

School Board

from page 1

ties. Those students are then correctly placed to deal with their particular difficulty, while those more advanced students are placed on the road to further enrichment. Within a normal classroom, teachers were usually only able to separate learners into two or three groups. Within the RTI program, this number has been increased to five. The strengths of the teachers are also taken into consideration, as the proper teacher is chosen to work with the group that they are best capable of assisting.

According to the literature provided, parents have been "highly in favor of differentiated instruction," and students "feel more empowered to participate" in this type of setting. RTI is a concentrated time without interruptions during a given school day. Some of the next steps include examining other areas of instruction, such as mathematics, for potential implementation. Also, the middle school level is under examination for potential future RTI groups.

From the Student Board, Kian Rowshani gave the schedule of upcoming events for the elementary schools, and the focus was clearly on Arts and Appreciation. Even upcoming open houses had an art theme at most sites. All of the elementary sites, according to Rowshani, have some type of teacher appreciation in the works. Flowers, school

supplies, and thank-you cards were just some of the ways that students were showing their appreciation in these themed events.

Rowshani was also impressed by the Parsa brothers' donation, stating, "Birthday money is a big deal for kids that age" and went on to say that kids all over the district have shown generosity as well. Board member Amy Howorth also told of being impressed at the community's outpouring during these difficult financial times, as Hersman had earlier put the Ed Foundation donation at \$1.3 million. This is a number Hersman called "phenomenal."

Natalie Pratt gave her announcement of events at Manhattan Beach Middle School, and as the school year is coming to a close within two months, the seventh and eighth graders were writing speeches toward differing goals. The eighth graders at MSMS are trying out for speeches at the graduation ceremony, while the seventh graders are running for ASB positions for next year. Hannah Geiser announced that the Mira Costa High School prom will take place on June 6 at Viviana Palace in Los Angeles. Geiser also announced the upcoming "Scholar Quiz" for which applications were due by May 28. The event will take place June 1 through June 9, with the finals taking place on that last day. •

Mini's

from page 4

country by doing the right thing in California, not just because it's green, but because it's saving money," Montgomery said.

Mayor Portia Cohen said she agreed with Montgomery and was thankful he initiated the program. "We are stewards in environmentalism and energy efficiency," she said. "Why not showcase this in our own environment? The more people are familiar with something, the more comfortable they are to be open to it themselves."

Venture Capitalist Peter Trepp is the first person to lease a MINI E, which the Pacific Palisades resident drove home from a dealership on Friday. He has created a blog, petersminie.blogspot.com, to document his experiences with his new car. Like the City, Trepp has a one-year lease. "I have to give the car back at the end of the year and I already love it, so they're going to have a

hard time getting it back to me," Trepp said.

The MINI E does not have conventional brakes, Trepp noted. The car comes to a stop when he takes his foot off the "gas" pedal. "You've got to get used to the notion that you're not going to coast," Trepp said. "It's a learning curve for sure. If you've driven the cars in 'Autopia' at Disneyland, it's sort of like that but much smoother."

Trepp said electric cars are superior to other non-gas powered vehicles and thinks they will eventually become an important part of the automotive industry. He added that the MINI Cooper is a great prototype for such a car. "The MINI's just a fun rally car to drive," Trepp said. "You also have this great power-to-weight ratio, so the car gets extra speedy. So keep an eye on the employees. They're going to have a lot of fun for sure." •

Solar

from page 5

Nancy Paulikas and Kirk Moody also took advantage of a financing arrangement to make their solar-power dreams a reality in July 2008. Paulikas said they signed a 15-year lease with SolarCity for the rooftop installation of a 2.4-kW system with 12 Sanyo panels. Before going solar, their SCE bills were already low, around \$35 to \$40 a month, so the payoff period will be about 20 years.

Paulikas admits: "It barely makes financial sense for us, but we still wanted to do it as a long-term investment and because it was the right thing to do for the state and the planet." In addition, "it's just great to watch our electric meter spin backwards." Their monthly bills are now just a daily administrative cost of about \$1.75, explained Paulikas, and they already have a \$56 credit with net metering since they produce more electricity than they use.

Another way to go solar is to buy a brand new house with the PV panels already up and running. The fifth house on the Manhattan Beach tour (www.502twentyfourth.com) was available for sale and built top to bottom to offer "absolute luxury with a clean conscience," according to its glossy sales brochure, which was commissioned by Kuhlhaus LLC and designed by Lean Arch Design/Build.

Terri Roberts of Empire Solar explained that the environmentally friendly new home includes a 4.3-kW array of 20 Sharp PV panels, designed so that a family of five with normal consumption habits would have an

average monthly electric bill of about \$15. Because of its energy efficient design and use of materials, the house is naturally less energy-hungry, and requires a lower kilowatt system than normal for its square footage.

More homes making the switch to solar in Manhattan Beach would be welcome news for Sona Kalapura, the City's Environmental Programs Manager and head of the Task Force. By signing on to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, the City has pledged to cut carbon emissions to at least seven percent below 1990 levels by 2012 and has its work cut out for itself. "Our citizens need to do their part to help the City meet its climate goals," said Kalapura.

Adopting Assembly Bill 811 might be one good way for the City to encourage more homeowners to switch to solar power. This bill was passed in 2008 and is poised to further eliminate up-front solar installation costs. Under AB 811, municipalities can grant homeowners low interest 20-year loans for solar paid through an annual special tax on property bills that "goes with the house" when it is sold. Berkeley and Palm Desert have adopted AB 811, and Light is encouraging Manhattan Beach officials to consider embracing this new pro-solar option.

For additional information about solar rebates and tax incentives, visit: www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/csi/index.html; www.energy.gov/taxbreaks.htm; for information about solar energy and the Environmental Priorities Network visit: www.environmentalprioritiesnetwork.wordpress.com. •

Neptunian Awards Photos

Photos by Chris Barnes



Julien Nguyen (winner of the Elizabeth Dorsey Art Scholarship for \$2,000.00) smiles with mom Helen Le.



Alyssa Sbarounis (right) with mom Vicki Alyssa was awarded the Fashion Design Scholarship for \$2,000.



Proud parents and their children are recognized at the annual Neptunian Scholarship Award Luncheon. (From left) Lamy Kahl, Kara Kahl (scholarship recipient), Diana Kahl, Vicki Sbarounis, Alyssa Sbarounis (scholarship recipient), Helen Le, Julien Nguyen (scholarship recipient), Bonnie Spivey, Taylor Spivey (scholarship recipient), Marc Spivey, Hunter Porter (scholarship recipient), John Porter, Deborah Porter, and Neptunian Sabine Birkenseld.



Kara Kahl (center) with parents Lamy and Diana Karas was chosen as the recipient for the Elizabeth Dorsey Art Scholarship for \$2,000.

Frankly

from page 6

Well, Diva Danica didn't win the Indy 500, but she finished a respectable third. And had about 100 of her commercials broadcast on the old tube during the four-hour TV show. Tax problem guy and *Dancing With the Stars* contestant Helio Castroneves won the race, for the third time, I believe.

And finally, is your life so interesting that you actually got up early on Memorial Day and watched the L.A. Marathon? Wonder if the actor portraying "The Most Interesting Man in the World" was too hung over to watch? Did you see me running in the race? Just wondering... •

