

from the hills of beverly



Off And Maybe Running

And is the high school doomed?

By Rudy Cole

Will there be any real issues in the next city council election, or will it be based almost entirely on experience and past performance in public office?

The most frequently mentioned candidates, some announced and others yet to make known their plans, are two veteran city commissioners, **Noah Furie** and **Lily Bosse**, and the two incumbents whose terms expire next year, Mayor **Jimmy Delshad** and Councilmember **Nancy Krasne**.

For Delshad, it would mean seeking a third term, and for Krasne a second. Delshad is now serving his second stint as mayor and Krasne was mayor last year. For those few who have yet to understand our mayoral rotation process, mayors serve for one year and are elected by the council, not the voters. Traditionally, councilmembers become mayors when it is their turn based on seniority, or if that is the same as a colleague, on who received the highest vote in the last council election.

Very rarely, have councilmembers gone against that tradition, although rotation is not by law, only custom. When there have been challenges to the process it most often came in the council votes for vice mayor.

Can mayors be removed once in office? Voters can "recall" any councilmember, but that has never happened in our history. In fact, the only threat of a recall of a public official in our city involved members of the Board of Education.

However, it only takes three members of the council to remove a mayor. That almost happened in the 1980's when one of our most controversial mayors ever, **Charlotte Spadaro**, actually refused to sign an ordinance approved by the council with a four to one vote. Signatures are routinely required, but Spadaro balked at putting her name on a council action permitting demolition of a theatre on Wilshire Boulevard. This so angered her only real ally on the council, **Robert K. Tanenbaum**, that he reached out to the late **Maxwell H. Salter** to make a joint motion to replace Spadaro.

Spadaro was sufficiently mathematical to count to three and quickly signed the ordinance. Now embroiled in some sad legal issues involving treatment of animals in her care, Spadaro was elected to the council in 1984 following her defeat for reelection to the school board. She did not seek a second council term.

Back to the upcoming election: Bosse and Furie are obviously both highly qualified and respected candidates. Bosse, and her husband Jon, have become almost legendary for their incredible philanthropies. Their support of the Beverly Hills Education Foundation and our schools is only one

example of their dedication to our community.

However, her real qualifications for office have nothing to do with charity support. Bosse has served with distinction on two city commissions, most recently as chair of Planning, and previously Parking and Traffic. Evenhanded and collegial, she has earned the respect of her colleagues, applicants and opponents at commission hearings, and the city's professional staff.

Furie has followed an almost identical community service road. He too was on the Parking and Traffic Commission and then Planning, most recently as commission chair. His term on Planning ends this December.

A financial professional, Furie is the ultimate technocrat. His intense evaluation of every zoning or planning proposal to come before the commission has dazzled many of the professionals who bring projects to the city. Clearly, he does his homework and comes prepared. Furie too has a commendable record of civic involvement.

Although not doctrinaire on growth issues, both Furie and Bosse have most often voted against proposals they felt either violated the general plan or were overly intrusive on residential.

Without making this any kind of an endorsement – that should only come following the candidate forums, issues developed during the campaign and strengths of other possible candidates; it is however encouraging to have people with the experience and known qualifications such as Bosse and Furie available for public service.

Some of our best never sought public office. Imagine the contributions to the city government that could have been made by **Fred Hayman**, **Richard Rosenzweig**, **Bram Goldsmith**, **Sooky Goldman** and **Dar Mahboubi** had they been willing to run? There have been many more who could have made a big difference who ran from not for council.

What about the two incumbents, Delshad and Krasne? The third term question, if it is really an issue in our community, would apply to Delshad, but he is probably one of the most intense campaigners the city has ever seen. His door to door work is legendary as his attention to every election tool.

Krasne was the surprise first place finisher four years ago. Never shy on taking positions on often highly controversial issues and frequently confounding both supporters and opponents by being totally unpredictable, her outspoken behavior has both antagonized her base and brought her new admirers.

Krasne has told us she will run for a sec-

ond term, but many of her friends suspect her final decision has yet to be made. Delshad, now heavily involved in the 9.02.10 event, has been very silent on his own political plans.

Could there be "surprise" contenders such as **John Mirisch** who narrowly won two years ago and who was not taken too seriously when he first announced? There often are, but with Bosse and Furie both likely to run, the field will probably not be too crowded next year.

Back to issues: There will hardly be the same emotion packed and divisive issues before the voters next year such as the Montage and Beverly Hilton referenda. Both evoked questions on future growth, however, and despite enormous partisan alignments in the community during past elections, many people seem to forget that no matter how narrowly, both the Hilton and the Montage did receive majority voter support even though the more vocal community activists were against the two hotel projects.

Unless the route alignment of the proposed subway to the sea avoids going through the southwest and under the high school, it could be a big issue in the southwest, and should be. That area of our city traditionally produces some of our heaviest voting. Being a long-time resident of the southwest will certainly help Furie.

Stay tuned.

One under the radar, emotionally charged issue that has yet to be fully discussed, but is certain to draw considerable angst if and when it does become a matter of public concern has nothing to do with city government, the decision makers will be the Board of Education; as if those five do not have enough on their plate.

Is it really possible that the school district could consider demolishing the high school and building an entirely new structure?

The historic landmark could indeed face either demolition or at least major reconstruction as the district moves forward with plans to implement voter approved Measure E bonds.

Not only the high school but Horace Mann elementary might just face the same fate. In both cases, the decision will be based on feasibility as well as historic preservation with safety and costs likely to trump both.

No, this is not the first and only time thought has been given to building a new, safer and more student friendly high school. In 1989, a citizen appointed study committee did recommend consideration of not only demolishing the high school, but selling the property and building a new school in the city's then Industrial Area with funds obtained by the sale of the property. Practical, yes. Politically possible, hardly.

Now it is time to realistically balance all the options. The high school is simply not

really safe or utilitarian. The costs of making it both, and by utility we mean the enormous distances students must travel between classes and the totally inadequate parking, could exhaust bond money. What the board and the expert consultants will have to consider is not only preservation but responsible school uses.

Before we line up the troops, the community should wait for the completion of all the studies, but there will be strong arguments on both sides. Yes, the high school is a beautiful landmark, it has great history, however our other concern must be safety and what best serves the education needs of future generations. At the same time, the district will also give consideration to a new adult school and, of course, the future of Horace Mann.

Not yet on the table is a long-time proposal to "collapse" one of our four elementary schools and create a self contained middle school.

There is a new fashion star in Beverly Hills, **Yan Yan Zhang** who will preside at the grand opening of her show case at Beverly Gardens, adjacent to the Montage Beverly Hills today at 5 p.m. and you are invited.

Doing the official ribbon cutting will be Mayor **Jimmy Delshad** assisted by the event team at the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce. Following the official ceremony and reception, there will be a city sponsored jazz concert at the Gardens.

The lovely Yan Yan is a one-time model who has appeared at the academy awards ceremonies. She now heads her own company, "She's USA" featuring a line of hair and fashion accessories.

Is there some correlation between the success of the tea party candidates in Republican primaries and what I discovered in a quick quiz I gave four recent Beverly Hills High School graduates? It would be a stretch, but it is revealing.

This may be hard to fathom or believe, but when I asked our own recent grads if they could identify one of California's United States Senators, not one could. Even more scary, not one could even tell me the meaning of the word "incumbent" and they managed to obtain diplomas.

The success of the tea party contenders must be attributed to a lack of faith in our political system, and that surely requires improved, no revolutionary, improvements in how we teach kids about politics and government.

No, our system of governance is far from perfect, but it is the best ever created and it has made this one of the world's great nations, in world history.

While we accept and should always support reform, tearing the country apart, intemperate attacks on our leadership, and mindless extremism could do more damage to our nation than a host of terrorists.

Our institutions are far too strong to be demolished by radicals of either the left or

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