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NOT A MOMMA'S BOY
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Santa Monica Daily Press

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THE ADJUSTING THE YAW ISSUE

LIFESTYLE



LET THERE BE LIGHTS

Local skatepark lit for the first time
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Gabriel Shea Hacker news@smdp.com

You gonna eat the rest of that?

Law would make leaving food for homeless illegal

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Daily Press Staff Writer

REED PARK After leaving a community meeting at the Miles Playhouse, Julie Rusk saw a woman remove a half-eaten salmon from the trunk of her car with the intent of leaving it on the grass in hopes that some of the homeless might enjoy it.

While donating is always encouraged, the city's human services manager had to tell the woman that what she was doing was wrong, and could soon be illegal.

"Really, she was just trying to find a direct way to help people and not throw out food," Rusk said. "I understand that desire to not want to be wasteful and to help people too, but leaving it at the park is really not the best way to have food stored safely and distributed to people."

People looking to lend a helping hand, as well as clean out their pantry and closet, continue to drop off food and clothing at local parks, especially Reed Park. Sometimes, large amounts of leftovers from professionally-catered events have been left as well, creating a health risk, officials said.

To protect public health and aesthetics, while guarding against rodents and other infestations, the City Council is considering banning the practice of leaving food, clothing or other property unattended.

"We feel like we have a very established network of service providers where people can make donations and those who need help can get more than just a meal for today, but can access a comprehensive set of services that will help them tomorrow," Rusk said.

If approved, the ordinance would become effective 30 days after adoption. Violation of the ordinance would be a

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Kick and push after dusk

BY IRENE MANAHAN

Special to the Daily Press

MID-CITY The grinding and shredding continues even after the sun sets at the Cove Skatepark, which staged a celebration over the weekend to mark the installation of lights.

For many skaters, the illumination was a long time coming. The Cove, located on Olympic Boulevard at 14th Street, was often criticized by skaters following its much ballyhooed 2005 opening. Taking safety into consideration, the park would regularly close around dusk. Depending on the season, the park's gates could have been locked as early as 5 p.m.

Since the lights were switched on, the Cove has routinely hosted a flurry of activity until 10 p.m.

On Saturday, a ceremony marked the park's official late night hours, but the first night sessions really kicked off on Friday, April 13, according to Rick Boisdeau, park staff.

"Everyone was really happy about the lights. We've all been waiting," Boisdeau said.

Skaters at the park all seem to agree the lights are a great thing.

"It's about time," said professional skateboarder Eric Tuma, 34. "The installation of these lights was long overdue."

A cake, games, raffles and skating were all part of the weekend celebration.

"The ceremony was pretty fun," said 14-year-old skater

Jason Landau, who took home a new skateboard from winning the raffle. "This gives me something to do at night, and now I can skate without little kids being here."

The new lights and hours also allow skaters to make better use of their time.

"It's become especially convenient for older skaters who come after work. Instead of rushing to get to the park before it closes, they can come at their leisure," said Boisdeau.



IT'S ABOUT TIME. THE INSTALLATION OF THESE LIGHTS WAS LONG OVERDUE."

Eric Tuma, Professional skateboarder

Tuma, who is sponsored by Santa Monica Airlines and DVS Shoe Co., agrees that the late hours best suit working adults.

"It's convenient for people who work during the day," said Tuma, who skates at a park at least a few days a week. "Probably half of the members here are adults, so since the park opened, we've needed these lights to do our thing."

The two-year wait was due primarily to locating the finances. The lights were paid for by the city, and once the budget allowed for their installation, the city planted them

within months.

"I heard that private investors wanted to install lights before the park even opened," said Tuma, who suspects the city was trying to see if the park was worth the money before they invested in the lights.

But over the years, the park has far exceeded expectations, especially in terms of its high enrollment and popularity among Santa Monica skaters.

"I understand why that was an issue, and now I'm just waiting for a water fountain and sound system," said a smiling Tuma.

The park's new hours are from noon to 10 p.m. on the weekdays and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

New bike-only sessions are also affected. Now bikers can enjoy the park on Thursdays from 3:20 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6:20 p.m.

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V FOR VICTORY

Alexandra Blacker, 19, (front) holds a Pilates pose during the annual St. Jude's fundraiser 'Pilates Day in the Park' on May 5, 2007. The event was hosted by Power Pilates. Money raised during the event went to benefit the St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Fabian Lewkowicz fabianl@smdp.com

THE SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS IS CURRENTLY **LOOKING FOR CONTRIBUTORS AND INTERNS** TO HELP US AUGMENT OUR **ENTERTAINMENT COVERAGE**. EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD IS GREAT, BUT WE'LL TALK TO ANYONE WITH **A FRESH VOICE AND A WILLINGNESS TO WRITE ORIGINAL AND, AHM, ENTERTAINING COPY**. GOT WHAT IT TAKES?

CONTACT ASSOCIATE EDITOR DANIEL ARCHULETA AT DANIELA@SMDP.COM.

LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION

Group for writers gives some much needed inspiration

FROM PROSE PAGE 3

read." Members got a kick out of Shapiro's short story about "Viagra Falls," which ultimately became Niagara Falls when a group of women blew up the tainted waters because they could no longer take their men's insatiable sexual appetites.

"You really don't know what people are going to come up with from one week to the next," said Sandra Smith, a retired nurse who is currently working on a non-fiction piece for the New York Times and has hopes of writing her own column. "You get so many ideas from other people's writing and suggestions."

For three hours, the group sits in a back room of the library and performs various writing exercises. Following each one, members are encouraged to read their work — ranging from light to very dark — aloud for others to critique. One person's story can lead to discussions about pacing, or appropriateness, character development versus story development, and the importance of being descriptive — showing the reader instead of merely telling them.

"The criticism is very important," said Dan Anzel, a freelance writer who has been published in the Los Angeles Times. "I started a short story and within the first two pages, I had five comments that really helped. It's excellent and has really improved my stories."

Stories presented Tuesday ranged from a tale about a land made of diamonds and platinum to a bank robbery gone bad in Dallas to an obnoxious boyfriend who tries to pressure his girlfriend into having an abortion.

Most of those who participate in the group are retired or disabled and are, therefore, able to commit three hours each week to the cause, while others float in and out. There have been writers from China, Ireland, Australia and Africa.

"Perhaps a lot of people who walk through here have their hands in different baskets," said Mary Phillips. "I'm retired, so I have the time, but really, it's about one's dedication."

After sharing some of their work, members threw out five words to include in this week's writing prompt. They included "moonlight," "flexible," "dancing," "radical" and "lizard."

The writing group is free and open to the public. Those looking to test their creative skills can find out more by contacting the Fairview Library at (310) 450-0443.

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