The races were started by resident Karl Rogers and some friends 19 years ago as a unique way to celebrate his birthday, October 29. "I hit upon the idea of putting a pumpkin on a skateboard... it was kind of boring, so then I decided to put axels and wheels through the pumpkin and decorate the pumpkin," Rogers said. "One thing led to another and 19 years later, here we are in the most perfect place on Earth."

Parents and children lined up with

their pumpkins, to which they decorated and attached wheels. The racers would line up in groups on the starting line of the track, which ran about 20 feet down Manhattan Beach Boulevard. They would then let go, using gravity to power their pumpkins, which had themes ranging from Pinkberry to Michael Jackson. One of these speeding squashes was the "Pumpkinator," built by Josh Cooperman and his son Jack. "Jack and I make our pumpkins every year and it's a great event, it's just a ton of fun," Josh said. "I don't know what's more fun, making it or racing it; it's just a blast."

See Pumpkin Races, page 16