



Angels Gate Cultural Center Open Studios

By Doug Epperhart, Board Member

A hot Sunday afternoon in early May saw crowds ambling through many of the artists' studios at Angels Gate Cultural Center. The fun exhibit though was four walls made from blocks of ice that melted until each of the walls collapsed. It was definitely "cool." The icy exhibit, titled *Fluids*, was a "happening" as part of an Allan Kaprow retrospective coordinated by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Getty Museum, and, naturally, the Union Ice Co.

In addition to all the artists who opened their doors to visitors, photographer Slobodan Dimitrov's *Labor: Black and White Work* was featured in the Downstairs Gallery in Building A. The upstairs space offered an exhibition titled *Salty Dog Bites the Hand*. Among the works is one featuring a miniature container terminal providing a God-like—or perhaps Godzilla-like—perspective. These exhibits continue through June 15.



Photographer Slobodan Dimitrov is framed by blocks of ice that formed the walls of an "ice house" artwork at the recent open studio day at Angels Gate Cultural Center. Dimitrov's photos are featured in the Downstairs Gallery at Building A through June 15.

Photo by Bob Gelfand

Mayor, Planning Commission President Address Development Issues

By John Stinson, Treasurer

At a meeting of the Citywide Alliance of Neighborhood Councils on May 17, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa attended as the keynote speaker to address the current budget situation the city is facing. He opted to make a few opening remarks and then opened the floor to questions.

While there certainly were questions regarding fee hikes especially trash and the DWP, recent employee pay raises, public safety policies and priorities regarding what gets cut and how much, a lot of what was the minds of the people in attendance was how the city is dealing with the two big day-to-day issues that seem to be intertwined—overdevelopment and traffic.

The mayor has been a vocal proponent of so-called "smart growth" when it comes to developing the future housing needs of Los Angeles. Smart growth means

creating denser housing that is clustered around transportation corridors and businesses so residents can either walk or use public transportation to go to work or entertainment venues. It sounds good in principal, but does it really work and will it work here?

The mayor admitted that the model is not a "one size fits all" solution for dealing with Los Angeles' housing needs.

"I'm not against R-1 and single family residences" he said, "there are many areas of the city where it just isn't appropriate. But where it does make sense, I believe we should be pursuing that policy of development especially in downtown and the Wilshire corridor."

Jane Ellison Usher, president of the citywide planning commission, also spoke on May 17. She followed the remarks of Mayor Villaraigosa with a few comments of her own regarding the planning process.

"Developers typically will only tell you what works for them with regard to zoning and land use issues. It requires the local residents to do some homework in order to learn for themselves what is or isn't possible in order to challenge those assertions. It is also a long and painful process that tends to grind people down. In order to prevail, it means being there every step of the way."

With regard to Ponte Vista, it seems local residents have heeded that caveat. The issue has been hotbed of discussion for years now and is not over by a longshot. It is currently in the hands of the planning department, whose staff has been reviewing the comments to the draft environmental report.

There will be a meeting in June at a San Pedro location (to be determined) to present the department's recommendations to the public. It would behoove anyone with an interest in the outcome of this planning process to attend. You can go to www.coastalsanpedro.org for the details when they are made available.

Remember, you will only be heard if you speak up.



Jane Ellison Usher, president of the Los Angeles City Planning Commission enumerates her points.

COMMENTARY by John Stinson, Treasurer

More Density Doesn't Mean Less Traffic No Matter How You Do the Math

Mayor Villaraigosa told us at the Alliance meeting that density shouldn't be put where it doesn't make sense. One place it doesn't make sense is on Western Avenue in San Pedro. If you haven't noticed, there is no public transportation corridor connecting San Pedro to Los Angeles and places east and west. There also seems to be no plan to create one in the near future either with or without the current budget constraints.

The issue in San Pedro is maintaining R-1 zoning where it is appropriate. The recent flap over building multi-family housing at the McCowan's market site is a prime example.

Fortunately, Councilwoman Hahn, at the behest of neighbors in the area organized as Vista Del Oro Neighbors Against Condos, requested a Q Condition be placed on the property (making R-1 development the only choice) to have it fit in with the zoning of the surrounding neighborhood. The Harbor Planning Commission and the Los Angeles City Council both had the good sense to approve it.

The other mega R-1 issue that has been facing San Pedro and other cities and communities surrounding it, is the proposed Ponte Vista project. The developer, Bob Bisno, has requested a specific plan be drawn up to circumvent the current R-1 zoning on the property to allow him to build at least 1,950 units.

One of the arguments to support the project is that it employs "smart growth" principles. As we are painfully aware, with no public transportation corridor, it does not qualify and with the resulting infrastructure demands (especially greatly increased traffic), it is totally inappropriate.

It is more of a matter of increased profits for the developer at the expense of our quality of life.

The Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council and other harbor area neighborhood councils, homeowner groups, and surrounding city councils, have plainly stated their opposition to this project being built as proposed. Benefits the developer touts in his ads and commercials don't change the fact that more (in terms of the number of people and cars) is not less (in terms of the negative impact on our communities and quality of life).



Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa seems particularly expressive as he takes questions from community leaders representing groups throughout the city at the recent meeting of the Alliance of Neighborhood Councils. Villaraigosa talked about L.A.'s budget woes, development issues, and the ever-growing traffic problem plaguing our city.

Photos by John Stinson