

M! It's a playground



Concrete is spread by a volunteer at Walnut Mini-Park playground.

About 100 volunteers joined forces to build a playground in six hours Wednesday morning and afternoon at Walnut Mini-Park in Carson.

The project was carried out by KaBOOM!, a national nonprofit that builds about 200 playgrounds a year with the help of sponsors. This playground was paid for by L.A. Kings hockey player Dustin Brown and his wife, Nicole. Meat processor Farmer John also contributed.

Volunteers mixed 15,000 pounds of concrete and carried 150 cubic yards of mulch to lay the foundation for the play equipment on Wednesday.

"The kids around here don't have a safe playground to play within walking distance," said KaBOOM! project manager Kenny Altenburg.

KaBOOM! built a playground last week at Ashwood Park in Inglewood, with support from Home Depot, the city, and Carson-based Major League Soccer clubs Los Angeles Galaxy and Chivas USA.

— Sandy Mazza

giving new show the brush-off

On the Web

An entry form for the South Bay Focus art show can be found at www.torranceartmuseum.com

Watercolor Society had held them annually for years back-to-back over six summer weeks at the Torrance Art Museum.

They will be replaced by a show called South Bay Focus, which is open to artists throughout the region.

"There's still a lot of angry artists," said Kastagir, who is helping organize the new show. "They still want to have

our own shows — our own private shows.

"We've been concerned about the low (number of) entries," she added. "We've only got 30 so far."

Organizers had anticipated receiving about 300 entries by now for a show that has room for about 60 to 65 works of art.

The dearth of entries for South Bay Focus has forced city officials to extend the application deadline by a week.

Originally scheduled to close to entries at 4 p.m. Friday, the date was extended to 5 p.m. Oct. 8. The entry date was hastily extended Tuesday afternoon.

However, until Tuesday show organizers had not issued

a press release letting the general public know they were seeking entries, said Eve Rappoport, cultural services manager.

Until then, publicity had been limited to the museum's website, a museum e-mail list and entries solicited from members of the artists guild and watercolor society, she said.

That seems at odds with a show intended to open up the gallery to more artists, including those not affiliated with the two community art groups and sculptors. The two art groups had limited the exhibits to paintings only.

City officials are trying to "professionalize" and broaden

SHOW A22

pristine waters off the Palos Verdes Peninsula. It's especially contentious.

On Wednesday, at a special meeting near Sacramento where a new panelist with an environmental background was abruptly sworn in, the five-member commission voted unanimously in favor of a reduced time extension.

Members of the public will now have until Oct. 19 to submit comments on a lengthy draft review of the plan

FISHING A22

Area's summer beach water quality grades are good — mostly

POLLUTION: Many sites score A's, but Avalon and inner Cabrillo receive F's.

By Kristin S. Agostoni Staff Writer

If you braved the cool temperatures to swim at South Bay and Harbor Area beaches over the summer, chances are the surf was pretty clean.

At least according to Heal the Bay's End of Summer Beach Report Card, which assigns letter grades to 453 beaches statewide based on dry weather water quality data collected from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The samples were analyzed for bacterial pollution. The higher the grade a beach receives, the lower the risk of swimmers contracting an illness, scientists say.

A host of local beaches earned A's on the report that came out Wednesday — available at www.healthebay.org — and countywide, 79 percent got A's and B's, which was similar to last year.

But there were some local exceptions — most of them repeat offenders — with Avalon Beach on Catalina Island and San Pedro's inner Cabrillo Beach both earning F's.

Inner Cabrillo also topped Heal the Bay's list of local monitoring sites where samples showed higher than permitted bacteria levels.

Cabrillo for the first time this year must meet fecal bacteria water quality standards set by regional regulators 100 percent of the time during summer dry weather.

BEACHES A22

... comments before the dead-

firm, Baylis is a former board

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BEACHES

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The report cites 102 exceedances near the Cabrillo Beach restrooms from April 1 to Labor Day, while the Redondo Beach pier had 36, and Dockweiler State Beach at the Balona Creek mouth showed 34.

The failing grades for Cabrillo come after the Port of Los Angeles has spent roughly \$21 million over the past several years on various water quality projects there. The latest — which wrapped up in July — involved installing a system of poles and wires to shoo

away sea gulls and other birds that contribute to levels of fecal bacteria in the surf.

Heal the Bay doubts the effectiveness of the so-called bird exclusion devices.

“After consistently poor grades this summer ... and hundreds of birds observed on the beach despite the exclusion devices, this may yet be another failed attempt at improving water quality at this location,” the report states.

“What it’s actually doing is making the birds (land) closer to the water,” and in other sections of sand not shielded by poles and wires, said Heal the Bay water quality scientist Amanda Griesbach, who vis-

ited the beach a couple of weeks ago.

And Griesbach said she’s also heard reports that some birds “are actually starting to land on the detraction devices,” meaning they are undeterred.

But the port has yet to make its own determination, considering the devices went in only a couple of months ago and that the agency needs time to evaluate their effectiveness in conjunction with other improvement efforts, marine environmental supervisor Kathryn Curtis said.

“You need to look at it over time. You need to look at trend info,” Curtis said. “In the near-

time, we’re still evaluating and investigating other remedies.”

Avalon’s problems have been linked to an aging sewage system.

Heal the Bay also used Wednesday’s report to sound an alarm about dwindling state resources for water quality initiatives.

To cover the loss a few years ago of funding for California’s beach monitoring program, the state Water Resources Control Board has provided supplemental bond money through the end of the year, the report states, adding that “it is unknown” if the board will continue to do so in 2011.

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