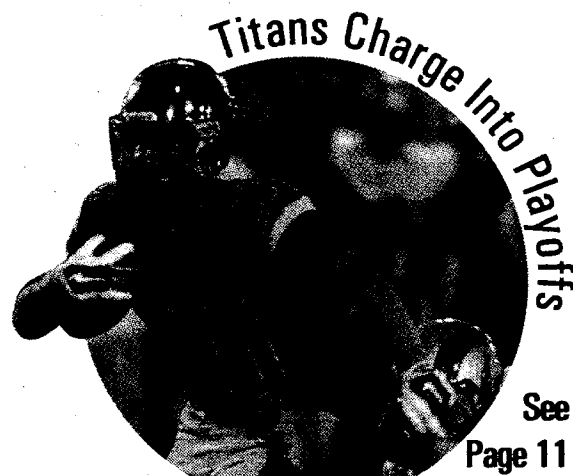


# Outlook

SAN MARINO

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2015

VOL. 3 NO. 46



Titans Charge Into Playoffs

See Page 11



Photos by Staci Moraza / OUTLOOK

## Honoring Veterans at Valentine, Carver

Students at Valentine and Carver elementary schools showed their appreciation to those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces during Veterans Day celebrations at the schools in recent days. At Valentine (top photo), family members who are service veterans were invited to the campus on Friday, and the entire school dressed in red, white and blue. Honorees, who were presented with flowers, included (front row, from left) James Phelan II, James Phelan III, Warren Szeto, Daniel Mackintosh, Bob Mason and Harry Sayers. Back: Victor Davila Sr., Tim Grizzell, John Morris, Robert Donaldson and Dr. John Giddings. Carver marked Veterans Day with a special all-school flag ceremony Tuesday morning (photo at right), where participants included Cub Scouts (from left) Luke Rios, Marcus Wang, Ellis Truong and Zachary Fong. See additional Valentine photos, page 15. See additional Carver photos, page 17.



## Reviewing Election Successes

By Eric Noland  
The Outlook

For two challengers in last week's City Council election, status as an outsider carried considerable weight. But a little money didn't hurt, either.

Steve Talt and Dr. Steven Huang each raised in excess of \$33,000 in campaign funds for the race, according to disclosure documents on file with the city clerk. They handily unseated the two incumbents, Mayor Eugene Sun and Councilman Dennis Kneier.

Talt, who tallied 1,634 votes to lead the field, raised \$33,660 through Oct. 22. Most of his contributions were in the \$500 range and lower, primarily from a wide swath of the San Marino citizenry. His highest single contributions were \$1,750 each from John and Katherine Wolf. (John Wolf was a key figure in last year's unsuccessful effort to recall Kneier.)

Huang, who gained his council position with 1,185 affirmative votes, reported an almost identical total of campaign contributions

See ELECTION, page 7

## Super-Speed Internet Comes to Crowell

By Nick Ostiller  
The Outlook

Accessing information online has become increasingly common in the digital age. Connection speeds have escalated and libraries all over the country now feature computers alongside traditional bookshelves. The Crowell Public Library is no different, except patrons at San Marino's information hub will now be placed directly at the forefront of this technological trend, thanks to a new Internet system.

The California Research and Education Network, or CalREN, is a noncommercial, high-bandwidth scheme specifically designed to meet the Web-intensive requirements of universities. Recently installed at Crowell, CalREN is 67 times faster than the previous Time Warner Cable and AT&T services offered at the library.

"It's a light-fiber cable that transmits the Internet at gigabyte speeds," said City Librarian Irene McDermott. "... Previously, we

See LIBRARY, page 7



Photo by Erin Marie Miller / OUTLOOK

## Attired in Their Finest for HMS Winter Formal

Huntington Middle School, 7th- and 8th-graders were dressed to the nines for their recent Winter Formal, including (front row, from left) Joseph Sanok, Matthew Li, Thayer Talt, Ella Chuang and Claire McDonald. Back: Jonathan Fong, Payton Talt, Ethan Chang and Ethan Y. Chen. See additional photos, page 16.

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**ELECTION**

contd. from page 1

— \$33,292 through late October. He threw a wide net, receiving money from supporters throughout Southern California — Chino, Diamond Bar, Irvine, Long Beach, Redondo Beach, Walnut, Woodland Hills — also primarily in amounts under \$500. His largest single contribution was \$2,000, from Poyu Su of San Marino, a real estate developer.

Huang wound up raising about \$28 per yes vote, Talt \$21.

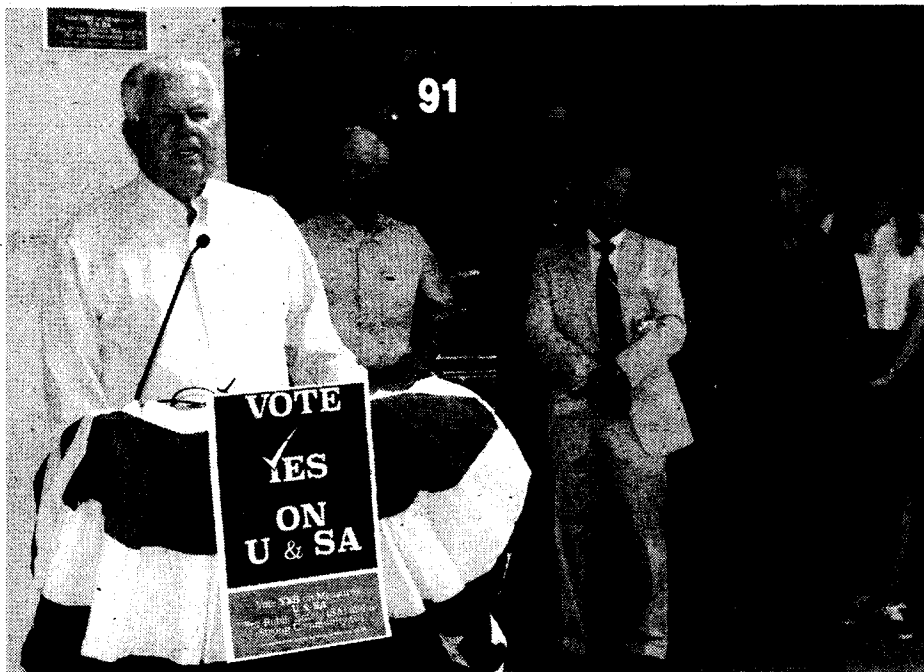
Among their opponents, Scott Kwong had nearly \$20,000 cash on hand for his campaign, coming entirely from his own wallet, according to disclosure documents. Kneier filed a short form with the city clerk declaring that he would receive less than \$1,000 for his campaign. Sun initially did the same, but ultimately formed a committee late in October and reported a campaign fund of \$2,698, self-financed.

Joining Talt and Huang in a successful campaign effort were the proponents of the public safety and utility user tax measures. The public safety tax, needing a two-thirds majority, pulled down a 74.6% affirmative vote, while the utility tax, needing only a simple majority, won convincingly with 72.6% of the vote.

These twin successes occurred in spite of what campaign committee co-Chair Jerry Hawk termed “four headwinds”: the fact that both measures were on the ballot at the same time, the firefighters’ union going public with its contract standoff with the city, some local residents opposing the taxes to constrain city spending, plus a Pasadena Tea Party group urging their defeat.

Hawk referred to the latter opposition as “outsiders coming into our community without an understanding of the culture we have and blindly suggesting that people vote no, without regard to the consequences of those cuts.” He added, “Knocking down the no votes reflects well on the people in the community who made that choice for quality services.”

Perhaps because of the two tax measures and the intrigue that marked the council race, voter turnout for the election was a little higher than usual. Of San Marino’s 8,419 registered voters, 2,594 cast ballots — or 30.1% — according to the office of the Los Angeles County Registrar. That



Mort Mortimer speaks in front of the fire station at the campaign kickoff for Measures U and SA in September. Both taxes were renewed by comfortable margins in last week’s election.

OUTLOOK photo

is up from the 29.8% voter participation in the City Council election of 2011 and the 21.3% figure recorded in the School Board race of 2013.

Talt and Huang are expected to take their seats on the City Council at the start of its regularly scheduled meeting of Dec. 9. The registrar’s office will first have to certify the election results, which should be accomplished by the end of this month. The City Council does not have a meeting on the final Friday of November because it falls on the day after Thanksgiving. Mayor Eugene Sun, who is currently out of the country, could call a special council meeting for the first week of December to formally seat the new members, but officials believe Dec. 9 is more likely.

At that time, the council will also reorganize. Dr. Allan Yung is next in line in the rotation for mayor, Dr. Richard Sun for vice mayor.

Talt, who has lived all but a few of his 57 years in San Marino, described his candidacy as “the evolution of someone who had been involved in the Housing Element, protecting our neighborhoods and had been a victim of crime ourselves. ...

“These issues really started to nag at me. The city was moving in a direction that made me uncomfortable sitting around

and doing nothing. I love this community. It’s the only place I really felt was my home, even when I moved away. It wasn’t about places for me, it was about people and places.”

For his part, Huang said the joy of his victory has been tempered by the enormity of the responsibility that stretches out in front of him. “I feel stress,” he said, “because I feel it’s going to be a very challenging next four years. There are a lot of things we need to address ASAP.”

His front-burner issues include the teardown trend in San Marino’s new construction projects, the budget, reducing the crime rate and transparency. On the budget, Huang is in favor of the council’s proposed ad hoc committee, “so we don’t rely on the staff too much and can utilize all these experts we have in the city.” In the area of transparency, he wishes “to have all meetings videotaped and on the website, so people can see them when they

want to.”

Talt also cited the budget as “foremost” among his issues — “implementing a new budget decision-making’ process, and looking at ways to reduce the budget and reduce the unfunded pension liability.” He also wants to urge a change in the application process for design review of new construction, and would further like to see the city create a vacancy registration list for San Marino’s homes, “so we can contact people about an issue, whether they’re in Pennsylvania, Taiwan or Hawaii.”

For proponents of the tax measures, the campaign was considered uphill from the start, because both pleas for residents’ money were side-by-side on the ballot. The public safety tax was about to lapse. The utility user tax had another year to run, but a vote on its renewal must coincide with a City Council election. So the city was faced with letting it lapse in early 2017 and bringing it back as a new tax in the City Council election in November of that year. Thus, the decision was made to put them on the ballot together.

Oddly, this may have given a boost to the utility user tax. It had achieved 58.29% support in its last renewal, in 2006. This time, it passed overwhelmingly. “I think there were a lot of voters who voted yes for both,” said Tom Santley, a co-chair of the committee. “All except 35 [voters]. That’s shocking, frankly.”

Proponents of the measures are quite aware of local discontent with the city’s fiscal circumstances. They’re just relieved that neither tax was sacrificed in the bargain.

“People understand the revenue to our city, and we know there is some concern about the expenditures of our city,” said co-Chair Linda Sun. “But we really believe those are two separate issues. This is a big chunk of revenues for our city, and it’s important for maintaining the level of services. After we have this money, we need to figure out how to streamline the budget of the city.”

**LIBRARY**

contd. from page 1

had a consumer-grade connection, which was 15 megabytes per second — on a good day. It usually ran about [half that speed]. ... People were really unhappy. So much information — since we’re an information place — you have to access over the Internet. It’s not a joke. We were really kind of wondering what we were going to do.”

The solution arrived when the California State Library’s public benefit group, Califa, was authorized to negotiate with the organization that operates the faster CalREN Internet — a body called the Corporation for the Education Network Initiatives in California.

Since Crowell is affiliated with the California State Library, it was eligible for CalREN. City Manager John Schaefer brought the idea to the City Council in February and the plan was adopted. The total cost of setting up the CalREN router and establishing connection inside Crowell was approximately \$18,500, although the library qualified to receive the service at a discount of almost 72%. An \$8,638.25 chunk of the cost, accounting for setup and monthly fees, is also expected to be returned to the city in the form of refunds.

“There’s money in the budget now to supplement and to support and to give us rebates for this amazingly fast connection,” said McDermott, who has worked at Crowell since 1997.

The state provided additional grant money to help cover the cost of the router,

which is hidden from sight inside a closet. Installation lasted several months and involved underground rewiring, but did not interfere with patrons’ daily experience at the library.

CalREN went live at Crowell on Oct. 30, and the free network will be nearly invisible to users, save for a terms-of-service agreement screen when logging on from one of the 36 public computers or a personal device.

How have patrons responded to the new-and-improved Internet connection?

“The response has been the lack of complaining,” said McDermott with a laugh. “I think people just expect fast Internet. When they weren’t getting it — and it really was very slow — they rightfully complained about it. But now that it’s super-fast, it’s not only going to help our patrons, it’s going to help us.”

Crowell is planning to enhance the overall Internet experience by using a camera to record library programs and then streaming the footage online. McDermott also hopes to offer tablets that people can use for voice-activated language translation among other high-tech features.

“This really, really leverages our ability to deliver information to our patrons,” she said.

“I really want to thank the City Council and City Manager John Schaefer and also the state of California for allowing us to get this fast Internet connection. It’s really what we needed and it’s going to solve a lot of problems around here.”

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