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OUR 154TH YEAR

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 2010

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Services held for D.A. Christie Stanley



The grandchildren of the late Santa Barbara County District Attorney Christie Stanley speak at a memorial service held in her honor on Friday in Santa Maria.

Friends, family, colleagues gather for service filled with tears, laughter

By NORA K. WALLACE
NEWS PRESS STAFF WRITER

Christie Stanley, Santa Barbara County's first elected female District Attorney, was remembered Friday as a hard worker with impeccable style and a radiant smile who never lost sight of crime's human cost and delighted in the traditions of family

life. Mrs. Stanley died April 23 at her home in Santa Maria at the age of 61. Following what friends and family termed a lonesome four-year battle with lung cancer.

On Friday, friends and family, judges and attorneys, law enforcement officers and community leaders passed into the Pacific Christian

Center in Santa Maria for a 90-minute celebration of life that elicited tears and laughter.

What emerged through reflections was a picture of a dedicated and determined prosecutor drawn in the field days of childhood, a woman who raised two little girls while commuting 100 miles to law school at night and a role model who rose

through the ranks of the district attorney's office to its top position.

Perhaps less known by the public was her role as loving daughter, wife, mother and grandmother. Told through recollections of tea parties with her granddaughters and trips to Disneyland, epic shopping trips with her

Photo see STANLEY on A10

Heavy snowpack could boost water deliveries

SACRAMENTO — Late-season storms could translate into larger than-expected water deliveries to California cities and farms, the state water agency said Friday.

The Department of Water Resources released its final snow survey of the season, reporting the state snowpack has grown to 143 percent of normal for this time of year across the 400-mile Sierra Nevada.

The department said estimated it would be able to deliver water contracts 30 percent of their requests. Department director Mark Cowan said the latest measurements could allow an

Photo see WATER on A7

Board OKs Roggero as new Brandon Elementary principal

By KENNY LINDBERG
NEWS PRESS CORRESPONDENT

In a special meeting Friday, the Goleta Union School District Board of Education unanimously approved the appointment of candidate Felicia Roggero to principal of Brandon Elementary School, ending an extensive search.

"After looking throughout the state and interviewing a number of candidates, we feel that she's the best candidate for Brandon School," Superintendent Kathleen Boomer said. "She needs 60 percent of the attributes that the parents and teachers are interested in having so that's rare."

Mrs. Roggero has served in a number of capacities during her 14-year tenure with the district, including as a teacher at elementary level, as a former school principal, and in

her current position as coordinator of curriculum materials and technology.

"I think she's an excellent choice," Board vice president Bill Gadsby said. "She's been around the district for a while and is pretty well respected and known and I think she'll do fantastic."

Mr. Gadsby stressed that Mrs. Roggero's unique background and strengths will help align the school closer to its strategic plan.

"She knows a lot about differentiated instruction, which is a big issue in our strategic plan," Mr. Gadsby said.

Differentiated instruction is when a teacher is able to teach at different levels to the same classroom so you don't have to separate the students, Mr. Gadsby explained.

"Because of her training, she'll be able to teach the other teachers how

and monitor it in the classroom and implement it," he said.

Mrs. Roggero also stressed the importance of good communication between parents and the school.

"We had many experiences working with parents, both as a teacher and as a parent to parent, so that needs to be one of the things that I would bring to the community at Brandon," she said.

Mrs. Roggero will take over for Lynette Meyer who will retire after a lengthy tenure with the district.

"She has worked 42 years inside the district, which is unusual in this day and age to have someone stay with us that long, but it's an indication of how much she enjoyed working here and how much we enjoyed working with her," the superintendent said of the retiring principal.

Photo see PRINCIPAL on A7



Management announced Thursday that Victoria Hall Theatre was closed because of structural problems that could cause the roof to collapse in an earthquake, bringing back to life a long-standing dispute between the three nonprofit organizations that own the facility.

Unity Shoppe cries foul over Victoria Hall shutdown

Says decision, purportedly made for safety reasons, actually aims to nix its lease

By ANGEL PACHECO
NEWS PRESS STAFF WRITER

The Unity Shoppe is alleging that a decision to shut down Victoria Hall Theatre, where it holds its annual festival, is a move to discourage its efforts to lease the space if it co-owns with two other nonprofit organizations.

Unity Shoppe, Child Abuse Listening and Mediation Inc. and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program have jointly owned the property, which includes an attached building at 1330 Chapala and 38 W. Victoria streets since 1988, and the Building Council that manages the property on Tuesday voted to shut down the theater after learning of structural problems that could cause the roof to collapse in a significant earthquake.

But Unity Shoppe Executive Director Thomas Reed said Ensemble Theatre Company, which received a 25-year lease for the hall last fall and is planning to renovate the space, had the engineering report that made the findings since last November, and pulling it out during Unity's arbitration process with the council was an attempt to convince the community that only Ensemble has the ability to restore the structure.

But Derek Weston, an Ensemble board member and head of the theater company's relocation project, called the accusations "ridiculous and unfounded." The report was private, internal documents that Ensemble had completed as part of its own investigation related to restoring Victoria Hall, and it was only turned over because Unity Shoppe attorneys requested it.

The Building Council made the decision to shut down the theater completely on its own, said Mr. Weston, who emphasized Ensemble is not part of arbitration.

According to Unity Shoppe, the change Ensemble plans to make to the theater would prevent Unity Shoppe from holding its charitable events there, including its annual telethon. Ensemble representatives said they would provide the new and improved theater to Unity Shoppe of charge for the telethon.

CALM Board President Rich Schaefer stated in March that the designers have gone out of their way to make the proposed renovations

compatible with the (telethon) event. "Not so," according to the Unity Shoppe. "The designers have never met with our telethon producer to discuss the technical and space requirements of the annual telethon production. The proposed modifications by Ensemble Theatre so drastically impact Victoria Hall as to render it unusable for the telethon," stated Tom Reed.

The council — made up of two representatives from each organization and four members of the community — was meant to carry out the owners' intent to conduct their charitable services on the property, and should have been available to lease it to other organizations involved in "compatible" activity.

Unity Shoppe, however, has argued that the Building Council last summer ignored its request to lease Victoria Hall, and instead struck a deal with Ensemble Theatre Company. Unity Shoppe has reportedly offered to match or beat Ensemble's offer, as well as fix any structural deficiencies.

Mr. Schaefer told the News-Press the closure is temporary, and the council is pursuing an engineering report to other contractors to back the previous report's findings, as well as an attorney's opinion on liability.

Mr. Schaefer called closing down the hall a bad economic decision, as it is displacing tenants who would otherwise be paying rent to use the facility. But the alternative would be to allow children and church groups to continue using it, knowing of the potential danger, he said.

The structural problems stem from a wall that was removed from the theater before the nonprofit organization purchased it. Mr. Schaefer explained. There's also the possibility that sheets of plaster could fall from the ceiling because of years of wear and tear.

Ensemble made the documents available about two months ago to attorneys for CALM and HSWP, which in turn handed the report over to Unity Shoppe attorneys. Mr. Schaefer said the vote to shut down Victoria Hall came on Tuesday.

In a letter to the building council, Mr. Reed wrote that some of its members may have legitimate concerns about personal liability as a result of the limited information from the report presented to them. Other portions stated that Victoria Hall is well built and is on par with or better than buildings of similar vintage and construction.

The report also indicates that it is only for remodeling consideration, and it may not contain sufficient information for other purposes, Mr. Reed pointed out. The collapse of the

Photo see VICTORIA on A10

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Report noted structural problems with theater, but not attached office space

■ VICTORIA *Continued from Page A1*

roof is a worst case scenario, according to Mr. Reed, and an earthquake powerful enough to do this would likely take down the rest of the buildings in Santa Barbara first.

It was also telling for Mr. Reed that the findings were only presented to the owner's when Mr. Westen was advocating for Ensemble's lease.

Mr. Reed also wondered if there really is a threat of the theater caving in, why isn't the office space used by the nonprofit organizations in the structure being cleared out as well?

Mr. Schuette said the office space

and Victoria Hall are practically two separate structures connected by a hallway, but only the theater features a massive ceiling that has been flagged as a potential risk because of the removal of a wall. The report doesn't address the rest of the structure.

The report additionally noted that when considering strong seismic events, there are a number of structural deficiencies in the hall's "lateral force-resisting system." However, the shortfalls weren't considered deal breakers.

If there really is a large conspiracy to close down the hall, which was hypothetically safe, Mr. Schuette questioned why Unity Shoppe turned down a suggestion from a council

member that the nonprofit organization take the liability in order to keep the theater open.

Mr. Reed said that Unity Shoppe never completely shot down the offer and is investigating the option. He added, however, that considering the attitude of the meeting, the suggestion was more of an inappropriate comment. The theater wouldn't have remained open even if he had accepted the proposal, Mr. Reed said.

Mr. Westen said Ensemble obtained the engineering report after the lease had already been approved without the council's knowledge in order to investigate how the structure would be impacted by the planned renovations. Ensemble never considered

what the report's findings would mean for the owners or how it may impact their decision, and there was no basis to disclose the information, he said.

He added that Ensemble didn't say anything publicly or privately about the report.

If the plan is approved, the theater company plans to transform Victoria Hall into a modern, multi-use theater. Restrooms would be moved off stage to provide for proper stage wings, the lobby would be expanded and the seating would be overhauled.

Lighting and acoustics would also be modernized.

The structure would be available

Please see **VICTORIA** *on* **A10**

Victoria Hall home to Unity Telethon for past seven years

■ VICTORIA

Continued from Page A8

for other uses for half the year, Mr. Westen said, and it would be a better facility than the one that has been hosting the telethon in recent years.

"We think it's a win, win-win," Mr. Westen said.

Unity Shoppe Director of Operations Barbara Tellefson has said that the renovations would remove the flat floor space the Unity Shoppe needs, and it would no longer be suitable for the telethon. The organization also holds educational programs in the hall, as well as "thank-you" events for its volunteers.

Unity Shoppe is able to bring in \$1 million with Victoria Hall through the telethon and other events that bring donor interest. Without the facility, Ms. Tellefson said, she doesn't see a way to keep the organization going. Leasing the building would only earn the nonprofit organization \$27,000 a year, she said.

For the last seven years, Victoria

Hall has been home to the Unity Telethon, which finances a third of the organization's budget.

Mr. Westen, however, said that the Unity Shoppe council members were the only ones who went against leasing the facility to Ensemble. Victoria Hall has been mostly vacant for more than a year, which is damaging for the other owners, said Mr. Westen.

Despite the property squabble, Mr. Schuette said what he wants most is for all three nonprofit organizations to thrive and continue doing what they do for the community.

Not a "ton" of events have to be relocated because of the closure, Mr. Schuette said, and the most impacted group is a church that uses the hall every week. Unity Shoppe doesn't have any events at the facility scheduled for the next three months, and the council is hoping to have the situation worked out by then, Mr. Schuette said.

In the letter to the council from Mr. Reed, he notes that the West Coast Believers Church uses the hall for services every Sunday and at other times as well. The congregation's

contract requires that they get 90 days notice, and Mr. Reed suggested that the council reconsider Unity Shoppe's suggestion to allow groups to use the facility as long as they sign waivers.

Binding arbitration between the two sides to decide the case is about a month away, Mr. Reed said.

Unity Shoppe gives away its food, toys and clothing to families in need at a State Street "free store," set up to look like a little town that is fun for children and dignified for adults.

CALM is the only nonprofit organization in the county that has a mission to prevent, assess and treat child abuse by providing comprehensive, culturally competent services for children, families and adults, according to its Web site. Some of its programs include child abuse assessment and treatment, family violence counseling and parent-child interaction therapy.

RSVP directs senior-age volunteers to various nonprofit entities.

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