Matson steps down as football coach at Mission Bay

By DAVE THOMAS

In a tenure that spanned a number of decades, Willie Matson announced that he was retiring from both the teaching and coaching professions at Mission Bay High School.

Matson, who had been under a San Diego Unified School District investigation for allegedly assaulting a player on his Mission Bay High football team, was a coach in the region for more than four decades. The longtime coach also had stints at University City, Hoover, Kearny and Poway high schools.

Speaking to the local media, Matson said he never physically abused any student on or off the football field, this despite the report documenting at least one reported incident.

In the report, it was alleged that Matson had a confrontation with a member of his Mission Bay Buccaneers’ football team in the summer of 2016.

The incident reportedly involved Matson taking exception to what he perceived as a player talking during a practice timeout. Matson reportedly pushed the player in the facemask, resulting in the individual falling backwards and hitting the ground. The former coach was alleged to have then stood over the player and used an expletive in talking to him.

Coach Willie Matson reacts to a call on the MBHS sideline. PHOTO BY THOMAS MELVILLE

DINING

Primitive Smoke BBQ in PB focuses on traditional barbecue with their own take on classic comfort side dishes. All their sides, sauces and sandwiches are made in house from scratch.

SEE PAGE 11

MUSIC

A star-studded list of entertainers headline this year’s Concerts on the Green series to be held Sunday afternoons from July 23 through Aug. 13 in Kate Sessions Park.

SEE PAGE 9

CRYSTAL PIER CELEBRATES 90 YEARS

From Pickering’s Pleasure Pier to Pacific Beach landmark

STORY ON PAGE 4

The 90-year-old wooden Crystal Pier, which is 872 feet long and includes charming hotel cottages, is an elegant icon to silhouette during Pacific Beach sunsets.

PHOTO BY THOMAS MELVILLE
By DAVE SCHWAB

Thieves were warned by SDPD during a June 29 press conference on Pacific Beach’s boardwalk that the bait bike program is in “full effect,” and that criminals caught stealing will face certain punishment.

“We’re here today because the beach bait-bike program has been a huge success, and because there are so many victims of bike theft in the beach communities,” said District 2 Councilmember Lori Zapf.

Zapf was successful in helping add $3,000, and an additional bike, to this year’s bait-bike program in the city’s budget.

At the conference, Zapf showed a photo of an illegal bike chop shop in Mission Valley that was recently raided. She noted, “In San Diego County, close to 3,000 bikes are stolen every year, and beach communities are hit the hardest.”

Regardless of whether your bike cost $300 or $3,000, Zapf noted, “If your bike is stolen — you feel violation.”

“We’re here today because the beach bait-bike program has proven results — and consequences — for wrongdoers. Out of 109 bait bikes recovered since the program began in 2014, 104 of those arrests have been successfully prosecuted by the District Attorney’s office. The remaining five cases are still pending in court.

Rachael Allen of the Mayor’s Advisory Board on Police and Community Relations, said, “beach communities are fed up with bike theft. I myself have been a victim of bike theft.”

Allen added the bait-bike program has become “a top priority of the Pacific Beach community.”

Longtime PB resident Janelle Sherako is in the thick of the fight to curb bike theft. She said she and her family have “had $2,000 worth of bikes stolen” over the past few years, all of which were locked, sometimes double locked.

“They even stole my 6-year-old child’s bike,” Sherako said in a recent interview in Beach & Bay Press, noting that in beach communities, where one or more bicycles are stolen daily, such theft is “not random but part of an organized effort in which some local homeless people are being recruited.

“Criminals are paying them (homeless) to go get them (bikes),” said Sherako. “That’s what I’ve seen.”

Sherako added thieves are re-purposing bikes in chop shops, switching out parts and repainting them, before re-selling them on Craigslist.

“I found hundreds of bikes there on Craigslist, and one of them was mine,” Sherako said, adding photos of several of the Craigslist bikes were “taken in front of the same planter. That’s your first clue that this is a (bicycle theft) ring.”

Zapf praised the efforts of local residents whom she said are “taking action in taking back their communities.”

The councilmember issued a warning to potential thieves.

“If you steal a bait bike, there is a 100 percent chance that you will be arrested and prosecuted and wind up in jail,” she said. “Beware, do not steal bikes in Pacific Beach.”

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The cottages were added to the Crystal Pier in 1930. PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIS ALLEN

Pacific Beach icon Crystal Pier dedicated in 1927

By DAVE SCHWAB

This month, Crystal Pier in Pacific Beach marks its 90th anniversary. Since it was dedicated in 1927, the iconic landmark at 4500 Ocean Blvd. has had numerous owners, two names, a ballroom, a carnival, and 270 more feet.

Today, it is home to a public fishing pier, as well as the private Crystal Pier Hotel, which is a collection of 32 cottages situated on the pier’s front half. Current ownership has been split between Allen family members and the City of San Diego since 1961.

Crystal Pier is a no-permit-necessary fishing zone, a sought-after vacation destination and one of the best places to watch San Diego sunsets.

Pier Hotel owner Willis Allen said his family originally acquired the pier in 1961 when his father “traded a ranch in Murrieta (Riverside County) for the pier. And it’s been in our family ever since.”

What Crystal Pier does for Pacific Beach and the city is easy to explain. “Hundreds of thousands of people walk on it every year,” noted Allen about the pier, its bait shop and other retail spaces.

Pointing out Crystal Pier is actually “the mainstay of PB and really the center of town where things are happening.” Allen said the structure “has always been just kind of the gateway to PB.”

Allen and his family are aware they are the custodians of a piece of history. “What we’re most proud of is keeping the cottages up,” said Allen, who gave kudos to his hotel’s long-time general manager, Jim Bostian, who’s led the business’ operation for nearly 50 years.

“My staff is just a big family, and you wouldn’t believe the postcards and letters we’ve gotten over the years from guests thanking [the staff] for the great time they had, and letting us know they were coming back with their families.” he said.

Allen said the city benefits from transit occupancy taxes from the pier, as do nearby restaurants and businesses from the patronage of lodgers staying on the pier.

“The pier is like a magnet bringing people together,” said Allen.

Visitors who’ve stayed at Crystal Pier Hotel have raved about its vintage looks and the way the pier moves with the waves “rocking them to sleep like a baby at night.”

The pier’s history began in 1924 with a local Realtor named Earl Taylor and a man named Ernest Pickering. Together they managed to open Pickering’s Pleasure Pier, as it was called at the time, in July of 1927. The Cape Cod-style cottages were added in 1930. However, during the next 10 years, pier ownership was thrown around as disputes with the city continued to arise.

Attempts at opening a midway, ballroom, and carnival on the pier each lasted a mere three months before closing. The reopening of Pickering’s Pleasure Pier as Crystal Pier in 1936 lessened the prior difficulties.

In 1987, a total of 270 feet of the pier was destroyed during a storm. Despite the Crystal Pier’s long struggle, though, it remains known as a “beach lover’s haven.”

In honor of its 90th anniversary, Randals Sandals, at 955 Turquoise St. in North PB, dedicated a mural on the outside of the store to the Crystal Pier and its timeless beauty.
Access to the off-leash dog area for beachgoers with disabilities is now easier with the installation of two new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant parking spaces on Fiesta Island at Mission Bay Park. The major makeover is a public accommodation improvement provided by the City of San Diego to connect dog owners with disabilities to the popular and nationally-recognized, off-leash dog area.

The new Fiesta Island ADA parking area involved the installation of one regular ADA spot, one van accessible spot and a striped walkway. The construction work consisted of grading, and new signage.

**New parking spaces for disabled beachgoers at Fiesta Island**

By DAVE SCHWAB

In June, Pacific Beach Planning Group nixed a project, EKO Blok, which seeks to demolish three existing buildings in the beach community and replace them with 30 new detached condo units.

The advisory group vote was three for, eight against the proposal. The June 28 vote followed a heated exchange over the proposed development, during which one angry neighbor was asked to leave the meeting. Several other neighbors turned out to complain they hadn’t adequately been informed about condominium plans.

Architect Tim Golba gave a slideshow presentation on the condo project located at 3917 to 3977 Shasta Ave. between Fortuna and Roosevelt avenues near Crown Point Elementary School.

“We’re not [proposing] removing any trees, there will be no curb cuts, it will have four unique floor plans, we’re not asking for any variances or deviations on this project and we’re not taking any new parking off Shasta Avenue,” Golba said. “It is a unique opportunity that doesn’t come along very often.”

Golba said EKO Blok has environmentally sustainable elements designed to meet the city’s aggressive Climate Action Plan calling for taking steps to lessen development’s carbon footprints and greenhouse gas emissions.

“This is in a transitional zone meant to be a bridge between single-family homes and surrounding multi-family types of developments,” said the architect.

Golba added project carports are being done in such a way as to allow green roofs to be constructed.

PBPG member Eve Anderson asked if developers would be willing to put in a deed restriction disallowing the condos from being turned into short term vacation rentals. Developers, who were present, said they would agree to such a stipulation.

Asked by a neighbor about the timeline for project development, Golba replied, “No timeline has been established yet,” while adding, “all 30 units will probably be built in two phases, which typically take six to seven months to build.”

The project site was formerly owned by Arc of San Diego mental health services.

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

**PB planners oppose new condo project on Shasta**
SD lifeguards make 550 rescues during Fourth weekend

More than half a million people visited San Diego city beaches over the weekend and on the Fourth of July, while city lifeguards were involved in nearly 550 rescues and medical aid operations during those three days, officials announced on July 5.

On Saturday, Sunday and the July Fourth holiday, officials estimate 572,100 people crowded San Diego’s beaches, said Monica Munoz, spokeswoman for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

During those three days, lifeguards made 283 rescues and were involved in 266 medical aid operations, Munoz said.

Farmers Market move to Garnet could prove costly

Proponents of moving Pacific Beach’s Farmers Market from Bayard Street to Garnet Avenue just got some bad news: It could be prohibitively expensive.

At Pacific Beach Planning Group’s June meeting, it was revealed that both the city and the Metropolitan Transit Service, which operates bus routes near the existing Pacific Beach Farmers Market, would both charge significant additional fees to shift the market a couple of blocks from a side street to a section along the Garnet Avenue business district.

“It’s unfortunate that the PB Farmer’s Market is being charged an estimated $1,500 per week from the police, and an estimated $1,000 per week from MTS, which adds up to roughly $130,000 per year,” said Tony Franco, a PBPG board member speaking on his own behalf and not the group’s.

Noting PB’s Farmers Market “only generates $70,000 annually,” Franco asked, “Why can’t we allow progress in PB by closing down Garnet Avenue? This is a great opportunity to test our neighborhood and see how it reacts when we close down Garnet Avenue on a regular basis. We can always revert back to Bayard Street.”

MTS weighed in on the prospect of changing the venue of the Farmers Market from less well-traveled Bayard to more heavily-trafficked Garnet.

“As with all city permits to close streets, affected parties are asked to submit comments,” said Rob Schupp, MTS director of marketing and communications. “As the PB Farmers Market will have significant impacts on transit operations, MTS cited the impacts, which include: deviating three different routes, losing access to bus stops and causing delays to service that would impact thousands of passengers (delays on one end of the route will impact the entire route and all of our riders).”

Schupp and the MTS also noted: “Rerouting is also difficult due to the narrow streets and the increased traffic on these streets due to the closure of Garnet. MTS projects the cost of the detours and the added buses to help maintain a reliable schedule would be approximately $1,000 per event.”

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

By DAVE SCHWAB
Summer trash, street sweeping schedule for Mission Beach

In an effort to help mitigate fly infestations in Mission Beach, the City of San Diego will increase the number of trash pickups and street sweeping in the community this summer. The new summer schedule is as follows:

**Black refuse bins**
- The city will collect residential trash twice a week on Tuesdays (although it will be one day later due to the Independence Day holiday) and Saturdays with the second weekly collection starting on Saturday, July 8 and continuing through Saturday, Sept. 30.

**Blue recycling bins**
- Recycling collection will be provided weekly on Tuesdays (although it will be one day later the first week due to the Independence Day holiday) from July 5 through Tuesday, Sept. 26.

**Street sweeping**
- Street sweeping vehicles will clean alleyways Wednesdays beginning in July through September.

Mission Beach residents and visitors can help by:
- Placing waste containers in the street or alley at the point of collection no later than 6 a.m. on collection days;
- Taking in trash bins immediately on trash collection days;
- Parking in legal spaces only (no alley parking) to allow room for trash collecting and street sweeping vehicles;
- Using trash can and trash bin liners to prevent the need for washing bins.

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**Instant Justice for beachgoers helps clean up Fourth filth**

Fifty beachgoers who received certain non-traffic infractions between June 23 and July 4 avoided convictions and fines through a program called Instant Justice.

As in past years, many persons cited for open alcohol containers, consuming alcohol in public, glass containers, littering, dogs off leash, or smoking in the park in Pacific Beach, Mission Beach, Mission Bay Park, La Jolla and Clairemont through July 4 were given an opportunity to complete five hours of community work service in the beach area and avoid their citations being filed.
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A star-studded list of entertainers headline this year’s Pacific Beach Concerts on the Green series to be held Sunday afternoons from July 23 through Aug. 13 in Kate Sessions Park at 5115 Soledad Road.

Pack up the family, bring your own blankets and chairs and come on out and enjoy the fun for these free Sunday afternoon musical events at Kate Sessions Park above PB on the south slope of Mount Soledad. Kate Sessions, with its expansive lawns, offers one of San Diego’s most panoramic views overlooking Fiesta Island, Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The public park is named after the pioneer horticulturist known for planting Balboa Park’s trees.

The month-long concert series is being co-hosted by Pacific Beach Town Council and the Pacific Beach Community Foundation, the non-profit fundraising arm of the Pacific Beach community.

Concert entertainers and dates include:

- July 23: Siers Brothers, classic rock, reggae, calypso, top 40, country and blues.
- July 30: Three Chord Justice, one of San Diego’s premiere country-western bands.
- Aug. 6: Bayou Brothers, Zydeco, blues, and Mardi Gras sound-bites.

Concerts on the Green has a long history in Pacific Beach. Early in 2003, Georgina Smith, a PBTC board member at the time, was asked if she had any intention of bringing back the concerts that had been held there in the past. The PBTC had produced single concerts during the summer at times in the past, but there had been no concerts for many years.

Smith took the idea to the board, who asked her to form a committee and develop a plan and budget for such an endeavor. This original Concerts Committee, chaired by Smith, met to develop plans for the events and how to pay for them. With help from former Councilmember Byron Wear and his wife Brigid, who was the Point Loma Concerts chair, the town council gathered information on the logistics of putting on a “modern” concert series.

**CONCERTS ON THE GREEN**

Where: Kate Sessions Park at 5115 Soledad Road.

When: 4 to 6:30 p.m. Sundays, from July 23 through Aug. 13.

Info: www.pbtowncouncil.org, email general@pbtowncouncil.org or call 858-483-6666.
Go ‘blue’ with Bell and Satterfield at Dizzy’s

By BART MENDOZA

On July 15, Dizzy’s will host a CD release show for the acclaimed duo of flautist Lori Bell and guitarist Ron Satterfield, celebrating the release of their new album, “blues(5).” Alongside special guests, percussionist Tom Aros and drummer Duncan Moore, the pair will perform the album’s nine blues-inspired tracks, all with the word “blue” in their titles, mixing originals with tunes penned by the likes of Miles Davis and Bill Evans.

Both Bell and Satterfield are fantastic players in their own right, but their pairing is particularly inspired with Bell’s playing setting wonderfully against Satterfield’s chording. Fans of jazz and blues will enjoy this, as will anyone who enjoys instrumental music. Lori Bell and Ron Satterfield: Saturday, July 15, at Dizzy’s at Aria Hall, 1717 Morena Blvd. 8 p.m. $20. www.dizzysjazz.com.

Anyone looking for dance floor action this week will want to hear Ray Bell and The Feel Good Band, performing at Humphrey’s Backstage Live on July 13. This quintet plays old school funk, as well as R&B, for music that’s full of groove and sure to fill a dance floor. The band is tight, with effortless beats and a sound that ranges from Prince to the Gap Band. With a dance floor right next to scenic docks at Shelter Island, this is a great way to start the weekend early.

Ray Bell and The Feel Good Band: Thursday, July 13, at Humphrey’s Backstage Live, 2241 Shelter Island Drive. 8 p.m. $5. www.humphreysbackstage-live.com.

What’s the best music venue in summertime San Diego? It’s most likely the Bahia Belle, the paddle wheel steamboat that cruises daily around Mission Bay, giving music lovers the San Diego skyline as a continually changing backdrop. The Bahia Belle books both DJs and bands with Fridays set aside for live music. Upcoming performers include ‘80s hit-makers Private Domain (July 14), playing sets of rock favorites and the Ron Detroit Band (July 21) an excellent quintet that specializes in classic soul and funk. The latter turns in excellent covers of songs by the likes of the Bill Withers and Stevie Wonder, but also has excellent originals, such as “Faith, Love and Harmony,” which slot in perfectly with the other gems in their set list.

Bahia Belle cruises: Daily, at the docks at Shelter Island, this is a great way to start the weekend early. Bahia Belle books both DJs and bands with Fridays set aside for live music. Upcoming performers include ‘80s hit-makers Private Domain (July 14), playing sets of rock favorites and the Ron Detroit Band (July 21) an excellent quintet that specializes in classic soul and funk. The latter turns in excellent covers of songs by the likes of the Bill Withers and Stevie Wonder, but also has excellent originals, such as “Faith, Love and Harmony,” which slot in perfectly with the other gems in their set list.

Bahia Belle cruises: Daily, at the Bahia Resort, 998 West Mission Bay Drive. 9:30 p.m. 21 and up. $10. www.bahiabelle.com.
Primitive Smoke BBQ is bringing the taste of Texas to Pacific Beach — one slab of ribs at a time.

Open since Jan. 18, the new barbecue place at 1037 Garnet Ave. utilizes only the freshest ingredients from local producers and farmers, all-natural meats never frozen and smoked daily for maximum quality. Co-owner Brandon Haynie said his smokehouse’s name, Primitive, is apt.

“It’s very traditional,” Haynie said of his barbecue spot, which is mostly takeout and busiest for dinner. “It’s by the pound, nothing fancy, just old-school barbecue.”

A Montana native, Haynie, who has a degree form Le Cordon Bleu College in Culinary Arts, and his business partner, chef Jermaine Spotwood, a graduate of San Diego Culinary Institute, got together and decided to bring there version of authentic barbecue to the beaches.

The culinary duo's menu focuses on traditional barbecue with their own take on classic comfort side dishes. All their sides, sauces and sandwiches are made in-house from scratch.

Primitive prides itself on the high quality of its product. “Our meat is 100 percent vegetarian-fed,” said Haynie. “It is smoked with real wood, hickory and peach, about 14 hours overnight in our top-of-the-line smokers.”

Primitive Smoke’s “fall off the bone” menu is anchored by its pork spare ribs, brisket and pulled pork sandwiches. Other tasty treats include hot links, chicken and a primitive "cocktail" of pulled pork, bourbon baked beans and coleslaw layered in a cup.

“We do a lot of catering,” noted Haynie, pointing out his smokehouse is mostly take-out. “It’s grab-and-go, the beach is only two blocks away,” added Haynie, noting his eatery is unique.

“We’re just bringing a different spin on barbecue,” Haynie said, noting his establishment is open from 11 a.m. until they sell out. “We sell whatever we’ve smoked the night before every single day until it runs out.”

Haynie urged customers to call ahead and order, the sooner the better. “We get lots of calls from customers the day before requesting say six pounds for the next day, which is good because if you call the next day at 2 p.m., you’re probably not going to get six pounds,” Haynie said.

“Now that the Fourth of July has come and gone, Haynie said business has really picked up. “The summertime crowds have definitely been crazy for us,” he said.

According to one local media member (who asked to remain anonymous), the use of verbal obscenities from the coaching staff (including Matson) at times on the sideline during games was rather offensive. The individual recalls that a number of members of the Mission Bay coaching staff grabbed players by the facemask and screamed at them at a very short distance more than once.

In retiring early, Matson agreed to be a part of the district’s Supplemental Early Retirement Plan (SERP). That plan is used as an incentive for teachers in the district to retire early.

Mission Bay is slated to open its season on Friday, Aug. 25 at Escondido High.

Editor’s note: Beach & Bay Press reached out via email to both Matson and Mission Bay High athletic director Jorge Palacios for comments.
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884 Felspar St, Pacific Beach
2br 2.5ba • 1406 sq ft • $779,000 - $819,000

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727 Sapphire St #414, San Diego CA 92109 | $735,000

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- 411 Sq Ft
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- 2 Blocks from the Beach
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What do you know about real estate LOCATION?
May be you heard: That the three most important factors in real estate desirability are: “Location, Location, Location!” This isn’t always true! If it were, Kansas would be empty! Location is important. But so are: Amenities, Condition of Amenities, Price, and Timing!
All real estate purchases are an “investment”. What matters are your goals and your timeframe.
Remember: “A goal is a dream with a deadline.”
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