



Laughing Matters

Jack Neworth

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Something about nothing

FANS OF "SEINFELD" WILL LIKELY remember when Jerry and George planned to get rich by writing a sitcom. There was one slight problem. Racking their brains, they couldn't think of a premise. Normally that might be a deal killer, but Jerry came up with a novel idea. Their show would be different because it would be about "nothing."

Ironically, or perhaps fittingly in modern Hollywood, Jerry and George managed to get pitch meetings with top network brass who were totally puzzled. But soon the idea intrigued the pompous execs, and it appeared that Jerry and George were headed for stardom. It was reminiscent of "The Emperor Has No Clothes." (Actually, we just had eight years of an "Emperor" with no clothes, which reminds me of a title for Bush's upcoming book, "It Took a Village Idiot.")

I mention all of this because the event I was going to write about today got canceled only hours before my deadline.

So this column, as opposed to the other 150 or so, will be spur of the moment. Uh oh. I have an uneasy feeling some readers are already moving to the crossword puzzle.

The event in question was to have been an art class between 4 p.m. — 5 p.m. this past Wednesday, for the kids at PAL (Police Activity League) at the newly opened Paint Lab at 2912 Main St. Paint Lab is a walk-in art studio, which supplies its customers, eager to explore their artistic potential, with an inspiring space, easels, paint, brushes and a creative atmosphere, all for a surprisingly reasonable fee. At least to my eye.

The founder, Oana Bodgan, an accomplished artist herself, longs to bring art to as many neighborhoods as possible, including minority and less fortunate areas. For the kids at PAL, many of whom have little or no exposure to art, a class where they'd get to create their own paintings to take home at the end of the day, well, the idea seemed like one of those wonderful but rare "win-win" scenarios.

Unfortunately, because the drivers for the kids' van didn't show up, it turned into one of those embarrassing, and all too common, "egg on the face" scenarios.

So there were 12 disappointed kids and volunteer art instructors, including my friend Hillary Kaye. I had also arranged for Police Chief Tim Jackman and a photographer to be there.

The good news is that the art class for the PAL kids is going to be rescheduled for summer. To learn more about Paint Lab go to their Web site, www.paintlab.net, and my guess is you'll be fascinated by what you find.

The bad news is something altogether different, an event that is scheduled for June 8. Longtime Santa Monica resident, and former champion bodybuilder, Tommy Lamparski, ("Mr. L.A." 1982) may be thrown out on the street from the apartment he's been living in for the past 25 years. (Other than that, it's no big deal?)

Since 1982 Tommy has gone from glory to agony due to steroids, which he began using at age 14. Now, he's a hobbling, anti-steroids poster boy as he's on crutches and in pain constantly. That's no excuse for not paying your April rent. But is kicking Tommy to the curb within the spirit of the law?

When word of Tommy's debilitating decline became public, a friend of 30 years, businessman David Glean, came forward with an offer to Tommy's landlady. He'd pay the back rent and a year's worth of rent in advance. The landlady declined. She wants Tommy out but said he could stay if he'd "pay fair market rent." How magnanimous.

So, after 25 years of paying over \$100,000 in rent, Tommy's history. Ironically, the landlady, whose company owns 30 buildings on the Westside, admitted that she "doesn't need the money," not exactly something I'd brag about under the circumstances.

A month ago in court, Tommy lost his unlawful detainer case, as expected.

The hearing on June 8 is a last ditch effort seeking mercy from the judge. Given Tommy's physical and emotional condition and David Glean's willingness and ability to pay the back rent, and a year's future rent, a reprieve doesn't seem unreasonable.

I know there's always two sides to a story, though Tommy's landlady has yet to return my phone calls.

In the meantime, I hope that on June 8, justice can be equitable to Tommy's landlady and merciful to him. If this column has any effect, then maybe it wasn't about nothing after all.

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COMMUNITY NOTICE

On Memorial Day, Monday May 25 at 11:00 a.m. a Memorial Day ceremony will be held at Woodlawn Cemetery to honor the memory of our nation's fallen military heroes. As a part of the program, a flyover above the Cemetery of military helicopters will occur at approximately 11:45 a.m. and at approximately 12:05 p.m. a 21-gun salute will be held.

Local residents should be aware that during the helicopter flyover and gun salute they may hear brief, but unique sounds that are typically not heard in the Community.

For additional information, please contact Woodlawn Cemetery at (310) 458-8717.

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The Q-Line

Holding pattern over jet ban

A U.S. appellate judge upheld an injunction last week restricting City Hall from enforcing its ban on certain jets at Santa Monica Airport. An FAA hearing officer also ruled that the ban violated the city's agreement with the agency.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

Should City Hall press its case further and perhaps take it all the way to federal court?

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press. Please limit responses to a minute or less.

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