



Santa Monica Daily Press

HOME COOKING
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Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE SPARE CHANGE ISSUE

Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

TAKING IT WITH YOU: The WhoFarmMobile, which features a garden on its roof, visits the Farmers' Market on the corner of Arizona and Second streets on Wednesday. The creators of the bus hope to encourage the new president to plant an organic garden on the lawn of the White House.

Edible bus rolls to market

BY CHRISTINA WALKER

Special to the Daily Press

ARIZONA AVE While most voters are concerned about sexual education in our schools, the slumping economy, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, two men are focusing on an issue that hasn't gotten a lot of play in this year's election coverage — organic gardening.

Daniel Bowman Simon and Casey Gustowarow are on a mission to plant a self-sustaining organic garden on the White House lawn for the future president. The two men began their trip on Aug. 4, driving all the way from New York to California. On Wednesday they arrived at the Farmers' Market at Arizona and Second streets to collect signatures for their petition called

the White House Organic Farming Project.

"Our primary goal is to get people excited about our petition," Simon said. "We need a leader who leads by example. We need a leader who eats the right breakfast."

The bus, called the WhoFarmMobile, is actually made up of two mini-school buses, one resting upside down on top of the other. One school bus is fully functional and serves as a home on the road for Simon and Gustowarow. The other serves as a plot to plant, becoming an edible roof. The bus is an example of the two men's commitment to an agriculturally, self-sustainable lifestyle.

The two advocates came to Santa Monica after various sources told them they could find a lot of support for their petition in the area. So far the two have col-

lected 1,500 signatures for their petition.

Simon and Gustowarow want to see their goal come to fruition for a variety of reasons. Besides giving the president and the first family healthy, nourishing food to eat each day, they believe it would set an example for all Americans to be more self-sustaining and would have an impact on international relations as well.

"This is a change that we can make that symbolic and simple and that would have a domino effect," Gustowarow said.

Those born after World War II may not remember that the White House has a history of growing not just flowers, but food as well. Simon and Gustowarow pointed out that Eleanor Roosevelt inspired the nation

SEE BUS PAGE 12

Panhandling while sitting is benched

(Editor's note: This story is part of an ongoing series that tracks the second and final reading of ordinances approved by the City Council. Second readings are held without public comment, although the issues have been discussed, often at length, during prior City Council meetings.)

BY MELODY HANATANI

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL Panhandling from public benches on the Third Street Promenade will soon be a thing of the past.

In an attempt to free up resting areas that are often monopolized by individuals seeking donations, the City Council on Tuesday passed an ordinance that bans solicitation from all public benches and seats along the promenade and Transit Mall, which runs along Santa Monica Boulevard and Broadway between Second and Fourth streets.

The new law was one of three that were approved upon second reading, which is the council's final review of an ordinance before taking action. The items were all previously introduced in July for a first reading, which is when the public has a chance to weigh in. All ordinances take effect 30 days after adoption.

The problem was first identified by the Bayside District Corp, a private-public management company that oversees Downtown, and the Santa Monica Police Department, which noticed that panhandlers would occupy the same benches for long periods of time.

The promenade is one of the biggest draws in the city, attracting as many as 10,000 people on each of the three blocks during summer weekends.

Meanwhile the benches along the shopping district provide seating for only 100 people.

While panhandling, much like other forms of solicitation, is protected under the First Amendment, City Attorney Marsha Moutrie said in July that City Hall does have the ability to regulate time, place and manner.

City officials decided to include the Transit Mall in the ban because they felt that leaving it out would only push the problem

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Kevin Herrera news@smdp.com

OLD LOOK: News racks line the sidewalk on the corner of Lincoln Boulevard and Colorado Avenue.

Updated law will permit flexibility for news racks

FROM RACKS PAGE 3

about the appearance of the racks, which in parts of the city have been spray painted, broken and used as trash receptacles.

"Some are very old and we hope this can help all of these folks to keep them up more easily," Joan Akins, the assistant director of public works, said. "They're weathered."

The racks are monitored by Public Works staff, who are required to notify the vendor if there is a box out of compliance. About 20 companies occupy racks citywide.

The cost to replace the woodgrain panels are expensive with each panel costing \$100

and boxes having six panels a piece. Replacing the entire box costs about \$300, a discount for buying in bulk.

Painting on the other hand would be about \$30, according to Santa Monica Daily Press Publisher Ross Furukawa.

He pointed out that the ordinance would result in all racks in Santa Monica looking better.

"I'm applauding the city for doing this because it's one of those common sense solutions that benefits everybody," Furukawa said.

melodyh@smdp.com

Advocates pour life savings into project

FROM BUS PAGE 1

by growing her own gardens in times of scarcity and encouraged the American public to do the same.

The two men who met in the Peace Corps in the Philippines have written five articles into their petition including one where they propose having children learn about agriculture through farming the future White House garden.

"I have children now and I'm looking at things in a different way," said Maura Kaplan, a shopper at the market. "Our kids don't understand that much about agriculture."

Kaplan said she would support an organic garden on the White House lawn and favors people buying local produce wherever they reside. The overall reaction to their petition has been very favorable, Gustowarow and Simon said.

Simon was inspired to plan and embark on the trip in early August after he heard Alice Waters give her acceptance speech at the 2008 Global Environmental Citizen Awards dinner at Harvard Medical School's

Center for Health and the Global Environment.

Waters is the founder of The Edible Schoolyard in Berkeley. The schoolyard teaches children where the food they put in their mouths comes from and also promotes environmental stewardship. She is the founder of Chez Panisse Restaurant & Cafe, a restaurant that relies on locally grown food and offers a fixed price menu.

The two men had the chance to lunch with Waters and consider it a highlight of their trip so far. They will be in Los Angeles for the next two days. Then they will slowly make their way back east toward Washington D.C. where they will continue their campaign during the presidential election.

They are currently sustaining themselves with produce from their rooftop garden, as well as the generosity of those they meet along the way. Both men poured their life savings into buying the bus and they estimate that they will need to raise an additional \$100,000 to carry their nonpartisan campaign to completion.

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