

THIS WEEK

Ambassador



Autistic, typical kids learn togetherness — Page 17

Election winner



Lesli Stein joins Las Virgenes school board — Page 3

Top educator



Eric Tally named teacher of the year — Page 31

Sharpshooter



Westlake golfer wins CIF title — Page 35

Inside...

Opinion	4
Sheriff's Blotter	7
Neighbors	12
Faith	18
Business	19
Dining & Entertainment....	20
Movie Listings	20
Health	22
Family	25
School Days	28
Datebook	32
Sports	33
Real Estate Guide	37
Public Notices	39
Classifieds	42

The Acorn

www.theacorn.com

Volume 35, Number 45 • 30,815 Circulation

Serving Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Oak Park, and Westlake Village

November 5, 2009

Pet costume party brings out the giggles

AHOY MATIE—Gizmo, a 3-year-old pug-poodle mix, shows up dressed as a pirate during an Oct. 30 pet costume party at the Agoura Hills Animal Clinic. Below, Calabasas resident Jack Williams, 4, poses with his pug, Jersey, who is wearing a bumblebee outfit, while the clinic's Brenda Najar snaps a photo. The pre-Halloween event was open to the public and included a contest and treats. Gizmo may want to cut back on the sweets, judging by his orthodontia.

WENDY PIERRO
Acorn Newspapers



T.O. Chamber goes courting in Agoura

By Stephanie Bertholdo
bertholdo@theacorn.com

The Thousand Oaks-Westlake Village Regional Chamber of Commerce says it can offer the city of Agoura Hills a plethora of business services that will give local stores and offices an economic shot in the arm during the current difficult times.

Agoura Hills officials are deciding whether to officially sever ties with the Agoura Hills/Oak Park/Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce and join the Thousand Oaks group. Even if the city switches affiliation, many businesses in the area are expected to continue supporting the Agoura

City endorsement and financial support at stake

Chamber.

The City Council will vote on the Chamber swap in December.

Bad blood

Agoura Hills and its Chamber have had an acrimonious relationship since 2003. Louis Masry, president of the Agoura Chamber, charges the City Council with being anti-business and using dirty politics to hurt the local Chamber, including the elimination of financial support. But city officials point to the Chamber's

unwillingness to open their financial books for audit and their reluctance to hold open elections for their board of directors.

The rift between the city and the Chamber started during the 2003-04 spring budget deliberations when the City Council was deciding which nonprofit groups it should fund.

The council had asked the Chamber to open their books to verify how the organization used past funding from the city. *The Acorn* was told that former Chamber president Alex Soteras wouldn't allow officials the opportunity to conduct an audit. Without transparency, the City

— PLEASE SEE PAGE 11

Agoura Hills hangs up on Lindero cell tower

Campus antenna voted down

By Stephanie Bertholdo
bertholdo@theacorn.com

The Agoura Hills City Council voted 4-1 last week to deny a cell tower at Lindero Canyon Middle School, despite a contract signed earlier between the phone company and the Las Virgenes Unified School District that permits an antenna on the campus.

Rina Baraz Nehdar and Deborah Lopez, residents of Agoura Hills, launched the fight against T-Mobile and presented arguments against the antenna during two public hearings with the city and at a meeting with the school board.

The opponents said children are vulnerable to health risks posed by radio frequency emissions from the antenna. The city, however, could not deny the application based on health issues because the Federal Communications Commission previously said that the RF waves from cell towers are not harmful to children.

Municipalities can only consider location and aesthetics in their decision to accept or deny a cell antenna application, but under current law, if T-Mobile could

— PLEASE SEE PAGE 9

Neighborhood Focus

New Westlake vineyard has roots deep in community

By Sophia Fischer
sfischer@theacorn.com

The idea to plant a vineyard on the corner of Lakeview Canyon and Agoura Road came, appropriately, over a glass of wine.

John Notter, owner of the Westlake Village Inn, wanted a vineyard. He had grown up in Switzerland where his family owned several vineyards. He asked his chief financial officer, Chris Cuiilty, to find one.

"The suggestion was made over the course of a glass of wine with a friend of mine, who said, 'If you want a vineyard you should put it right on this corner,'" Cuiilty said.

— PLEASE SEE PAGE 3