

Mustangs

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play and some daring baserunning. With both teams struggling to score against the others' pitcher, Matt Blankenship decided to test the Mustangs' defense. He hit a deep fly ball to left field that would normally go for a routine double--meaning the infield would set up to throw to third base. Blankenship saw the alignment and then saw the outfielder throw the ball towards second base with nobody covering so he kept going to third base. Blankenship then scored on J.R. Aguirre's single through a drawn-in Mustang infield to make it 2-1.

"It was a battle between two very good teams, but unfortunately we came up short in both games," said Neily. "Hopefully we'll build and learn on this experience and refocus ourselves and be ready for CIF (playoffs)."

The playoff committee wasn't so nice to the Mustangs and they hosted a wild card game against Valencia on Tuesday with the winner advancing to play Upland, the Baseline League champion, on Thursday.

Mustang News and Notes

The Mira Costa softball team lost to Palos Verdes 11-0, dropping the Mustangs into a tie for third place with Redondo. So the Mustangs faced Redondo in a one-game playoff to decide who would be the third

and final team from the Bay League to go on to the playoffs.

Trailing 5-2 going into the sixth inning, the Mustangs put together a five-run rally and went on to win 7-5. The Mustangs benefited by three walks to start the inning and Rachel Lee doubled home two of those runners to make it 5-4. Amanda Gard singled in Lee to tie the game and Gard later scored on an error as the Mustangs took the lead. They would add one more run when Chloe Krasnoff scored on Amanda Padilla's RBI single to make it 7-5.

The Mustangs hammered out 10 hits and were led by Padilla's perfect 4-for-4 day. Kamyle Glover came in to relieve Mustang starter Sara Gazzaniga, who gave up three runs in the first two innings when the Mustangs fell behind 3-0. Glover pitched well, but gave up two unearned runs in the third inning when the Mustangs trailed 5-2 before they mounted their sixth inning comeback to earn the last playoff berth from the Bay League.

The Lady Mustangs played a wild card game on Tuesday against Whittier with the winner advancing to play at La Mirada, a team the Mustangs lost to earlier in the year, on Friday. •

City Council

from front page

hand it over. "It's not as though we're writing a check to the state, they just take it," Moe said. "It never hits our books."

"I guess we can't go rogue on them," Ward said.

Dolan said the city would be able to take the borrowed money from its cash reserves, and replace it when the state is expected to return the money in 3 years. The city has a total of \$14.4 million in two different reserves, which staff does not plan on tapping into for 2009-2010.

Councilmember Richard Montgomery said \$25 million was taken from the state from 1990 to 2004 and never repaid it. He said voters passed proposition 1A in 2004 to force the state to borrow money from cities rather than simply taking it. "That \$25 million we lost from 1990 to 2004 is gone, and we can never recover that," Montgomery said. "Now, whether they actually repay this \$1.8 million with interest in three years has yet to be seen."

The city has scheduled budget study sessions for Tuesday, from 2 to 9 p.m., and Wednesday, from 7 to 10 p.m. in the Police/Fire Community Room, 420 15th St.

Water Conservation

City Council members put the final touches on an updated water conservation ordinance, which they expect to pass at the next Council meeting. The ordinance, No. 2122, was drafted from recommendations by the Environmental Task Force's Water and Storm Water Sub-Committee.

The ordinance would revise Chapter 7.44 of the Manhattan Beach Municipal Code to promote water conservation efforts through public outreach and usage restrictions on residents and businesses. "We have a serious drought; we are going through our fourth year. It's not only serious for the state of California, it's a global issue," Mayor Portia Cohen said. "So we're being responsible locally and globally."

The ordinance would have three components: water conservation, drought restrictions as called for by the Metropolitan Water District, and warnings and fines for violators. The ordinance would also require commercial establishments to install low-flow toilets and urinals, and water efficient dishwashers as they replace old units. "This is a cost item as well; our rates are going to go up," Cohen

said. "We are supporting a behavioral change that will benefit us all environmentally and financially, so I'm completely in support."

Among a number of restrictions, the ordinance would ban the watering of lawns or landscapes between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., washing down surfaces with a hose, and filling pools and spas without using a cover. "I'm very pleased that the City of Manhattan Beach is taking an aggressive approach to water conservation," Ward said. "We have to do whatever we can to save this resource... I'm pleased with this effort and I think the education aspects of it will go a long way."

Eating and drinking establishments would no longer be allowed to provide water unless requested. Hotels and motels would have to provide customers the option of choosing not to have towels and linens laundered daily. "I like that we are partnering with our eating and drinking establishments here in town to try to educate the public in places you typically wouldn't expect education in water conservation," Ward said.

The Water and Storm Water Sub-Committee plans to create a public awareness campaign using the city website, mailers, and warning notices. According to the staff report, such warning notices would range from "friendly observations of water wasting practices to severe language that evokes ordinance penalties."

Under the ordinance, violators may be fined \$75, or 200 percent of the total price of their most recent water bill. Staff told Council members that fines would be a last resort for repeat offenders. "I think this is a great ordinance. This is something that will go a long way toward conserving water," Councilmember Wayne Powell said. "I also like the public outreach and education portion." Montgomery said that people should be aware of the water shortages since the issue has been reported in the media over the last few years.

"Now we have the tools not only to educate, but also the second step is to enforce," Montgomery said. "I don't think it's a matter of ratting out, it's a matter of doing the right thing. If you consistently see somebody doing this, there's no excuse, no matter who they are."

The Council will vote on whether or not to adopt the ordinance at its next meeting. •

Don't Skip Vacation; Just Watch the Costs

By Jason Alderman

One of the first things many people trim from their budget during economic downturns is vacation. That's unfortunate because stressful times are when we most need to recharge our batteries. Taking on additional debt to finance a vacation is itself stressful, however. With summer vacation just around the corner, here are a few tips for taking a well-deserved break that won't break the bank:

Staycations. Last summer's astronomical gas and airfare price hikes popularized "staycations," where people vacation close to home and explore their own backyard — sometimes literally. A few ideas:

If gardening relaxes you, dedicate time to sprucing up your yard. If you hate it, splurge on a gardener.

Use money you save by not traveling to hire a housecleaner after your staycation so you won't have to think about cleaning.

Become a local tourist. Research what online travel sites and the Chamber of Commerce recommend for visitor activities. Many businesses provide local-resident discounts to encourage return visits.

For a minor splurge, visit a local resort and take advantage of its amenities. Most offer off-days where rates are lower.

Enjoy crowd-free shopping and errands while everyone else is at work.

Uncover hidden vacation costs. If you do travel, make sure to budget beyond normal airfare, hotel, rental car and meal expenses. Consider such items as surcharges for extra or overweight luggage, sales and hotel taxes, babysitters, tips, taxis, rail and transit passes, event admission costs and ticket-ordering charges, new luggage, sporting equipment rental, and special clothing or accessory requirements.

Don't have a vacation budget? Visa Inc.'s free personal financial management site, Practical Money Skills for Life (www.practicalmoneyskills.com/travel), features a summer travel budgeting center filled with tools to help you create a vacation budget, including a web-based calculator that suggests various travel options and then automatically tallies the results.

Double-check prices. You can find great deals on fares, hotels and rental cars by comparison shopping online. But beware: Before clicking "confirm" to finalize your purchase, make sure the final price matches the initial quote. I've seen fares jump \$50 or more in just minutes or had the seat I thought I was booking suddenly become unavailable.

Try haggling. With so many people cutting back on travel, many hotels, airlines, restaurants and other tourist-oriented businesses are hurting. Don't be afraid request incentives like an extra night's lodging, free parking or shuttle service, meal vouchers or spa treatment discounts. At worst they'll just say no or perhaps offer some other perk. And always ask for member discounts if you belong to organizations like AAA or AARP — 10 or 15 percent here and there can add up.

Be flexible. Unless you're tied to your kids' school calendar, try to avoid peak travel times and routes. Flying mid-week or from more remote airports can save a bundle. And with so many flights overbooked, airlines frequently offer cash rewards or free tickets to those willing to be bumped to a later flight. Just make sure you won't lose any deposits at your destination.

Don't forego vacation — you've earned it. Just be cautious about how expenses can add up. •

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