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No girlcotts yet

I was looking forward to reading ValleyBeat, which I understood was a "sister" paper of the Pasadena Weekly. Wouldn't it be more accurate to call it a "brother" paper? I've long been a fan of Ellen Snortland, Erica Zeitlin (unfortunately now gone), as well as Judy Seckler, Sally, Jean and your other female writers. Living in the Valley, but working in Pasadena, I've been faxing Snortland's funny diatribes to friends around Southern California for years. My hopes about ValleyBeat: "Cool. Now my friends can pick her up on their own." The Pasadena Weekly should be proud. It relates to women like they actually matter. What's up with ValleyBeat? All boys — all the time? True, there's a lot of Catherine Seipp (who has her moments). But is she going to be the only (read "token") woman? Cuz, even she was missing from the second edition! If I want an all-male perspective, I can read all the other papers. Pasadena Weekly, keep up the good work! ValleyBeat? You deserve a girlcott.

D.J. MILLER
Van Nuys

Oops

Yeah! Boo! The "Yeah" part first: Do we ever appreciate the column that Ellen Snortland wrote about our Understand Men 101 workshop. It's especially heartening to see that she went in to our workshop so skeptically and came out so enthusiastically. She was able to communicate very effectively just how life changing our courses can be for women in their relationships with men.

The "Boo" part? Boo, our Web site was printed incorrectly! Ordinarily, that wouldn't be such a big deal but in this case, the typo in the Web site sent people to a rather raunchy porn site. Our true Web site address is: www.UnderstandMen.com.

Otherwise, keep up the good work. We're very glad that journalists like Ellen Snortland have a platform at the Pasadena Weekly. She represents voices not often heard in the media today.

ALISON A. ARMSTRONG
President
PAX Programs Inc.
www.understandmen.com

Ray of light

Regarding "Dark stages," June 13: I anticipate that our new Boston Court two-venue, state-of-the-art, high-tech small theater space will expand the Pasadena theater audience and other, more distant theater audiences as well. People seem to want to come to architect John Fisher's wonderful building just for itself. Pending the diversity and excellence we're preparing in theater and other performances (including jazz, classical music and young people's fare), we can win many new theatergoers, young and old, and patronage too. Along with more theatergoers and concert attendees, our promised cultural/ educational service to the community will affect city patronage for the better.

All this helps other artistic enterprises other than just ours. As has been so repeatedly said to us, "This is wonderful. Pasadena needs what you're doing."

I hope the hard setbacks being lately experienced by local theaters will be temporary. Theaters should help each other to prosper, as able (I don't believe small theater should compete with itself).

Down the road, there are grants and sponsorships to be had collectively, by a theater association or league, as well as by individual theaters (remember LA's collective, "See a play in May," years ago, by way of a grant and some sponsorships?).



This is big talk, of course. But what other way is there to think? I'm a relative beginner in the always-difficult theater business. In addition to conference with my learned Boston Court mentors, I'm interested in talking to any knowledgeable persons who'd like to meet over coffee or lunch (on me). I hope you'll contact me.
Sincerely, for a thriving performing arts community,

Z. CLARK BRANSON
Owner/Executive Producer
BOSTON COURT

Sign him up

If this is not the correct address for local curmudgeons to rail over the stupidity and narrow-sightedness of our fair city, please pass me along to what would be the best spot to harpoon our city fathers (and mommas).

Please send a photographer to the intersections of Washington and Hill/Allen. The fair city planners have disrupted traffic for the last two weeks, tearing up streets, and creating potential havoc. One would have assumed it was to complete some essential city project: water, electricity. Nope. It is to install brick and sand to existing pavement.
Good thing Pasadena has additional discretionary funds for these aesthetic upgrades. (Unfortunately, they will leave this project with asphalt scars and uneven surfaces that could chip a tooth driving over them.) It is comforting that Pasadena is financially flush in a state that is slipping into the Pacific Ocean.
Check it out. If you need a digital photo or 12, let me know. Stupidity and lousy planning prevails. Where can I sign up?

STEVEN M. DURHAM
Pasadena

Private thoughts

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., announced on national television that he condemned the Supreme Court decision overturning Texas anti-sodomy law.

Senator Frist, a close ally of George Bush, is concerned about the "zone of privacy" that the court is erecting around the home. Apparently Senator Frist wants to protect his own zone of privacy but not that of gays and lesbians.
This is the same Republican senator who ruled out creating a joint committee to investigate the Bush administration's inflated claims about Iraq's nonexistent weapons of mass destruction. Apparently this man thinks that the government has a right to investigate what private citizens do in their bedrooms but private citizens have no right to know what goes on in the corridors of power.

JON NEFF
Via email

Get real

As the federal Drug Enforcement Administration celebrates its 30th anniversary this July, the US Senate is considering the nomination of Karen Tandy as the DEA's first female administrator.

This should call for a critical review of the DEA's record, but the Senate Judiciary Committee's once-over-lightly June 25 hearing on Tandy's nomination gave no hint that anyone is willing to ask the necessary questions.
The DEA has squandered vast resources arresting medical marijuana patients and caregivers — people whose only crime is trying to obtain relief from the symptoms of cancer, AIDS and other terrible illnesses.

Meanwhile, the clearest measure of the DEA's effectiveness — availability of illegal drugs — demonstrates utter failure. Since 1975 the federal government has funded "Monitoring the Future," a survey of teen drug use.
That first year, 87.8 percent of high school seniors said that marijuana was "easy to get." In 2002 — some 15 million marijuana arrests later — the figure was 87.2 percent.

Cocaine and heroin were easier for teens to obtain in 2002 than in 1975.
It is time our elected officials did some serious rethinking of anti-drug strategies and priorities. But don't hold your breath.

BRUCE MIRKEN
Director of Communications

Marijuana Policy Project
Washington DC

Not the solution

The Weekly has fallen for bogus populism from the right wing. Your knee-jerk editorial blames Gov. Davis for raising the car tax and penalizing working people, the unemployed and students.

Sounds good, but the facts are wrong. The "car tax" was cut by two-thirds to provide a "feel good" issue for Gov. Pete Wilson's failed presidential campaign. But a promise was written into the law that the state would continue to provide the revenue the car tax used to produce to keep local services from being slashed.

The only way the state can keep that promise today is by borrowing money from Wall Street — or raising the car tax. Which alternative does the Weekly support? And if you support borrowing the money, how do you propose we pay it back?

Is the tax regressive? The owner of a used Toyota Corolla will pay an extra \$66 dollars a year or 18 cents a day. A parking meter in Old Pasadena costs more. The owner of a brand new Lexus SUV will pay an extra \$666 a year or \$1.80 a day, less than the cost of a valet tip.

Since this is the cost of continuing to provide local services like police, fire, parks and libraries, is this a good reason to plunge the state into a political firestorm?

There are lots of reasons not to like Gray Davis. They would not come as a sudden surprise to anyone paying attention for more than the time it takes to sign a recall petition. He has won five statewide elections precisely because he tells us what we want to hear.

"Dump Davis" fits neatly on a bumper sticker. It isn't a workable solution to governing the fifth largest economy in the 21st century. In a democracy, the voters — and the press — need to pay closer attention and not just howl when the bills come due.

RICK COLE
Azusa

Misplaced priorities

It is ironic that at a time when business tax revenues are low and property taxes do not contribute to city coffers that Pasadena chooses to support a misplaced housing project on a property that would generate tax revenue, create jobs and support surrounding restaurants and retail.

Pasadena has made a substantial investment in this neighborhood to create amenities for the community and draw outside dollars as a cultural and retail destination. The Raymond Theatre is next door to an important community arts center and would certainly enhance and augment the public benefits of their programs.

The Raymond Theater already has had enough pre-publicity from its highly publicized battle for survival to draw sell-out crowds from the day it opens its doors.

Of course, there is also the indomitable spirit of Ms. Gina Zamparelli, who I have no doubt would go door to door if necessary to see the house filled every night as well as stalk the best talent in the world to play her theater.

SANDY BLEIFER
Venice

