

# ALTADENA COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

QUARTERLY - WINTER 2009 - VOL. II

[www.Altadenans.com](http://www.Altadenans.com)

**From your Councilmember Herbert Simmons**

(323) 397-2075

*"Linking Altadenans Together through Technology to Make Our Community a Better and Safer Place"*

This newsletter was prepared, published, and delivered at Herbert Simmons's expense.

Your Representatives of Census Tract 4602:

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Hon. Simmons



Hon. Ezieme

*Disclaimer: This newsletter is not endorsed by, or affiliated with, the Altadena Town Council or its other Councilmembers. Herbert Simmons does not speak on behalf of the Altadena Town Council, only himself as your elected representative.*

**Not on our e-mail list?** Please contact [herbert.h.simmons@gmail.com](mailto:herbert.h.simmons@gmail.com) to stay in the loop.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

## **KIDS FIRST!**

### **DECEMBER IS A SUPER MONTH!**

#### **ALTADENA'S STUDENT AND TEACHER OF THE MONTH PROGRAM**

December is a Super Month for the Student and Teacher of the Month Program, during which we will award three students from each school in Altadena as Students of the Month instead of the usual one student. Our commitment as a community should be focused on rewarding teachers and students, who are our future. It is the best chance of lowering crime and creating a better tomorrow.



1.

Thank you to our local business sponsors for being a part of a positive program to benefit the hardworking youth and educators in our community: Whole Foods Market Arroyo, Souplantation, Two Dragons Martial Arts, Sue B. Dance Co., Pacific Paseo Theaters, Kidspace Museum, Laemmle Theatres, McDonald's, Islands, Big Mama's Rib Shack, Brio Spa, KidsArt, Under the Sea Indoor Playground, FedEx Office, Merit Cleaners, 300 Pasadena, Obvious Giant, Guy Moore Gardening and Landscape, Curves, Coffee Gallery, and Martins' Famous Louisiana Sausages.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

1. Okorie Ezieme, Sharon Lundgren, and Herbert Simmons with Ms. Lundgren's class
2. Herbert Simmons, Jacquelyn Wilson, Principal Rose Ingber
3. Simmons, Ali Schulte, Principal Sharon Lefler
4. Simmons, Moriah Katz, Principal Peter Pannell
5. Shelene Hearing of Two Dragons Martial Arts, Principal Eric Sahakian, Okorie Ezieme, Tyler Bohannon, Simmons
6. Mrs. Nunez, Ms. Boynton, Simmons, Principal Caroline Bermudez, Josue Nunez
7. Principal Kelly Lawson, Theresa Burns, Simmons
8. Simmons, Principal Gregory White, Shelene Hearing, Yvette Gonzalez

For a full list of awarded students, teachers, and photos, please go to [www.Altadenans.com](http://www.Altadenans.com).

*"On behalf of the Superintendent, the principals, the teachers and the students of the Pasadena Unified School District, we would like to thank you for your time, vision and leadership in offering to our schools the Student and Teacher of the Month Program. . . . You are truly our 'champion' for Pasadena Schools. Thank you for encouraging our schools, our teachers and our students. I applaud your tireless work and accomplishments . . ."* - Dr. Kathy Onoye, Executive Director, Elementary; PUSD

**Altadena Town Council meetings take place every third Tuesday, 7pm, at the Altadena Community Center, 730 E. Altadena Dr. Meetings are televised at 6am and 6pm every Wednesday on Channel 56 if you have a cable box and Channel 5 if you do not.**

# NO DUE PROCESS IN ALTADENA!!!

## YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED.

### URGENT: VOTE TO REMOVE YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL, HERBERT SIMMONS, FROM OFFICE, POSTPONED TO DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

Who Is the Altadena Town Council? (a) The Accuser, (b) the Judge, (c) the Jury, or (d) All of the Above?

#### **To know is to be responsible.**

How can anyone in modern day America in their right mind be the accuser, the judge, and the jury? How is it possible that a group of individuals that represents the community of Altadena thinks that is okay?

As I sat in our Altadena Town Council meeting on Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at the Altadena Community Center, it was clear as I shook hands with Senator Carol Liu, who was there to address the Altadena Town Council body, that the Altadena Town Council represents itself as the governing authority of Altadena. Senator Liu, Assemblymember Anthony Portantino, the Sheriffs, the CHP, and government officials, all have recently addressed the Altadena Town Council and do so on a continual basis. It can be inferred by these relationships, that the Altadena Town Council reciprocates and accepts this role as Altadena's legislative body. However, when transparency in its decision-making processes is requested, the Altadena Town Council insists that it is merely nothing more than the equivalent of a homeowner's association that is not obligated to abide to statutes such as the Brown Act, or the Open Meeting Act, which requires openness and accountability.

Who televises and pays for the Altadena Town Council meetings? As of November 17<sup>th</sup>, the Council only had \$2,264.89 in their treasury. During this meeting we donated \$500 to the Sheriff's Annual Christmas Food and Toy Drive. Simple math,  $\$2,264.89 - \$500 = \text{balance } \$1764.89$ , would indicate that somebody else is paying for the televised recordings of the ATC meetings as well as the room rental and the office space at the Altadena Community Center. Who is paying for this and why? Why does the Altadena Town Council receive this special treatment? How does it influence ordinances and property and land use decisions? I know of no other homeowner's association in Altadena that wields such power and authority.

It is now time that we, the community, take notice of this supposed group of homeowners who represents and affects decisions that affect you. If you ask them for transparency, they are a homeowner's group. When they are influencing legislation, they appear as an authority. Currently, there is no admitted accountability or openness. **Why not? The second question is, who is the Altadena Town Council?** This is a 34 year old question. It is rumored that Baxter Ward, Los Angeles County Supervisor at the time, and the Pasadena League of Women Voters created the Altadena Town Council in 1975 to express the will and wishes of the Altadena community. As a community, we must push for accountability and openness, which would equal the real governance that they portray. Our fundamental rights as citizens of this community are affected by the ATC's way of making decisions. It is important for the community to note their current attempt to remove one of its own members over the votes of the community. The fact that they believe they can do this tears at the fundamental concepts of freedoms fought for by our predecessors. For the Town Council to be the accuser, the judge, and the jury, is fundamentally wrong. If the Town Council fails to see this on a smaller level where it ignores the votes of the people, what do you think it does on a larger scale when it comes to making decisions that affect the community? Is it a legislative body that represents the people? Is it a clan of people with special interests representing the few? It is this kind of decision making in which politicians have sold their constituents down the river for ten cents on a dollar. The few benefit, but the many suffer the consequences of decisions made behind closed doors. If we want to change our community, it starts now and with us. It is now time for the community to push that the ATC define its role clearly in the community and make itself official by being accountable and open, which ultimately means amending its bylaws to follow the Brown Act.

Please view my commentary in the Pasadena Weekly at [http://www.pasadenaweekly.com/cms/story/detail/liberty\\_and\\_justice\\_for\\_some/8064/](http://www.pasadenaweekly.com/cms/story/detail/liberty_and_justice_for_some/8064/) and attend the next Town Council Meeting to stand up for your vote. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 15th at 7PM at the Altadena Community Center. Meetings are held every third Tuesday, same location, and televised every Wednesday at 6AM and 6PM on Ch. 56 if you have a cable box, and Ch. 5 if you do not.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST 120 DAYS

- Launched [www.Altadenans.com](http://www.Altadenans.com), a website centered around your voice in community issues
- Free advertising offered to local businesses on [Altadenans.com](http://www.Altadenans.com)
- Published and distributed Census Tract 4602's very first Altadena Community Newsletter
- Launched the Student and Teacher of the Month programs in all seven public schools in Altadena
- Gave over 300 Student and Teacher of the Month T-shirts to community members
- Awarded 39 students and teachers in Altadena at press time
- Promoted 21 local businesses through the Student and Teacher of the Month programs
- Held an informal Town Hall Meeting for Census Tract 4602 and beyond
- Linked and informed more families than ever through technology

**I have not accepted any donations nor have I reaped any personal gain from these accomplishments.**

## COMMUNITY BRIEFINGS

**Proposed Cell Tower** AT&T has withdrawn its application for a Conditional Use Permit for a cell tower at the Lincoln Avenue Water Company site. AT&T is now pursuing a new location for this cell tower at the Los Angeles County Flood Control site just east of Loma Alta. **Re-Striping of Lake Avenue** In an attempt to reduce speed, a re-striping plan for North Lake Avenue has been proposed. The plan is to reduce the street, from Altadena Dr. to Loma Alta, from four lanes to two lanes, with a two way left turn lane in the center. **Altadena Sheriff's Station Burglary Meeting Summary** The Sheriff's Station has released a summary of the community meeting held on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, to discuss recent burglaries in Altadena. Among their advice: (1) Call the Sheriff's Station at (626) 798-1131 to immediately report any suspicious activity. (2) Do not leave visible valuables in your car. (3) Close all window coverings when you are not home. (4) If someone you do not know knocks on your door, it is best to answer them without opening the door.

*These community briefings can all be viewed in full detail on [Altadenans.com](http://www.Altadenans.com). Please vote and share your input.*

## THE BUZZ ON ALTADENANS.COM

*"I was extremely excited to FINALLY receive information on my community from my elected representative Mr. Herbert Simmons. Prior to Mr. Simmons being elected we had no clue with how this town operated, politically speaking. Mr. Simmons seems to be focusing on making a positive difference in our community and keeping his constituent base informed. . . .What is the big deal with recognizing our teachers and students? We think that it's a wonderful concept and should be applauded not destroyed. What is wrong with you guys?" – Suzanne Madison*

*"What I don't understand is how the Altadena Town Council has the authority (if it exists) to eject from the council a member elected by his constituents in a legal election. This is an unheard of matter in all the almost 50 yrs. of my living here. I say SHAME on the Town Council for its actions in this matter." – Ninarose Mayer*

*"Even though I did not vote for Mr. Herbert Simmons, I think he is doing an awesome job as elected town council representative and I greatly disagree with having him removed. He has done more for this community than most of the previous town council people elected because he keeps us informed and updated and links us together through technology. . . . I'm a big fan of his student/teacher of the month program and feel it is a very positive influence on the community and our children who are our future. I don't see how they can attempt to remove you*

when you were elected by us, the community, to represent us.” – Andy

*“Herbert Simmons is the only Altadena Town Council member who has ever attempted to reach out to constituents . . . in the 17 plus years that I’ve lived here. I don’t understand why the Town Council wants to remove an elected official who has made harmless mistakes, apologized for them, and has refrained from repeating them. Back in 1973, Kissinger and Nixon removed Salvador Allende who had been overwhelmingly elected by the people of Chile. His crime: wanting to do something meaningful for those who elected him. Is the Altadena Town Council a Pinochet dictatorship in miniature? Why the secrecy? Will people begin ‘disappearing’ from Altadena next?” - Clark Hansen*

*“Herbert Simmons is a positive, recognizable presence in Altadena. He is a man who cares deeply about this community. He has made it his priority to raise awareness and bring deserved recognition to the formerly unsung educators in our community. He has worked tirelessly to bring long-needed adequate cell phone reception to our area. His efforts to unify and inform the community during the Station Fire are testament alone to this man’s dedication to Altadena. I lived in this community for 5 yrs before I even knew the ATC existed! I still wouldn’t had Herbert Simmons not knocked on my door one day and introduced himself. I never could have imagined that such an ineffably, inexhaustibly, civic-minded individual resided here. Herbert Simmons makes me proud to live Altadena!” – John Torres*

*“Mr Simmons is the only representative that goes out to the community. He knows who he represents because he knocked on our doors. He goes to the schools and shows achievement. He informs us. I’ve lived in Altadena for 12 years and have felt no representation until Mr. Simmons arrived. We don’t live in a secret society. I vote everyone who attends a secret meeting be terminated. What was said? Where is the defense. This is not how it should be. Mr Simmons apologized and made corrections. Can the council secret members do the same?” – David Sandstrom*

**“J’ACCUSE” – COMMENTARY BY FORMER 19-YEAR ALTADENA TOWN COUNCIL MEMBER STEVE LAMB (1989-2008)**

Article has been removed by author’s request.