

# ManhattanBeachSun

The Weekly Newspaper of Manhattan Beach

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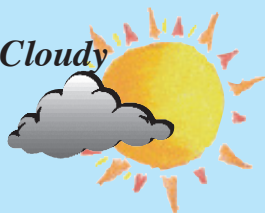
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## Weekend Weather Forecast

### Friday

Partly Cloudy

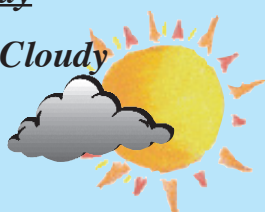
66°



### Saturday

Partly Cloudy

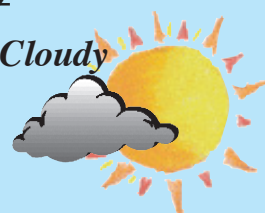
65°



### Sunday

Partly Cloudy

65°



## Neptunian's Celebrate Christmas for the 100th time



The Neptunian Woman's Club celebrated Christmas and their 100<sup>th</sup> year on December 6<sup>th</sup> at a members home. (Left to right) Carol Shafer, Rosemary Ray, Andrea and Steve Miller stand near the gorgeous Christmas tree.

See more photos, page 18

## Mayor Cohen Delivers State of City Address

By Evan Ortega

Manhattan Beach Mayor Portia Cohen updated civic, business and community leaders on the State of the City over breakfast at the Belamar Hotel Friday morning, often speaking in the context of the economic recession. The Mayor indicated that the City Council will work to reduce employee labor and pension costs as the City renegotiates contracts with local fire, police and teamsters unions over the next several years. "We're talking people's livelihoods and we're also talking public funds. The move has to come now," Cohen said. "It is critical for our City to band together with other cities to make sure this is a competitive understanding, and structure new risk and rewards, fair relationships between public employees and taxpayers."

This year, the City gave the Manhattan Beach Unified School District \$1.3 million and Cohen said that although the City would continue to support the schools, it appears the Council will not be able to afford a similar contribution next year. Cohen mentioned the City might be able to purchase or lease School District property in the future as a way to provide financial assistance. She also noted the City's in-kind contributions to the District, such as Mira Costa High School's resource officer, Begg pool and field maintenance, and security. "It's amazing that our system has failed us so much that an affluent community has to reach into our pockets and fund more basic things, but we do it and we do it every year," Cohen said.

Cohen defended the Council's decision to dissolve Underground Assessment Districts 8 and 13, raise water and sewer utility rates, and earmark up to \$320,000 in bonuses and raises for City management. She said residents face the possibility of spending more money on street lighting and landscaping if the Council decides to raise assessments for the City's Stormwater Fund and Street Lighting and Landscape Fund. "We take general fund money that can be used for police and

fire and other things, and we subsidize these funds," Cohen said. "...It doesn't make sense to subsidize actual costs of stormwater infrastructure and street lighting and landscape infrastructure from the general fund."

Regarding the dissolving of underground districts, Cohen said that times have changed since the districts were originally formed and that the costs were "astronomical" compared to original projections. "Now is not the time," she said. "I completely respect prior Council's decision to do it that way in trying to meet the needs of those who wanted it and protecting the needs of those who did not. It is on hold for now."

Cohen said it was an "unpopular but a right decision" to raise water and sewer rates. She said the City needs to pay for the

repairs and renovations if it hopes to avoid problems plaguing cities like Los Angeles, where water pipes continue to rupture, causing sinkholes and other damage. Cohen said residents will be paying water rates that are on par with other South Bay cities.

With help from subcommittees of the Environmental Task Force, the City adopted a new water conservation ordinance, developed new environmentally-friendly building standards, and began renegotiating a new waste hauler contract. Cohen called Manhattan Beach an environmental leader and praised the 18-member Environmental Task Force for creating policies to help the City become more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.

See State of City, page 19

## Special Partnership is Special Indeed

Special Olympics and Mattel have created a very special partnership – from the launch of the Young Athletes program in 2005 to one of the largest corporate volunteer forces globally.

Special Olympics leaders from around the world gathered for their annual board meeting at Mattel's global headquarters in El Segundo, which served as both a meeting location and a place to have some fun. The Special Olympics International Board of Directors joined more than 50 Special Olympics young athletes and 60 Mattel employee volunteers at an outdoor event celebrating the partnership, hosting numerous activity stations, soccer and basketball games.

Choreographer JaQuel Knight, who helped bring Barbie to life in her first music

and dance video, taught event attendees how to dance "The Barbie" – a series of doll-like moves and grooves.

Mattel, Inc. and the Mattel Children's Foundation have partnered with Special Olympics since 2005 to expand the involvement of children with intellectual disabilities in Special Olympics activities around the world. Mattel's CFO, Kevin Farr, serves as president of the Mattel Children's Foundation and is on the Special Olympics Board. Mattel supports three programs – the Young Athletes Program, Special Olympics Get Into It™ school-based curriculum and Team Mattel, which engages Mattel employees as volunteers around the world. Team Mattel is the largest global corporate

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