



Morning clouds, with temps around 70°

# BEVERLY PRESS

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## Vigil Marks Anniversary of AIDS

■ Hundreds March in Solidarity on Santa Monica Boulevard

BY MATT WILHALME

On the evening of the Remember AIDS candle-light vigil on June 5, heavy rain clouds hung over a crowd of more than 200 people.

But while the group gathered together and began to light their candles, sprinkles of rain could not snuff out the fire in the hearts of the crowd who were there to mark the 30th anniversary of the disease that took the lives of more than 10,000 members of the West Hollywood community.

Undeterred and a little wet, they began the march down Santa Monica Boulevard from the Matthew Shepard Memorial Triangle to the West Hollywood Park. Members of the group shared memories of the chaos and fear they felt more than three decades ago, as well as the stories of friends and family members who became some of the 30 million victims of the epidemic worldwide.

"I just remember way back in the day it used to be a death sentence," said Tod Macofsky, 47, a 10-year resident of West Hollywood. "I am here to commemorate a milestone ... and also

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More than 200 people gathered in West Hollywood on June 5 in observance of the 30th Anniversary of AIDS. photo by Matt Wilhalme

## Fairfax High May Lose Beloved Music Director

■ Band Leader Is Not Among Teachers Whose Layoff Notice was Rescinded

BY MATT WILHALME

Outside Ray Vizcarra's Fairfax High School classroom door, you can hear the school band playing.

"'Ran Kan Kan' by Tito Puente," the band director said, identifying the song as the band played without its leader.

But for Vizcarra, and many other art, music and theatre teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School

District (LAUSD), the image is sadly fitting. Of the 3,400 reduction in force (RIF) notices to be rescinded because of a deal struck with the teachers unions, his will not be one of them.

"As far as I am concerned it's not a done deal yet," Fairfax High School Principal Ed Zubiarte said. "There will be a music program, but there is a question because this is the man who has resurrected the

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photo by Matt Wilhalme

Fairfax High School band director Ray Vizcarra resurrected the music program at the school after it had been defunct for decades.

## CRA Lends a Hand in Fixing Up Hollywood

■ Agency Provides Loans for Small Business Projects

BY EDWIN FOLVEN

A coat of paint or power-washing the windows can go a long way in attracting customers to a business. Now, business and property owners in Hollywood can apply for loans to fix up their storefronts through a new program launched on June 3 by the Los Angeles City Council and the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA).

The program will provide loans of up to \$200,000 to finance new signage, paint or upgrade facades, or complete other exterior improvements that will make the businesses look better.

"The program targets small businesses and property owners with loans they can use to fix up their

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The Bettie Page clothing store on Hollywood Boulevard was recently renovated, and the roll-up doors were removed. photo by Edwin Folven

## Prang Throws Hat in Ring for 42nd District Election

■ Four Candidates are Vying to Succeed Feuer, So Far

BY MATT WILHALME

As 42nd District Assembly-member Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles) terms out in 2012, with dates to officially file as a candidate still undetermined and the district's boundaries unknown, several contenders have already announced their intent to run for the office.

Jeff Prang, David Hernandez, Jr., Andrew Lachman and Brian Johnson have already filed their letters of intent to run with the secretary of state's office.

"Of course it's frustrating knowing that there are some tremendous unknowns," said

Prang, a 14-year West Hollywood city councilmember.

These days, political campaigns are extremely expensive because of the sheer size of districts in California, so the intention to run and fundraising process can begin up to two years before the official election, Prang said.

"All I know is I am going to be in a district, and there is going to be an election," said Hernandez, a community advocate and North Hollywood resident since 1955.

Tasked with redrawing the 40 senate and 80 assembly district lines, the Citizens Redistricting Commission has been holding public hearings and meetings to discuss reapportionment with the community.

Ideally, the commission will

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# AIDS Vigil Held in West Hollywood

From page 1

celebrate the life of a friend who passed away three years ago.”

Nearly 30 years ago, the first reports of a mysterious disease that affected gay men began making headlines.

“I read about it, but I didn’t really understand what it was all about it, but it was scary because people were dying,” said Ray Montoya, who was 19-years old at the time.

Across the country, hospitals were filled with patients carrying the disease with the newly designated name of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In Los Angeles, Olympia Medical Center became one of the first and only AIDS wards in the country, with San Francisco and New York having the only other two locations.

“People were afraid, and hospitals were not set up for AIDS ... they didn’t know anything at the time,” said Steve Rosenthal, Olympia Medical Center marketing manager.

Still known today as the immune suppressed unit (ISU), the ward at Olympia has retained much of the same staff of nurses and physicians from its inception.

During the 1980s and 1990s,

there could be anywhere from 20 to 30 patients in the ward suffering from a life threatening infection or Kaposi’s Sarcoma, a form of cancer that became associated with AIDS,

**“I am now on a new journey that doesn’t have as much fear.”**

-Rebekka Armstrong

according to Dr. Michael Gottlieb, staff physician at Olympia Medical Center and one of the first to diagnose the disease.

“There was a sofa bed pulled out, and partners were there all the time and were able to bring patients food from the outside and it really was a community,” Gottlieb said. “In the bad days, the worst days, doctors and patients were in the same boat. We were feeling powerless, often in the face of one life threatening infection after another. I remember patients being very understanding that we as doctors were frustrated as well. Patients faced these infec-

tions with remarkable strength, they weren’t angry with us for failing to save their lives, they understood it was a tall order.”

But after 30 years, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, who organized the event, President Michael Weinstein noted that possibly the most important discovery in the battle against HIV/AIDS has come in the last month.

A study conducted by the HIV Prevention Trials Network, funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, has recently shown that “antiretroviral treatment can prevent sexual transmission of HIV among heterosexual couples in whom one partner is HIV-infected and the other is not.” The study revealed a 96 percent reduction in the risk of transmission.

The study confirms what has already been documented in uncontrolled studies, Gottlieb said. Treatment is a needed public health intervention.

As people participating in the AIDS anniversary walked on, they passed underneath AHF billboards encouraging HIV testing, and passed many West Hollywood bars full of people who turned to snap pictures and stare at the hundreds of lighted candles.

“Twenty-two years ago, I was twenty-two years old,” Rebekka Armstrong said. “I was given an HIV diagnosis. The next five years I was filled with fear, it was a very dark time for me. I witnessed discrimination, fear, death, anxiety. I fought medical battles, and I won. For those of you out here tonight who fight the fight with me, we are still here thirty years later. It’s a beautiful thing.”

As the group gathered in West Hollywood Park, a screen cycled through an endless list of the names of those who died from the disease.

“This evening is about remembrance of our friends, lovers, the guy who worked at the store, the woman who delivered our mail,” West Hollywood City Councilmember John D’Amico told the quiet crowd.

D’Amico asked the crowd to yell



photo by Matt Wilhalme

More than 200 people participated in the AIDS anniversary observance organized by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation.



photo by Matt Wilhalme

Participants gathered at the Matthew Shepard Memorial Triangle before walking to West Hollywood Park.

out the names of people who had died, and may have participated in the event. Slowly at first, people began to shout out the names of their loved ones, until almost the entire crowd was yelling out different names.

For those living with HIV and those affected by the disease, the event was a time for recommitment to the fight.

“I am now on a new journey that doesn’t have as much fear,” Armstrong said. “It wears a different kind of face to prevent the

young people who didn’t get to witness what we saw in the ‘80s. We saw the AIDS face, we know what it smelled like, we looked at it and we saw death. We saw a lot of very frightening things.”

Watching the names of the victims continue to tick by on the screen, the crowd looked on in silence for a few moments until a single voice began a solemn chorus of “This Little Light of Mine.”

“This little light of mine, I’m going let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.”

## Building on Sweetzer Receives Honors

From page 4

Owings and Merrill LLP (SOM).

“It would have been easy to stay in Chicago,” he said. “I knew exactly where I would be in forty and fifty years.”

But after a decade at SOM, and a move to L.A., Istanbulu started his own company 25 years ago.

In December of 2005, Hertz purchased the property at 1200 Sweetzer Ave. and began interviewing potential firms to work from the ground up on the construction. Hertz considered almost 20 applicants before he met Istanbulu.

Hertz was looking for someone who had worked in West Hollywood before, who had a contemporary flare, but more importantly would be someone with who he could get along.

Istanbulu fit the profile and presented the developer with a design that broke away from the typical “railroad car-style” housing prevalent in the area with a stacked model blueprint, in a form he had previously constructed in Japan – which had received an award.

Breaking the location’s design into three distinct buildings,

Istanbulu was able to create the sense of individual homes on the property, and was able to use natural light in each building. But after finishing construction on the pro-

ject, Istanbulu didn’t just walk away; he left his fingerprints on everything inside of the homes, from color choices to countertops.

“He’s involved in all those



photo by Matt Wilhalme

The building on Sweetzer Avenue in West Hollywood has a distinctive, colorful design.

processes,” Hertz said. “It’s nice to work with someone who is not only savvy architecturally, but also with the interior.”

Istanbulu currently has two other

projects of the same style in the works in West Hollywood. The townhouses that have been sold have ranged in price from \$520,000 to \$1.1 million.

## Waitress is Fondly Remembered

From page 4

“Michael Mann would sit in her station for hours, before he became famous, and work on his writing. For a waitress, that is a big thing, because you may have only three tables,” Canter said. “Shotgun Tom Kelly, from K-Earth radio, was also one of her regulars.”

Canter said Cocchiario worked between three and five-days-a-week as a waitress and one night as a manager. Lazar said a little over five years ago, Cocchiario was diagnosed with lung cancer and had a lung removed, after which the cancer went into remission.

“Those were a pretty damn good five years,” Lazar said.

Within the past couple of months, the cancer returned and she was diagnosed with a brain tumor, Lazar added. Cocchiario

**“She became friends with all of her customers.”**

-Jacqueline Canter,  
Canter’s Deli

stopped working at the deli a few weeks ago, and never told anyone about the cancer. She is survived by her sons, Michael and Danny Trager.

A memorial and celebration of Cocchiario’s life will be held on June 16 at 11 a.m. at the deli, 419 N. Fairfax Ave.

For information, contact Jacqueline Canter at (323)651-2030.