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NEWS



August

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Temporary permit parking district on the agenda for next LMU NAC meeting

With Loyola Marymount University's (LMU) fall semester set to begin on August 26, community members, LMU and Councilman Mike Bonin's office have made it a priority to help find a solution to the LMU parking problem that will hopefully lead to more students and faculty parking on campus and not on residential, neighborhood streets.

The next quarterly LMU Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC), made up of neighborhood stakeholders appointed by the council office, as well as LMU representatives,

will meet on Thursday, August 22 to discuss solutions to the parking issue that has plagued the streets surrounding the university. While neighbors have been complaining for years about residential parking being used by students, the situation has been exacerbated by the university's decision to charge its students, staff and visitors for parking. Parking fees for students, faculty and staff are currently almost \$700. At the August meeting, LMU's Senior Vice President for Administration, Lynne Scarboro will be replacing the university's Director of

Community Relations, Clarence Griffin, as the NAC liaison.

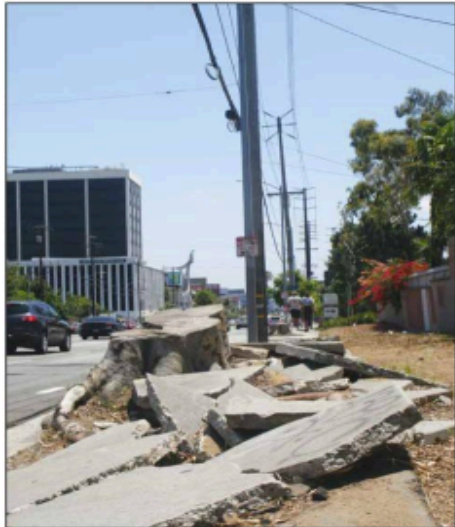
According to Scarboro, who reports directly to the school's provost, Joseph Heilige, the shift in the department overseeing the committee is meant to show the community that the university is taking the parking situation seriously and setting the "reset button" on the tense relationship that has been created between the school and neighbors. The issue came to a head when community members protested the university's graduation this spring and signs reading, "Shame on LMU" and

"LMU is a bad neighbor" were placed in residents' yards.

Scarboro says she and her team have been meeting with neighbors, community leaders and the council office to help find a reasonable solution to the parking problem that all sides can agree on.

For Playa del Rey resident and NAC member Pat Lyon, Scarboro's department taking over the leadership role for the NAC meetings is a good sign the university is starting to listen to neighbors.

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Sepulveda sidewalks still in need of repair after trees are cut down

In January of this year, the Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association (WSIA) completed the removal of trees along the west side of Sepulveda as part of its Westchester Landscape Entry project. The 50-plus-year-old Ficus trees and their massive roots, many of which were diseased or structurally unstable, had made sidewalk repair impossible and impractical. While pedestrians walking the stretch of Sepulveda between Manchester and 80th street were fully aware of the extent of the crumbling sidewalks, with the massive trees now gone, the sidewalks are painfully visible to anyone traveling down Sepulveda creating a massive eyesore.

Said one Westchester resident, "We are saddened by how our neighborhood looks and how it's perceived. It's so embarrassing picking up a friend from out of town at LAX and driving them down Sepulveda, or La Tijera for that matter, with how unkempt they are."

While the project was slated to begin in March or April of this year, eight months after the trees were taken

down, however, the project remains on hold. According to WSIA president John Ruhlén, the city's Bureau of Engineering, which is overseeing the project, has now rescheduled two or three times and the project is now tentatively scheduled to begin this fall.

The Westchester Landscape Entry project is a \$2.85-million project that will be funded through a \$1 million federal grant secured by Congresswoman Maxine Waters and a \$1.85 million contribution from Equity Office Partners, owners of the Howard Hughes Center, to handle improvements on the east side of Sepulveda. Equity Office has also pledged \$850,000 to create an on-going endowment to maintain the improvements.

When the project is completed the updates to Sepulveda will include the planting of approximately 100 new trees and vegetation, including New Zealand Flax, Fountain Grass and Pink Trumpet Trees. These trees and plants will not cause the same issues created

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A look inside your HomeTown



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Westchester family prepares for trip around the world

Starting this October, Westchester's Rigney family will embark on the trip of a lifetime as they leave their home, their friends and most of their possessions behind to spend the next three to five years traveling the world and its most exotic locations on a sailboat.

For Eric Rigney, the trip is the culmination of a lifelong dream that started when he was just a teenager, when he and his uncle, Bill Kohut, sailed to Hawaii on a cement sailboat they built together. Later they would travel to French Polynesia and spend 18 months living on the island like locals. The experience left Eric with the dream of working hard and one day recreating a similar experience with his own family.

Now Eric and his wife, Leslie, and their two children Bryce, 12 and Trent, 10, are renting out their home, tying up loose ends and getting their 42-foot sailboat named "Kandu" ready for the trip that will bring them to 70 different countries if everything goes according to plan.

While the snug living quarters or the danger of sailing in the open sea may scare most families from making a similar trip, the Rigney's see this as an experience to grow as a family and take a break from the instant gratification, video games and fast food culture that is prevalent with a lot of teens these days.

"We are trying to pull them [the kids]



The Rigney family will embark on a trip around the world on a sailboat starting this October.

out of the commercialism a little bit and pull them out of the Internet and the texting world. Life seems so fast right now, that we are going to slow things down. It's also an opportunity as a family to grow," said Eric. "I think it's rare that parents get the opportunity to live with their kids, shoulder to shoulder, almost like back in the day when people were farmers. We have that opportunity where we can work along side each other and then have a unified goal take care of the boat, maintain the boat and get to where we need to get. We need to rely on them and they have to rely on us, so it makes

us a stronger family unit."

While the chances of encountering a pirate ship, a whale bumping into their sailboat, or a direct lightning strike are rare, the Rigney's are confident they can handle any situation that comes their way. They have carefully calculated their route to avoid storms and they will stay away from areas where pirates are known to congregate. They have been studying navigation, practicing first aid and will have shipwright, "Uncle Bill," on board for the first seven months. He brings decades of ship maintenance and sailing to the team.

When the group sets off this October, their first stop will be Cabo San Lucas for the Baja Haha, a sailboat cruisers' rally. There they hope to meet up with other like-minded families before heading off to such exotic locales as the Easter and Pitcairn Islands. For the Rigney family, the more far-off and usual destination, the better.

While their days will be filled with cruising the oceans of the world, learning about the cultures they are visiting and all of the chores that accompany life at sea (laundry, fishing, taking care of the boat), a few creature comforts will be smuggled on board, including the Xbox that the boys will be allowed to play every once and a while. Leslie and Eric hope that once the trip gets started the experience and the hands-on learning will far outshine the lure of electronics.

While their friends and their family's reactions to their trip range from excitement to concern, the Rigney's hope their trip will motivate people to go back to basics and spend more time with their families.

"For a lot of people what [this trip seems] to do is inspire them to want to do something with their family and do something as a group for an extended period of time," said Eric.

Interested in learning more? The Rigney's will be detailing their travels through their website at rigneyskandu.com. They are also looking for schools or organizations to team up with to