



Cloudy with temps in the mid 60s

# BEVERLY PRESS

INSIDE

Beverly Hills schools projects over budget p. 5

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## Councilman Ryu runs with Runyon expansion

■ Plan to buy land would grow park by 10 acres

BY GREGORY CORNFIELD

Runyon Canyon Park – one of Angelenos’ favorite spots to exercise and enjoy some of the best views that Southern California has to offer – could soon expand if the city secures the purchase of nearby land.

Councilman David Ryu, 4th District, last week introduced a motion to transfer funds to extend Runyon Canyon Park by purchasing private land to the northwest of the park at 2450 Solar Dr.

The board of Recreation and Parks (RAP) directed staff to explore the possibility of acquiring a portion of privately owned land, known as the Knoll property, and its associated trail. The private property is approximately 4.76 acres, and the rest is unincorporated.

Under the proposal, almost five acres would be added to the park, and more than 10 acres would be preserved as open space.

See Land page 26

## Miracle Mile residents debate if HPOZ is best tool for the job

■ Opponents challenge commission’s vote to advance proposed plan

BY GREGORY CORNFIELD

Opponents to the Miracle Mile HPOZ are holding out hope this week that the proposed preservation plan will be declared invalid after the city planning commission’s eight appointees made a second vote to advance it earlier this month.

According to officials with the planning department, the city council’s planning and land use management (PLUM) committee is still expected next month to consider the HPOZ – a historic designation and corresponding regulations to ensure preservation. But leaders of the group “Say No HPOZ” – who argue the accompanying regulations are too strict – said the planning commission’s actions to send it to PLUM were “illegitimate and must be vacated.”

The commission’s first vote on the HPOZ on Dec. 8 resulted in a 4-4 tie, which would have defeated the proposal.

“The motion fails, ladies and



photo by Gregory Cornfield

The character of the homes in the Miracle Mile will be preserved if the HPOZ is approved by city council next year.

gentlemen,” planning commission president David Ambroz said, which would “kill it.”

But Ambroz, who voted for approval, introduced the same proposal for a second vote after appealing to the other commissioners that they should advance the HPOZ to PLUM to ensure the neighborhood would be safe from development after the

Interim Control Ordinance expires in March.

“Let’s not kill it to endanger what we all agree on,” Ambroz said.

Commissioner Renee Wilson also said she does not believe the area would be protected solely by the recently approved

See City page 26



photo by Gregory Cornfield

Michael Flint, left, talks about the effort to produce the film “Angels in the Sky,” based on the efforts of his father, Mitchell Flint, right, and others who fought in the Israeli War of Independence.

## The ‘real heroes’ of Beverly Hills

■ Entertainer works to create film in Beverly Hills residents’ names

BY GREGORY CORNFIELD

The Beverly Hills City Council members were noticeably overwhelmed with pride and excitement Tuesday, as they honored two residents who are considered “real heroes” of the Israeli War of Independence.

“I don’t know if Israel would be there if it wasn’t for you. I don’t even know if I would be here if it wasn’t for you,” said Councilwoman Lili Bosse,

daughter to two Holocaust survivors.

World War II veteran pilots and Beverly Hills residents – Mitchell Flint and the late Aaron “Red” Finkel – were founding members of “Machal,” a group of non-Israelis who fought in the 1948 War for Independence and whose heroism contributed directly to the creation of the nation of Israel.

The council members on Tuesday presented a proclamation for the two veterans for their extraordinary contributions to the formation of the State of Israel.

Entertainer Pat Boone on Tuesday spoke about the birth of

See Council page 25

## Holiday miracle delivered on Wilshire Blvd.

BY EDWIN FOLVEN

Toy drives are a holiday tradition, and this year the Greater Miracle Mile Chamber of Commerce and Miracle Mile Toys and Games collected donations for children of homeless families.

A highlight of the toy drive wasn’t the donations from the many businesses who participated, rather a gift from a child. Seven-year-old Miracle Mile resident Adelene Olive Gruber donated some of her prized toys to People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) with the help of Miracle Mile Toys and Games.

The gift was the result of a package for the girl’s father being mistakenly delivered to the toy store at 5363 Wilshire Blvd. The package was for Michael Gruber, an architect whose office is located at 6363 Wilshire Blvd. Miracle Mile Toys and Games owner Christine Johnson said staff members recognized the name on the package, found the owner online and called

See Donation page 25



photo courtesy of Christine Johnson, Miracle Mile Toys and Games

Seven-year-old Adelene Olive Gruber donated Shopkins to children in need as part of a toy drive at Miracle Mile Toys and Games.

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# Donation brightens holidays for children

From page 1

Gruber to let him know they received it.

“His office was a five-minute walk away. He came by, saw the toy bins (for PATH) and said, ‘my daughter has some presents,’” Johnson said. “It turns out they were Shopkins, one of the hottest toys. She is quite the collector and she took all the ones she didn’t need any more and wrapped them up for other kids.”

Shopkins are little figurines that come in packaged sets. Gruber explained that his daughter, who goes by Olive, had accumulated dozens of duplicate Shopkins and the family wanted to give them to children in need.

He initially reached out to Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, but learned the hospital can only accept new packaged gifts because of protocols to prevent

infections. He wasn’t sure where to donate the toys until he saw the bins at Miracle Mile Toys and Games.

“It was all by coincidence. I was trying to find an avenue for these extra toys my daughter has and was at a dead end as to who to give them to,” Gruber said. “There were just so many, three to five of the same thing. Our thought was to give them to other kids so they could be beneficial and it would put a smile on their faces. The chance meeting with Christine worked out perfectly.”

Gruber said Olive wrapped the duplicate Shopkins and a few days later, approximately 100 packages were donated to the toy drive.

“She went with my wife to drop them off,” Gruber said. “She is very shy and quiet, but it is some-

thing she picked up on. She did all the work. She is very happy she gave.”

Johnson said the donation was a heartwarming gesture, and the toys were delivered to PATH for a holiday party held last weekend.

“I was blown away,” Johnson said. “I thought, what a collection this little girl has and how amazing it is that she wanted to share them with other kids. I was so impressed they wrapped them all. It was very festive and sweet.”

Gruber said he hopes the children enjoy the Shopkins, and added that donating them was a learning experience about the power of giving. It’s a tradition he plans to continue.

“It doesn’t matter which children receive the gifts, only that they received a gift,” Gruber said. “It was all for good.”

# Animal rights supporters honored at gala



photo by Matthew Fried

Actors and Others for Animals, one of the oldest animal welfare organizations in Los Angeles, recently celebrated at the annual “Joy to the Animals” luncheon and fundraiser at the Universal City Hilton and Towers.

Awards were presented to Laurie and Peter Marshall, Loretta Swit, and Erin and George Pennacchio. Pictured presenting an award to Swit, of the television series “M.A.S.H.,” are co-stars Mike Farrell (left) and Jamie Farr. Founded in 1971 by the late actor Richard Basehart and his wife Diana, Actors and Others strives to eliminate pet overpopulation and ensure good care and protection for pets. All proceeds support spay, neuter and veterinary assistance for low-income individuals. For information, visit [www.actorsandothers.com](http://www.actorsandothers.com).

# Council recognizes veteran pilots as ‘heroes’

From page 1

the Israeli Air Force and Flint accepted the proclamation with Finkel’s family.

Finkel and Flint were original members of the Israeli Air Force’s

first fighter squadron and helped train Israel’s first military pilots.

According to the proclamation, Finkel was a founding member of the Israeli Air Force’s First Fighter

Squadron 101 and his heroism “contributed directly to the creation of the State of Israel.”

Finkel was a longtime resident of Beverly Hills, who after the war, studied for his real estate license in night classes at Beverly Hills High School and whose son Joshua Finkel attended Beverly Hills schools.

Flint flew more than 50 missions for the Israeli Air Force during the War of Independence, and helped train Israel’s first military pilots. He flew 27 types of military aircraft, and is the only person in

Aviation History to fly the four greatest fighter planes of WWII, the Messerschmitt, the Spitfire – the Corsair and the Mustang – in war time combat situations, and

retired as a Commander in the U.S. Navy. Flint has been an important part of the Beverly Hills community for more than 60 years as a resident and prominent local attorney.

# Money collected in federal civil actions increase funds for victims

United States Attorney Eileen M. Decker has announced that her office collected more than \$71.7 million in criminal and civil actions in fiscal year 2016. More than \$27 million was collected in criminal actions, and \$44.6 million was collected in civil actions.

The United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California worked with other U.S. Attorney’s Offices and agencies within the U.S. Department of Justice to collect an additional \$7.8 million in joint cases – primarily civil matters.

Additionally, the U.S. Attorney’s office, working with partner agencies and divisions, collected \$29.9 million in asset forfeiture actions in the fiscal year that ended on Sept. 30. Forfeited assets deposited into the U.S. Department of Justice Assets Forfeiture Fund reimburse crime victims and are used by law enforcement.

“Every year, my office helps collect millions of dollars that goes to help victims of crime and to the United States Treasury to fund government programs,” Decker said. “We are committed to recovering every dollar from defendants involved in criminal activity, as well as working on behalf of the victims of crime.”

The United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California is based in Los Angeles and has branch offices in Santa Ana and Riverside. Currently, approximately 270 Assistant United States Attorneys serve nearly 20 million residents from Orange County to San Luis Obispo County.

U.S. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch also announced that the U.S. Justice Department collected more than \$15.3 billion in civil and criminal actions in fiscal year 2016. The figure is five times more than the approximately \$3 billion budget

**“We are committed to recovering every dollar from defendants involved in criminal activity.”**

*-U.S. Attorney Eileen M. Decker*

for the 94 U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the main litigating divisions of the department.

U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the litigating divisions are responsible for enforcing and collecting civil and criminal debts owed to the United States, as well as criminal debts owed to federal crime victims. Federal law requires defendants to pay restitution to victims who have suffered a physical injury or financial loss. While restitution is paid to the victim, criminal fines and felony assessments are paid to the department’s Crime Victims’ Fund, which distributes the funds to state victim compensation and victim assistance programs.

## Answers From Page 21



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