

Letters Part I

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A call of warning

Dear ER:

Last Friday, as my husband and I were driving down Alma, a young man about 10 years old was weaving on his bicycle and almost hit a car stopped at a stop sign. Why? He was on his cell phone! Wonder where he learned that. Can't wait until he is behind the wheel of a car!

Julia Tedesco

Manhattan Beach

Indoor gym for an indoor generation?

Dear ER:

I am against building a gym at Hermosa Valley School because I feel that unscripted play is very important for kids.

In 1986 Valley School was built to support 500 children; in 2005 we have two schools and 1,060 children. There are 170 more students squeezed into the current Valley playground area while plans call for building two classrooms, a library, science lab and a high school sized gym on an already-impacted site. That many bodies in a small space is a recipe for injuries and fights. My son laments that he has to wait in long lines to get into games at lunchtime, sometimes to no avail.

Free play at recess is very important for kids at this age, it teaches them social skills that they don't get much of in this indoor generation. They have to come up with rules, organize teams, learn to cooperate and resolve conflicts. If we build a gym we will be reducing space for unscripted play during lunch and recess and creating a place where kids have to follow adult rules with adult supervision. If we build a gym we will lose the popular handball courts which are too expensive to rebuild. There will be continual costs to maintain the building and we will have to hire an additional maintenance worker to clean and supervise the use of the gym during non-school hours.

Let's add basketball, volleyball and tether ball courts and buy sit-up pads and decent balls. Let's use our limited funds to build quality classrooms, library, and science labs.

Miyo Prassas

Hermosa Beach

The Heart in pieces

Dear ER:

I attended a meeting last Thursday night hosted by a developer who plans to build 12 units in the former Heart of the City area in Redondo Beach. It's not a particularly large project by itself, but it does reveal how our city staff and Council are working quietly behind the scenes to encourage more residential development and eventually get the Heart of the City on a piecemeal basis.

To accommodate this particular development, staff is recommending the City rezone some of the property in my neighborhood from commercial to medium density residential. This will add 79 units to my little neighborhood, or 23 units per acre, and be out of character with what is here now. While this project would replace some rundown buildings that need replacing, I can't help but think the property owner let it go through neglect so the City and residents would grow tired of looking at a blighted area and hand him a huge windfall by up-zoning his property for residential development.

It seems to be working like a charm, as does this piecemeal approach to implementing the Heart of the City. I attended another meeting a couple weeks ago where another developer is still proposing a hotel and condos on