



KURT MILLER/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Jackie Mendoza, 14, gets help with her iPad from Ed Gonsalves in his freshman literature class at Ramona High School. Gonsalves encourages students to use their smart phones, iPads or whatever else they have during class.

STUDENTS PHONE IT IN

Ramona High teachers see education opportunity, not distraction

BY DAYNA STRAEHLEY
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Video shows smart phones used as teaching tools. PE.com

Most schools ban cell phones in class, but a few teachers are turning the ubiquitous technology into learning tools.

Students in Ed Gonsalves' English classes at Ramona High School in Riverside use their smart phones, iPads or laptop computers for Internet research as class assignments.

That use is in addition to a more common application for which Ramona teachers attended training.

Some teachers at Ramona and a few other Inland schools ask students to text answers to see whether they understand lessons in progress, Principal Susan Mills said.

They use a program through PollEverywhere.com that displays what percentage of the class has responded in real time on the interactive white board in front of the

class. It shows the percentages of correct and incorrect answers. Teachers quickly know whether students understand and are ready for the next topic.

"That's how we started using the cell phone and teaching students to use them in class," Mills said. "Cell phones in general are intimidating to people in any classroom or meeting."

SHOWING SOME RESPECT

Mills said students now feel they and their phones are respected. Ramona has fewer problems this year with students texting their friends in class, the principal said.

The school also issued iPads, small notebook-size computers, to 120 students in a pilot project using digital textbooks and for classroom research.

Gonsalves just happened to add phones to that mix.

He said he was teaching one day when a question arose that he said he would have to look up later.

"One of my kids has a smart phone and pulled it out," Gonsalves said. "I walked by and kind of gave him the glare" to put it away.

"He said, 'No. Mr. Gonsalves. I have the answer on my phone.' So I asked who else had phones and asked them to look up other pieces of information."

Now he assigns students to work in research groups using smart phones, iPads, laptops or whatever else they have.

Ninth-grader Brian Aguilar said the gadgets help him remember what he learns.

"It makes it way more interesting," Brian said.

Reach Dayna Strahley at 951-368-9455 or dstrahley@PE.com

City Council pay up for discussion

RIVERSIDE: Most say they shouldn't get a raise, and the mayor questions the car perk.

BY ALICIA ROBINSON
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Riverside elected officials have gone without a raise since 2007, and they appear likely to keep their pay status quo when they take up the issue in January.

But Mayor Ron Loveridge said he may call for a closer look at the costs and benefits of providing city officials — elected and appointed — with cars and gas on the taxpayers' dime.

Five of Riverside's seven council members drive city-owned cars; Loveridge and Councilmen Mike Gardner and Chris Mac Arthur take a monthly car allowance and use their own vehicles.

The city charter dictates that the council must review its compensation, including pay and benefits, every two years, with the next such discussion scheduled Jan. 18.

While the 2010-11 fiscal year budget did include 2 percent cost-of-living raises for city employees that were deferred last year, several council members said they don't plan to boost their own pay.

Council members earn an annual salary of \$39,408 plus health care and other benefits; the mayor's salary is \$78,828. Five of seven council members have other jobs; Gardner and Councilwoman Nancy Hart do not.

"I think as a council we need to hold steady with what we have," Councilman Andy Melendrez said. "Giving ourselves an increase at this time would not, I think, be financially prudent."

Several other council members echoed that sentiment. The reasoning behind their self-denial may be largely economic, but Loveridge also noted 2011 is an election year for four of seven council members.

"People running for office are going to talk about the kind of difficulties, the choices they have to make," he said. "It's hard to talk about making cuts when you're asking for a salary increase for yourself."

Even if the council wanted

to consider raises, its power would be limited by the city charter, which caps council salary increases at 5 percent.

Council members also have the ability to review their fringe benefits, which since 1982 have included any benefits available to city management and executive employees.

One such benefit is the vehicle policy, under which council members can take a \$350 monthly car allowance and seek some reimbursement for miles driven in their own cars, or they can use a city-owned car with maintenance and gas provided.

Several council members said they believe using a city car is cheaper for taxpayers because they drive so much, they would end up requesting large reimbursement checks.

Councilman Paul Davis estimated that while it costs the city about \$500 a month to provide him a car, it could be as much as \$1,500 if he took the allowance and mileage.

But under the current policy, council members aren't entitled to extra mileage for local driving, even if they do a lot of it. A copy of the reimbursement policy provided by the city says elected officials who receive a car allowance don't get other reimbursement "for travel within the local vicinity," defined as within a 50-mile radius of Riverside.

That means council members would be limited to their \$350 stipend unless they often drive farther than

Beach, for example, Long Beach or Palm Springs.

Loveridge said few cities provide cars to their elected officials. It can be difficult to draw the line between public and private use of such a taxpayer-funded perk, and if an official gets into an accident, that could raise a new set of concerns, he said.

"The potential complications are very hard to justify," Loveridge said.

He said this may be the right time to "take a very serious look" at all city vehicle policies, for elected and appointed officials.

Reach Alicia Robinson at 951-368-9461 or arobinson@PE.com

COUNCIL TO REVIEW PAY, BENEFITS

In January, Riverside elected officials will discuss whether to give themselves the first raise in four years. Here are the pay and benefits they now receive. They also can use a city-owned car instead of taking the allowance.

	Council	Mayor
Salary	\$39,408	\$78,828
Monthly car allowance	\$350	\$500
Value of health care, other benefits*	\$29,709	\$38,469

*Includes car allowance

SOURCE: CITY OF RIVERSIDE

IN BRIEF

RIVERSIDE Water triggers blackout at UCR

Electrical service was cut off to about a quarter of the buildings at UC Riverside on Wednesday morning as a precaution against equipment failure because of water seeping into an underground utility vault, a campus spokeswoman said. "They intentionally shut the power down," Kris Lovekin said of the 9:45 a.m. outage. "There are 10 buildings affected."

Power was restored by 3 p.m., university officials said.

Only a few hundred employees were inconvenienced, she said.

"Finals are done. All of the students are off campus," Lovekin said.

—RICHARD BROOKS
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Storm has caused few city outages

Despite six days of stormy weather, there were few power failures — none of them major — Wednesday night in Riverside, city utility officials said.

"Over the last 24 hours, we've probably had two or three interruptions ... because of the wind," said Deputy General Manager Steve Badgett.

About a dozen customers lost power about 5:30 a.m. Wednesday because of a blown transformer along 12th Street, he said.

Fourteen customers lost electricity because a transformer failed in an underground vault near Fox Trot Street and Cannon Road.

Badgett warned that the chances for outages would increase with more rain.

—RICHARD BROOKS
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Damages ordered to fired nurse

\$1.6 MILLION: Her leadership skills are criticized, but jurors say patient advocacy was her ultimate focus.

BY DAVID OLSON
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

A Riverside County jury has awarded more than \$1.6 million to a supervisory nurse at Corona Regional Medical Center who said she was fired for disciplining subordinates while trying to improve patient care.

The Superior Court jury Friday concluded that Do-reen O'Connor's "patient ad-

vocacy" was a key reason for her firing, minutes of the trial show.

The hospital is considering an appeal of the verdict, said Al De La Cruz, an attorney for the medical center and its parent company, Pennsylvania-based Universal Health Services.

"We certainly believe her actions were inappropriate, as found by the jury," De La

Cruz said.

The jury said O'Connor "engaged in inappropriate behavior." But it also found that allegations that O'Connor harassed, stalked, threatened and spied on employees were untrue.

Jeffrey Rager, an attorney for O'Connor, 52, said his client acknowledged several inappropriate actions, including the use of curse words a few times and raising her voice once. That did not warrant her firing, he said.

"My client's style was direct, and she was an advocate for the patients," Rager said.

As a charge nurse — the head nurse on a shift — O'Connor expanded evaluations of employees and wrote up nurses for poor performance, including medical errors, failure to prioritize patient needs and

excessive personal phone calls that sometimes tied up nursing station phone lines, Rager said.

The hospital wanted to avoid conflict with employees and "took the easy route out" by firing O'Connor, he said.

De La Cruz said the hospital did not retaliate against O'Connor for standing up for patients.

"The hospital very strongly believes in improving patient care," he said. "Ms. O'Connor was dismissed solely based upon the inappropriate manner in which she tried to achieve those goals."

The jury ordered the hospital to pay O'Connor \$1,630,334 in damages. It did not levy damages against the two supervisors named as defendants in the lawsuit.

Reach David Olson at 951-368-9462 or dolson@PE.com

Norco turns on spigot for U.S. Navy

WATER: The base will pay for what it once received for free from the prison. The city gets a reservoir.

BY BRIAN ROKOS
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Norco's newest water customer knows a thing or two about H2O.

The city turned the spigot on for the U.S. Navy base in Norco on Saturday, and the first bill will arrive in January.

Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach-Corona Detachment had been receiving drinking water for free from the adjacent prison for years. The deal goes back to 1962, when the state acquired part of the Navy property at the Lake Norconian resort so it could build California Rehabilitation Center-Norco.

In the mid-1980s, the wells on that purchased land were transferred from the Navy to the state, and as part of that deal, the prison provided the

Navy with water for free. Around 2000, the prison began providing the Navy with water it purchased from Norco because of poor water quality in the wells, Navy public affairs officer Gregg Smith said.

He explained that once the prison ceased using the wells to provide the Navy with water, the free-water deal was no longer in effect. So the Navy, prison and city began discussing the new deal about nine years ago. An agreement was signed in the spring of 2009 and the water was due to flow in October 2009, Smith said, but Norco needed more time to install meters.

Prison spokesman Lt. Brian Davis said that as part of the agreement, the prison will send its sewage to the city to process instead of sending it to Orange County.

Also, Smith said, Norco will be responsible for keeping Lake Norconian filled, and the Navy will in turn

SEE WATER/A5

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2 Siberian husky pups stolen

MURRIETA: Suspects are seen on video taking the dogs, worth \$750 each, from a breeder's yard.

BY JEFF HORSEMAN
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Murrieta police are investigating the theft of two purebred Siberian husky puppies from a breeder's home by a pair of suspects, one of whom jumped over a backyard fence.

Lisa Daniels said she returned to her home near Murrieta Valley High School from errands around 10:50 a.m. Dec. 15 to find the 8-week-old puppies gone. They were part of a litter of six, one of which was adopted the night before.

Daniels said she checked her home's surveillance video and saw two men driving by the house and scoping it out starting about 9:30. They walked up to the property shortly before 10, she said.

One of the thieves jumped over the fence, which is more than 5 feet tall, Daniels said. The suspect on the other side threw dog treats to distract the larger dogs, she said.

Each puppy is valued at



JOHN F. HILL/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Ali Daniels, 10, plays with one of her family's remaining Siberian husky puppies. Thieves climbed the Danielses' fence and stole two puppies from their backyard in Murrieta.

\$750, Daniels said. The Danielses have three other huskies in addition to the litter.

Police took a report and investigated some leads, although a few haven't panned out and the case remains open, said Lt. Dennis Vrooman, a police spokesman. He said it appeared the suspects

targeted the home.

"This is not a simple theft of a dog from a backyard," he said. "I think they knew she was a breeder."

Daniels said she hopes the puppies are returned, though she worries they may already have been sold. "Regardless of whether

I'm a breeder or not, they did not have the right to come in here and choose which homes (the puppies) were going to go to," she said. "I want to stop worrying about this. I want to start taking care of my family."

Reach Jeff Horseman at 951-375-3727 or jhorseman@PE.com

Parks fee may go to voters again

WILDOMAR: Whether to reinstate an annual \$28 fee struck down this year could go on a June ballot.

BY JOHN F. HILL
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Wildomar voters will likely decide in June whether to charge themselves an annual fee to keep the city's three parks open.

Assistant City Manager Gary Nordquist said Wednesday that officials need to have the details of the parks assessment in place by March to get it on the ballot.

The City Council on Wednesday heard a recommendation from a committee formed to save the parks that the city reinstate its \$28 annual parks fee. This time, the fee should apply to all properties, rather than just residential properties, they said.

The group also recommends leaving in place a plan to boost the fee to \$45 should the city open a fourth park.

The parks committee is a group of residents and city staff members who have been trying to figure out how to fund maintenance of the three cash-strapped parks.

The group's plan would exempt seniors from the charge. People over 55 would be eligible, but could write a letter each year requesting to be exempted.

Parks committee chairman John Lloyd said the group recommended exempting seniors because

they were the toughest voting bloc to convince when the fee was approved the first time. He said he didn't think many would opt out.

The vote is necessary because a judge tossed out the fee that Wildomar residents had paid for years to cover the \$200,000 annual upkeep of the parks. Resident Steven Beutz sued over the annual charge, and a judge found technical problems with the way the fee was set up.

Wildomar has hired the same firm used by Riverside County, Webb & Associates, to set up the original fee.

The ruling cut off the parks' major funding source, and many residents worried they would lose the public spaces for the second time.

The parks were closed nearly a decade, starting in the 1990s, when the Ortega Park District went bankrupt. They were reopened in 2006 when Riverside County took over the district's debt and Wildomar voters approved the \$28 annual assessment.

Nordquist said Wednesday the city has raised \$9,392 to keep the parks open through community dinners, individual donations and even a kids' lemonade stand.

Reach John F. Hill at 951-375-3738 or johnhill@PE.com

IN BRIEF

MURRIETA

Council to declare storm emergency

Murrieta will join the list of Inland cities declaring a local emergency because of the seven-day rainstorm that has battered the region.

The designation allows cities to receive money to help offset the costs of damage to roads and other infrastructure.

The City Council will hold a special meeting at 5 p.m. today to make the declaration.

—JOHN F. HILL
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MENIFEE

Christmas food and toy drive under way

A Christmas dinner and toy drive for Menifee residents experiencing financial hardship is being organized by longtime youth sports coach Jimmy Canales.

The toy giveaway and dinner are set for noon to 5 p.m. Christmas Day at Wheatfield Park Clubhouse, 30627 Menifee Road.

Organizers are collecting toys and non-perishable food items from 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. through Friday at the clubhouse.

For the dinner, organizers are asking cooks to drop off holiday dishes at the clubhouse between noon and 1:30 p.m. Saturday, preferably in disposable foil pans. Items needed are turkey, ham, stuffing, green bean casserole, potatoes, gravy and

desserts.

Volunteers also are needed to set up and serve the meal or help clean up. Information: Jimmy Canales at jimmycanales43@yahoo.com or 951-852-1668.

—JULISSA MCKINNON
jmckinnon@PE.com

TEMECULA

Christmas Eve meal offered for needy

A Christmas Eve meal for the homeless and needy will be served at a Temecula restaurant with the help of a Murrieta homeless advocacy group.

Project TOUCH will host the meal, from noon until 5 p.m. Friday at Noodles of the World, 32965 Temecula Parkway, Temecula. Ron Brown, a 1984 Olympic gold medalist and former NFL player, will make an appearance.

Information: 951-677-9661.
—JOHN F. HILL
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Water plant swamped by storm

A recycled water plant in Temecula was swamped with twice its normal daily flows Wednesday as storm water rushed through man-

holes into underground water channels.

Instead of its average daily flow of 12 million gallons, the plant took in 20 to 24 million gallons. At full capacity, it can treat 18 million gallons a day, said Peter Odencrans, spokesman for the Eastern Municipal Water District, which runs the facility.

"We're pushing it," he said of the plant, which treats recycled water for use in irrigation.

—JULISSA MCKINNON
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CANYON LAKE

Garage burns on Outrigger Drive

Fire burned the garage of a two-story home in the 23900 block of Outrigger Drive in Canyon Lake on

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IN BRIEF

S.B. COUNTY

Ramos named to AG's committee

San Bernardino County District Attorney Mike Ramos has been named to California Attorney General-elect Kamala Harris' transition team.

Ramos will be co-chairman of a committee on Gangs, Gun Crimes and Organized Crime, one of 11 "Smart on Crime" committees that Harris has formed.

"I look forward to working with AG Elect Harris," Ramos said in a statement. "She will bring a new and dynamic approach to the Attorney General's office."

—IMRAN GHORI
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YUCAIPA

City Hall to close for the holidays

Yucaipa City Hall will be closed today and Friday for the Christmas holiday, according to the city's website.

The Yucaipa City Council meeting scheduled for Monday has been canceled.

City Hall also will close Dec. 30 and Dec. 31 for the New Year's Day holiday.

—ERIN WALDNER
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Council meetings may start later

REDLANDS: The change to 6 p.m. from 3 p.m. is expected to begin in February.

BY JAN SEARS
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

The Redlands City Council will begin meeting at 6 p.m. instead of 3 p.m. if council members give the plan a final approval next month.

The later meeting time is just one of a series of changes proposed by Mayor Pete Aguilar at Tuesday's council meeting.

The councilmen also agreed to allow the public to speak about items not on the agenda at the beginning of

the meeting instead of the end.

"Having the meeting begin later might lead to more people attending, and it will work out better for all of us," said Aguilar, who was elected mayor earlier this month.

Most of the councilmen hold full-time jobs and have to take time off every first and third Tuesday afternoon to attend the meetings.

The council's meeting time is set by city ordinance, so the time change won't

take effect until 30 days after the new ordinance gets a second reading and approval on Jan. 4, Aguilar said.

Former Mayor Bill Cunningham praised the council for the change.

"This is a positive move in terms of the people's business being conducted in the people's presence," he said.

Councilman Paul Foster, who was elected in November, said that while he was campaigning, he repeatedly heard from people asking for later meetings.

Aguilar suggested adding announcements at the end of

each meeting, to give the councilmen an opportunity to talk about issues they are working on.

He also proposed changing the structure of the city's various commissions — consolidating some and suggesting that many meet only every other month.

Councilman Jon Harrison supported the changes in general but said the city's historical commission needs to continue meeting monthly. The panel determines whether projects proposed by residents affect historic elements of the city.

The council will consider the commissions again at its next meeting.

The councilmen agreed with Aguilar's suggestion that they give up their individual offices in City Hall, if the space could be used for other purposes. The mayor proposed turning his office into a council conference space.

"It's uncomfortable for me to have the mayor's office, while my colleagues filter on past to what I call the dungeon," Aguilar said.

Reach Jan Sears at 951-368-9477 or jssears@PE.com

DA

CONTINUED FROM A1

version showed an \$18,000 surplus.

After reviewing that report, "Mr. Keenan added additional items and assumptions, causing the projected surplus to increase to over \$2.1 million," Woolery's declaration said.

SUBMITTED TO BOARD

That version was the one submitted to the county executive office and Board of Supervisors Chairman Marion Ashley, Woolery said.

"I do not believe this version is probable based on the information available at the time," Woolery said.

"The district attorney is currently \$9 million in the hole," county Supervisor John Tavaglione said Wednesday during a specially called meeting of the board. "There's something here to do with integrity, the integrity of the office and the integrity of the job."

Keenan started work in the Fresno County district attorney's office earlier this month. He did not return a call Wednesday seeking comment.

Pacheco did not return a

call to his cell phone seeking comment on Woolery's statement.

Asked if Woolery's declaration about the alleged manipulation of budget numbers is going to be referred to law enforcement agencies to see if any laws were broken, county spokesman Ray Smith said, "I can't address that question."

Pacheco was defeated for re-election in June by Superior Court Judge Paul Zellerbach, who will be sworn in Jan. 3.

"It's a sad state of affairs," Zellerbach said Wednesday. "This appears to be a purposefully intentional act on the district attorney's part to deceive and mislead not only the Board of Supervisors, but the public."

HIRING FREEZE

After a closed session to discuss the lawsuit Wednesday, County Counsel Pamela J. Walls said nine of 12 job seekers can be hired, but not for the positions they originally sought. Places were found for eight new lawyers hired for starting prosecutor posts.

"Today, the District Attorney's office submitted a new and corrected request that properly addresses the

personnel changes for eight positions using available positions that are authorized and funded in the budget," Walls wrote in a statement.

The county human resources department will also process a voluntary demotion request to place Chief Deputy District Attorney Rick Cookson into an undisclosed position. He will be under probationary review for that job.

The remaining three jobs out of the 12 also appear to be resolved.

Two who were prospective starting deputy district attorneys have found work elsewhere.

Chief Investigator Vern Horst has withdrawn his application to be voluntarily demoted to the frozen assistant chief investigator's position he had sought.

Pacheco said in a statement that the hires announced Wednesday showed the county recognized "they had no authority to deny these employees the jobs that they earned." A statement from his office said the county had "capitulated."

But Smith said what Pacheco's office had "repeatedly sought to do was open frozen positions. And in this

last application, they sought positions that were open."

Chief Assistant District Attorney Bill Mitchell declined to comment directly on the Woolery document, saying he had not seen it.

ASSERTIONS 'CONTRIVED'

But he said if the county managed to find places for nine of the 12 job applicants, "They are now acknowledging those assertions (of budget restrictions) were contrived. So this has nothing to do with budget reports, deficits, or surpluses."

Mitchell said the office has restrained hiring, noting there are about 40 open positions that it could fill.

"There now appears to be no reason for the lawsuit, and the district attorney should dismiss it," said county spokesman Smith. A statement from Pacheco's office said it may be dismissed.

Zellerbach has said if the lawsuit still stands when he is sworn in on Jan. 3, he will move to dismiss it.

Reach Richard K. De Atley at 951-368-9573 or rdeatley@PE.com



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showed the water to be safe. "The quality of water has never been in question," Davis said.

Reach Brian Rokos at 951-368-9660 or brokos@PE.com

WATER

CONTINUED FROM A3

allow the city to use the lake for water storage.

Norco Public Works Director Bill Thompson could not be reached for comment. He said in a 2009 interview that the city would not lose money on the deal.

In an unrelated action, the prison's water pipes will be replaced next year, Davis said.

Periodically in the past, inmates who have developed illnesses or rashes have blamed the water. Authorities said at the time that tests

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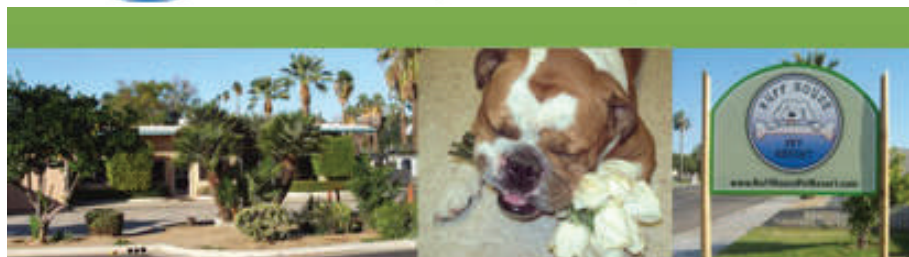
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Your furnace needs a tune-up and maintenance once a year just like your car. It's easy when you call for this...

Meter Squeezing GREEN Tune-Up

December

For the month of ~~November~~, One Hour Air will carefully tune-up your furnace to save you money on your utility bills and eliminate unexpected repairs.

- Check furnace for fire safety
- Lubricate serviceable blower motor which increases motor life
- Clean the blower for better air flow and greater comfort

Call now and schedule this wonderful GREEN Tune-up for only:

\$69 (a \$189 value)



Call now and you will also receive...

Amazing FREE BREAKDOWN-PROOF Guarantee

Schedule your GREEN Tune-Up in the next two weeks and I guarantee your furnace won't break down this winter or I will refund 100% of your investment.

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