

Thursday, April 8, 2004

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The Fountain Valley View



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An Orange County Register Publication

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Easter and Passover Services in FV

EASTER SERVICES

- All Saints Anglican Church, 18082 Bushard Ave. (714) 963-3801
Easter: 7:25, 9:30 and 10:30 a.m.
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 17500 Bushard St. (714) 962-4230
- Cornerstone Christian Fellowship 17575 Euclid St. (714) 962-5412
Easter: 9 and 10:30 a.m.
- First Baptist Church HB/FV, 17415 Magnolia St. (714) 847-3573
Easter: 9 and 10:45 a.m.
- First Chinese Baptist Church 16835 Brookhurst St. (714) 964-6899
Chinese: 9 a.m.
English: 10:45 a.m.
- First Christian Church of FV 18110 Magnolia St. (714) 962-4962
Easter: 9 and 10:30 a.m.
- Fountain of Life Fellowship, 9120 Heil Ave., (714) 847-1515
Easter: 9 and 10:30 a.m.
- First United Methodist Church 18225 Bushard St. (714) 962-2593
Easter: 8:30 and 10:45 a.m.
- Fountain Valley Baptist Church 10460 Slater Ave. (714) 963-9708
Easter: 10:45 a.m.
- Holy Spirit Catholic Church 17270 Ward St., (714) 963-1811
Easter: 7:30, 9 and 10:30 a.m., noon
- Huntington Valley Baptist Church 9779 Starfish Ave. (714) 968-2248
Easter: 10:30 a.m.
- King of Glory Lutheran Church 10280 Slater Ave., (714) 963-5649
Easter: 8 and 10:30 a.m.
- Living Waters Christian Fellowship Church of God, 9801 Talbert Ave., (714) 963-8131
Easter: 8:15 and 10:30 a.m.
- Shoreline Baptist Church 10350 Ellis Ave., (714) 968-4222
Easter: 9 and 10:30 a.m.

PASSOVER

- Congregation B'nai Tzedek 9669 Talbert Ave., (714) 963-4611
Friday, April 9 at 6 p.m.
Shabbat Passover dinner;
Sisterhood Shabbat service at 8:15 p.m.
Sunday, April 11 at 8:15 p.m.,
Seventh Day of Pesach
Festival Eve Service

Plavan play



Photo by STARR BUCK / The View

ON STAGE: Plavan Elementary School students recently performed "Enchanted Sleeping Beauty" in the school's 14th annual play. Bethany Glover, above, is the "Black Cat," while Bayli Anderson is "Evilina," and Irene Jeffries, the "Spinder."

Council enacts sewer fee

BY BLYTHE BERNHARD
The Fountain Valley View

Water bills will be going up starting in July after the City Council on Tuesday approved a monthly sewer fee.

The fees range from \$4 a month for residences to \$400 a month for large businesses and are expected to bring in \$1.2 million per year.

The money will go toward upkeep and improvements to the city's sewer system and cannot be used for any other purpose.

After 15 years of collecting the fees, the city expects to have \$1 million in an emergency fund.

"No one likes to do these kind of things," Councilman Larry Crandall said. "Fountain Valley is a nice place to live and we make it a nice place to live by making decisions like

this, looking toward the future."

The city received 23 letters of protest to the fee. Three residents spoke out against the fee at the council meeting, including Bob Boring.

"What we are coming into is, between the federal government, state government and now city government are taxing the poor people to death," Boring said.

If half of the city's rate payers – or about 8,000 residents – had written protest letters, the fee would not have been enacted under Proposition 218.

Monthly sewer fees in other cities range from \$6.12 in Huntington Beach to \$2.14 in Santa Ana, \$2.12 in Costa Mesa and \$6.70 in Garden Grove.

Fountain Valley has 133 miles of sewer pipe, 3,050 manholes and one sewage pumping station.

McD's applies to build restaurant

By LYNN SEEDEN
and BLYTHE BERNHARD
The Fountain Valley View

McDonald's and Panda Express last week each submitted applications for Planning Commission review to the city, requesting permission to construct two fast-food restaurants on an empty commercial lot at the corner of Brookhurst Street and Niagara River Avenue, one block north of Garfield Avenue.

The action activates the city's process of environmental reviews, traffic studies and public input.

Homeowners in the Devonwood Estates tract – which backs up to the empty lot – have been quick to protest the restaurants' desire to relocate there, citing traffic, noise and odor concerns. McDonald's is currently located across Brookhurst Street, closer to Garfield Avenue.

"When you put in a commercial building that has one of two entrances on a residential street that leads to an elementary school where kids are continually coming and going, it creates a hazard that I think is wrong for a commercially-zoned property," Devonwood resident Mike Israelsky said in January.

Moiola Elementary School is adjacent to the housing tract.

Don Ikeler, McDonald's project manager, has heard residents' concerns in two neighborhood meetings.

"We want to minimize our impact to them and try to be the best neighbors we can be. ...We've been a part of this community and we want to continue to be there," he said last month.

Please see **MCD'S / Page 12**

The Mailbox

Borden's column, buffoonery

Yes, I know it was April Fools' Day, but Borden, the big

fool, has got to find something else to crow about.

All he ever does is gripe about things here in Fountain Valley and brag about how great things are in Huntington Beach ... Huntington Beach where they don't have enough

money to fix the pot holes or hire cops, but they always have plenty to save the hooty owls or invent another wetland.

Let Borden stay on his side of Newland and leave us alone. And I'm not kidding.

P.F. Henahan

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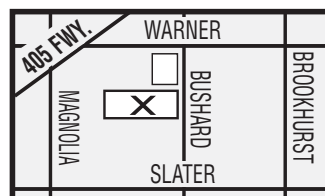
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Find a better use for strawberry lot

Per the Fountain Valley municipal code, C-1 zoned property is "suitable for small-scale, retail and personal service uses for essential needs located near residential neighborhoods." We believe a McDonald's high-volume fast-food drive-in with an anticipated traffic flow of well over 1,000 cars per day hardly fits into that category. While Brookhurst Street is zoned commercial, please understand that Niagara River Avenue is a short access road to our quiet residential tract. This is exactly why our city managers will require McDonald's to apply for a conditional use permit. The city will grant a permit only if it can be shown that the development would not be detrimental to the public convenience, health, interest, safety or welfare, or injurious to persons, property or improvements in the vicinity.

As the owners of the home directly next to the empty lot, we can attest that the entire side of our home, along with our sidewalk, grass, shade trees and sometimes our playful 7-year-old daughter, are situated directly along side Niagara River Avenue. Any visitor to this quiet neighborhood area would quickly conclude that there is currently only one permanent commercial development on this street, and that is the backside of an office complex located clear over on the Brookhurst end of the street.

McDonald's is proposing "a right-in, right-out driveway to make access into the Devonwood neighborhood next to impossible from that parcel," according to a letter to the editor last week ("Be reasonable about McDonald's," Letters, The View, April 1).

This is the outcome of a desperate plan adjustment by McDonald's to counter the Devonwood homeowners' concerns about traffic flow through their neighborhood. It is very apparent that McDonald's customers will quickly

realize that it is easier to zip through our residential streets for access to McDonald's and Panda Express. We hope that the Fountain Valley police will conclude that a "no right turn" sign on the McDonald's driveway will be ineffective, and is an unenforceable impractical solution to the traffic issues that are being raised by the homeowners.

Finally, the Devonwood residents wisely understand that a commercial project would eventually go into the empty lot that currently serves as a temporary home for Christmas trees, pumpkin patches and strawberry stands. Perhaps the landowner could rethink why the land was zoned for "small-scale retail" in the first place. Perhaps an office complex mirroring what is already on the south side of the street would be the ideal solution.

Ken And Melissa Seidner

Devonwood homeowner rebuts

In reading the response letter to the editor ("Be reasonable about McDonald's," Letters, The View, April 1), it became apparent that maybe Devonwood Estates homeowners are not stating our position clearly. Let me expound on Devonwood's position.

We accept the fact that the lot is commercially zoned for development.

What concerns us is the use of this lot for a fast-food drive-through restaurant. In this situation, it will not be one store, it will be two stores – McDonalds and Panda Express. These fast-food restaurants thrive on drive-through traffic.

The McDonald's officials stated that they have 1,200 to 1,500 customers or cars a day, 65 percent being drive-through. I will extrapolate 75 percent of McDonald's numbers and apply them to Panda Express. This represents another 900 to 1,125 additional cars. By combining the

Please see **LETTERS / Page 20**

What's your view?

The View welcomes letters about community issues.

Here's how to get them to us:

■ Mail or deliver to 17777 Newhope St., Fountain Valley, 92708.

■ Fax to (714) 825-0434

■ E-mail to FVview@ocregister.com

Letters should be typed and must include your name and telephone number. Letters should be no longer than 300 words and are subject to editing. The staff at The View does not guarantee publishing a submitted letter. Questions? Call city editor Lynn Seeden at (714) 445-6686.

MCD'S

FROM PAGE 1

The franchisee of the existing McDonald's across Brookhurst wants to move before the lease expires in 2010. Representatives of the restaurant said they looked at a number of other sites before deciding the

vacant lot was best in terms of accessibility, cost and size.

The new McDonald's would have 90 seats and an indoor playground in a 5,000-square-foot building. Panda Express plans include a

separate, nearly 2,400-square-foot building. Both restaurants would have a drive-through and a total of 106 parking spaces.

City Planner Bob Franklin confirmed that fast-food restaurants are allowed in commercial zones such as the empty lot. The city would require a conditional-use permit, as it does for all restaurants.

"Restaurants are considered higher impact than regular commercial use," Franklin said. "We do want to control things like hours of operation, location of trash, access, traffic, and the glare of lights. We use a conditional-use permit to do this, to make the use of the land more compatible with the neighborhood."

Nearly all the retail stores that line Brookhurst Street from Edinger to Garfield avenues do not have the strict rules commonly placed on higher-impact businesses like restaurants. The permit helps avoid situations such as 24-hour operations or an abundance of traffic.

Franklin pointed out that only one other tract of homes in Fountain Valley has a comparable situation to Devonwood. The La Capilla Park area west of Brookhurst and north of Slater Avenue is also a closed-in tract, with its primary entrance on La Alameda Street. The corner of La Ala-

meda and Brookhurst is fronted by commercial properties, including a Kentucky Fried Chicken, a closed Coco's Restaurant, and an assisted-senior living complex. La Alameda Avenue, however, has a signal. Niagara River does not.

"We're looking out for their neighborhood but we have to respect property rights," Franklin said. "There's a process, we'll all go through it and we'll see how it goes."

Franklin added that not all cities enjoy the public hearing process that Fountain Valley does.

The empty commercial lot at Niagara River and Brookhurst is owned by the Charles Vermillion Trust. Vermillion, a long-time farmer in Fountain Valley, owned large areas of agricultural land. Since his death, his estate has sold off pieces of property, and the Niagara River plot is the last piece of his trust. The lot is best known as the home to seasonal Christmas tree, pumpkin and strawberry sales.

Franklin said that the trust does not plan to sell the property, and that McDonald's and Panda Express are the only businesses that have recently approached the Vermillion Trust about leasing the land. A senior assisted-housing com-

Please see **MCD'S / Page 13**

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pany in April 1998 applied to build a three-story apartment building on the lot. The developer withdrew the application in August 1998 after a combination of protests from Devonwood homeowners and refusal by the city to soften traffic rules. The senior housing project would have caused 50 percent more traffic than the city allows.

McDonald's has held two informational meetings with homeowners in the Devonwood Estates tract, who have also held their own meetings. Neighborhood leaders have also launched a Web site, www.devonwoodestates.org.

Here is the process that a restaurant or other higher-impact business must go through:

► **Apply for a building permit:** McDonald's and Panda Express applied last week.

► **Go to an environmental review committee:** This group of staff members review the possible impacts that a business might make on the surrounding businesses, residents and traffic.

► **Prepare an environmental analysis:** The review committee will scrutinize a long list of concerns, which includes noise, odors, the glare of lights that could annoy neighbors, and the impact on a local school. Staff members will also contract with an outside company to do a traffic study.

► **Put the project up for public review:** The finished analysis will be available for at least 30 days at City Hall for the public to read and give their written comments about the project.

► **The city will respond to comments:** Staff members will write responses to the public's written concerns. The public can read all the responses at City Hall.

► **Go to the Traffic Committee:** The traffic study will be re-

viewed by the Traffic Committee, which is made up of Fountain Valley residents. Staff members will help as necessary.

► **Go to the Planning Commission:** It has now been at least 6 months since the business ap-

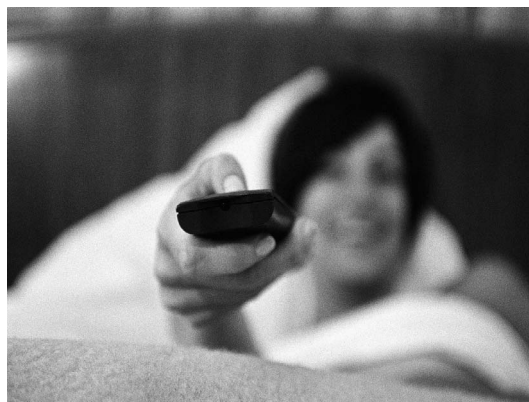
plied for a permit. Now the Planning Commission, which is made up of Fountain Valley residents, will evaluate each part of the project to see if it matches up to the city's written rules, and to see if the project is good for the community. The

applicant is required to change anything that doesn't comply with the city's rules. The public can speak at Planning Commission meetings.

► **Approved or denied:** The Planning Commission has the authority to approve or reject the

project. If the developer or the public is not happy with the Planning Commission's decision, they can appeal it. The City Council would hear the appeal and decide if the project should be approved or rejected.

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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

traffic of these two restaurants, I estimate a total high volume of 2,625 cars a day. There are two entry points: one on Brookhurst Street and another on Niagara River Avenue. Applying 60 percent of the cars using Brookhurst, this leaves 40 percent or 1,050 cars to exit or enter from Niagara. Focusing on Niagara, there is a 50-50 chance of turning left or right. So a conservative esti-

mate of 300 cars will use Devonwood Estates' Mt. Cimarron Street. Each car must come and go. So a round trip of coming and going is twice 300, creating a potential of 600 trips through our neighborhood a day. Imagine the weekend when applying 500 cars a day? McDonalds' proposed Niagara exit does not eliminate the coming traffic (300 to 500 cars a day) only the going (the other 300 to 500 cars a day).

Most of this traffic is during peak times and weekends when children are present. Adding this to the fact Mt. Cimarron is curved, street safety

is further compromised. For the protection and safety of your children and neighborhood, I know Devonwood would support you in your efforts. Devonwood is asking the same understanding and support of our fellow Fountain Valley residents.

There are many commercial businesses that we would welcome on this site. We are just not convinced that two fast-food drive-through restaurants are prudent when weighing against the risks. Lastly, we urge you to learn more by visiting www.devonwoodestates.org

If you are still adverse to Devonwood's position, I welcome you to purchase one of the Mt. Cimarron homes, paying today's price but after the two restaurants are built. For safety's sake, I hope you don't have any young children.

Eric Verstraete

Saying 'no' to drive-throughs

I laughed when I read Ms. Burns' inaccurate comment, "...developer is willing to install a right-in, right-out driveway to make access into the Devonwood neighborhood next to im-

possible." Everyone knows "no sign or driveway" is going to keep cars from accessing the Devonwood neighborhood. Motorists already use Mt. Cimarron to access Garfield.

Ms. Burn is also wrong when she stated that the Devonwood Estates neighborhood is anti-development. The fact is, we are against drive-through restaurant development because of the potential 650 plus cars driving daily through our neighborhood and concerns for the safety of our children and ourselves.

Let's work together to keep Fountain Valley a "nice place to live."

Joan Giguere

CITY SCANS

FROM PAGE 2

Jewish day camp registration opens

The Silver Gan Israel Day Camp in Huntington Beach is now accepting early registration for the summer session. Deadline to register early and receive a discount is April 30.

The 11-acre camp features programs and activities for kids 2-14 years old, including arts and crafts, swimming, sports, drama, Jewish culture and more. The summer session will be held from June 28 to Aug. 20. Information: (714) 898-0051 or (562) 596-1681. The deadline to register early and receive a discount is April 30.

Home garden tours scheduled

The Orange County chapter of the California Native Plant Society will host free tours at three gardens in Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 24. Get a copy at the chapter's Web site at www.ocnps.org. Information: (949) 552-0691.

Free seminars at Coast Memorial

Orange Coast Memorial Hospital will host several health education seminars at the hospital, 9920 Talbert Ave.:
 ► **Natural Approach to Pre-Menstrual Syndrome**, April 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Conference Room A.
 ► **GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease) - More Common Than You Think**, April 20, 11:30-1 p.m. in Conference Room A.
 ► **Early Warning Signs, Detection and Treatment of Stroke** (presented in Vietnamese), April 17, 2-4 p.m., Conference Room A.

Lecture reservations/information: (800) 636-6742.



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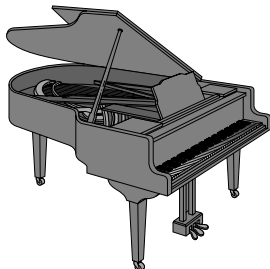
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