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BIG CHECK — Fitness doesn't just strengthen your health, it can also boost the bank account! At least that was the case this week for the Beverly Hills Education Foundation, which received a \$30,000 check for money raised from the inaugural Beverly Hills 5K Run/Walk & Fitness Blast. Pictured above, from left: April Jergens, Jeannine Ramer, Dion Jackson, Troy Titus-Barrow, Leti Abrego, Annette Saleh, Marc Saleh, Michael Bregy, Cindy Trost, Doreece Artal and Rose Kaiserman. For more on the donation, see page 4.

City, School District At Odds Over Continued Fight Against Subway Extension

By Laura Coleman

Beverly Hills Mayor Julian Gold wasted no time in making his thoughts known once he found out that Superintendent Michael Bregy had emailed Beverly Hills Unified parents on Wednesday about his intention to involve the City in the school district's fight against the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) having set up its subway construction staging area directly adjacent to 33 portable classrooms in which

Beverly Hills High School students are now being taught.

"The district's statement was misleading, does not represent the City's position on the subway and was released without our knowledge," Gold wrote in a statement distributed through City spokesperson Therese Kosterman.

Bregy's email emphasized that the City continued to support the school district in its continued fight against Metro's Purple Line Extension project.

(see 'METRO SUBWAY' page 21)

THIS ISSUE



Buster Brown is a 6-month-old Yorkie mix hoping to find his forever home. **4**



The BHPD held a flag ceremony Thursday in honor of National Peace Officers Memorial Day. **5**



Playboy Enterprises is set to leave Beverly Hills for a location in Westwood. **10**

- Sports **19**
- Birthdays **22**
- Letters to the Editor **31**



George Christy,
Page 6

A Wise Man Of Letters And Of Law, Attorney Reeve Chud Offers Acute Observations About The World Today. He And Wife Marian Are Loyal Contributors Who Enhance The Good Life Of Our Community

CLASSIFIEDS 25

- Announcements
- Real Estate
- Rentals
- Sales
- and More

Beverly Hills Developer Facing Federal Charges Of Bribing County Employee

By Matt Lopez

Arman Gabae, a well-known Beverly Hills real estate developer, was arrested at his home Wednesday morning by FBI officials on federal bribery charges.

Gabae, 57, who is known professionally as Arman Gabay, is charged with paying monthly bribes to a Los Angeles County employee for six years, according to a press release from the Department of Justice.

In addition to the monthly



cash bribes, the charges allege that Gabae submitted offers on a \$1.1 million home in Santa Rosa for the

(see 'DEVELOPER BRIBERY' page 11)

Zoning Administrator To Hear Appeal On Hadid's 901 Strada Vecchia On June 7



By Matt Lopez

A hearing set for June 7 by the Los Angeles Planning Department could go a long way toward determining the fate of celebrity megamansion developer Mohamed Hadid's 901 Strada Vecchia in Bel Air.

The hearing by the Zoning Administrator will be addressing an appeal from a group of residents regarding the issuance of an Erosion Control Plan for the megamansion.

In a filing on behalf of Bel-Air Residents Joe and Beatriz Horacek and John and Judith Bedrosian, the group's attorney Victor de la Cruz wrote that the residents are appealing an Erosion Control Plan approved by the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) "that is nothing more than an illegal scheme aimed at disguising significant amounts of grading that require discretionary

(see '901 STRADA VECCHIA' page 11)

MEET THE MAYOR

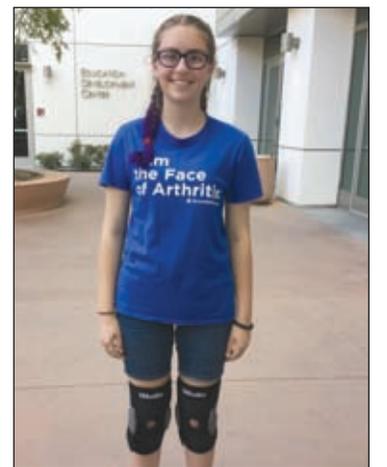
Step right up and meet the mayor! All are welcome to meet Mayor Julian Gold at a rooftop community event on Wednesday, May 23 at 4 p.m. for the first of what will be a monthly tradition. Residents are encouraged to listen and provide feedback on the future of Beverly Hills. The meeting is set for the rooftop terrace of the Chamber of Commerce building at 9400 S. Santa Monica Blvd.

Broken Elevator Triggers Disability In BHHS Freshman

By Laura Coleman

For most people, when an elevator is out of service, taking the stairs might be considered a healthy alternative. For 15-year-old Rhiannon Carter, a Beverly Hills High School freshman who was diagnosed with childhood arthritis at the age of two, walking too many flights of stairs might land her in a wheelchair or in braces.

When the elevator in BHHS's Science and Technology Center (STC) building broke down almost four months ago, Rhiannon found herself with the choice of walking up to 18 flights of stairs during the day to reach classes or walking further to access another elevator. The timing of the elevator breaking down (although it has worked occa-



Rhiannon Carter

sionally during the months since it first broke down) was particularly ironic; in January Rhiannon's doctor told her she was in medicated remission.

(see 'BHHS DISABILITY' page 21)



Celebrity Photo Agency/Scott Downie



PAULA AND CYNDI — Paula Abdul and Cyndi Lauper participated in the WE Day California to celebrate young people changing the world at the Forum

For more photos, see George Christy's column on page 6.

Local Realtor Splits Time Between Real Estate, Dance With Conga Kids Salsa Class

By Minnie Leaman

For many, it is not a problem if a business lunch runs late. For Brad Gluckstein, President and CEO of Apex Realty and the founder and co-owner of the Conga Room, a simple late meeting can alter his entire day.

One recent weekday afternoon, Gluckstein rushes from his meeting with lenders off to L.A. Live where he quickly sheds his suit and tie for jeans and a suede jacket with a bit more bling.

While Gluckstein spends his days focused on business related to his company, which specializes in development, property management and brokerage services, he ends most days teaching the Conga Kids program at his Latin dance studio, the Conga Room.

Conga Kids is set to hold its

Spring Final Competition at the Conga Room on Wednesday, May 23.

Conga Kids offers 10-week courses to elementary and middle school students, where they learn Salsa, Merengue, Tango, Foxtrot and Swing.

At the end of the classes, 10 students and four alternates are selected to go to the competition phase of Conga Kids at L.A. Live.

Gluckstein said that the competition not only gives children from the Westside an opportunity "to get a keener understanding of what the rest of the fabric of the community



CONGA KIDS— Brad Gluckstein (center, back) is surrounded by members of his Conga Kids dance class. Gluckstein is a realtor by day and a children's dance instructor by night.

looks like, but also presents an opportunity for those kids to understand what Westside kids are like."

Two years ago, when Conga Kids first started, there were 600 students in the program. Today, they have over 6,000 in seven school districts including; Los Angeles Unified, Compton, Pomona, El Monte, Mountain View, Beverly Hills and Lynwood.

Gluckstein said his love of Latin culture dates back to Beverly Hills High School where he thoroughly enjoyed and excelled in honors Spanish. He later took classes in Spanish Literature at UC Berkeley, eventually moving to Spain for several years after he graduated.

Gluckstein said he got the idea to take over the Conga

Room a five years ago, when one of his daughters participated in a dance program at El Rodeo Elementary. He recalled loving the program so much that he became the board chair.

Two years ago, Gluckstein transitioned the name and non-profit into Conga Kids, which he believed would enhance the community.

"The brand equity and notoriety of the Conga Room regionally was so strong that it just made sense," he said. "The Conga Room had a responsibility to give back to the community."

For more information, visit: <https://www.congakids.com>.

DEVELOPER BRIBERY

(continued from page 1)

staffer, in exchange for the developer obtaining a \$45 million county lease in the Hawthorne Mall, which Gabae was redeveloping.

According to the federal complaint, Gabae was pushing for the county to enter into a 10-year, \$45 million lease to rent space in the mall for the county's Department of Public Social Services.

Last year, Arman, along with his brother Mark, purchased 27,400 square feet of office and industrial space in San Gabriel Valley for \$26 million in an off-market deal.

The anchor tenant of that building is Los Angeles County Health Services.

The staffer, who is said to be cooperating with the FBI, negotiated leases for the county to rent office space from private parties and had "significant autonomy to contractually bind the county."

Gabae, who is a co-founder and co-managing partner in a Hollywood-based real

estate firm the Charles Company, is said to have paid the employee \$1,000 or more in cash every month for the six-year span.

"Business leaders who use their wealth and influence to corrupt our government are a scourge on our community," United States Attorney Nicola T. Hanna said. "No one, no matter how prominent or wealthy, is above the law."

The FBI's investigation included intercepting communications that revealed Gabae had taken steps to purchase a property in Santa Rosa for the county employee.

Gabae eventually found a property on eight acres of land listed for \$1.1 million and allegedly told an associate to make an offer on the home "ASAP" as a bribe.

Further communications show Gabae went to great lengths to conceal his ownership of the property.

If convicted of bribery, Gabae would face a maximum of 10 years in federal prison.

cubic yards of grading are allowed without discretionary entitlements, which makes it puzzling that Hadid was ever allowed additional grading at the site.

"Simply put," writes De la Cruz in the lawsuit. "LADBS erred in allowing Mr. Hadid to subsume grading under an erosion control plan to somehow evade discretionary review."

De la Cruz and the group of Bel-Air residents said they believe that the Erosion Control Plan is simply a way for Hadid to continue work under the nose of inspectors.

The appeal hearing is set for June 7 at 10 a.m. in the West Los Angeles Municipal Building at 1645 Corinth Ave. Los Angeles.

901 STRADA VECCHIA

(continued from page 1)

entitlements and California Environmental Quality Act review for the entire project."

The Erosion Control Plan approved by LADBS allowed 2,283 cubic yards of grading, which the lawsuit says brings the total amount of grading at the site to date to 14,200 cubic yards – all without a single valid grading permit having ever been issued to the project.

"Approximately 17,000 cubic yards of grading has now taken place at the site without the issuance of a single valid grading permit or required discretionary approval." De la Cruz writes.

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