



## Friends to the end

Andre Mayis Special to the Daily Press

Program Director Barbara Palilis embraces a student after the Circle of Friends — a Santa Monica High School student-run program that works to create relationships between students with disabilities and their peers — was given the first Santa Monica Disabilities Commission award last weekend at a ceremony staged in the Main Library. The Disabilities Commission commended the commitment of Circle of Friends during an event that included performances including Lyena Strlkoff's one-woman show "Caterpillar Soup."

# Rally organizer denies cahoots with the McKeown campaign

CAMPAIGN EFFORTS, from page 1

(SMRR), the city's ruling political party, which is backing McKeown.

SMSP has received nearly \$400,000 from the Edward Thomas Management Co., operators of Shutters on the Beach and Casa del Mar. The Beverly Hills-based management company has spent more than \$40,000 on cable television ads blasting McKeown.

Petz said the rally Sunday in front of Casa del Mar and Shutters was never about McKeown, but rather the "hijacking of our political process."

"For the most part, our democratic process has been community driven for decades and now we have big hotel owners coming in with millions of dollars ... to run attack ads dwarfing the opportunity for community members to have a voice in the process," Petz said.

Open Democracy is not an organization like SMRR or SMSP, said Petz. Instead, it was just a name he came up with to help people better understand his intentions for the rally, which Petz said was organized strictly by him, without any help from McKeown or SMRR.

Petz also said he has raised no money nor did he spend any organizing the rally. He contacted people through e-mail, and those who came with signs made them on their own.

"They are taking the same approach with me as they have with Kevin McKeown: Lie, distort, misdirect," Petz said of SMSP.

Hattoy claims Petz and SMRR co-founder Denny Zane, who spoke at Sunday's rally, are running the misdirection play, pulling people's attention away from the fact that Zane has accepted \$100,000 from Edward Thomas for the Measure V campaign, which, if approved by voters, would create a new parcel tax to help pay for clean beaches.

Petz is advocating for the passage of Measure BB, a \$268 million school bond. While Petz denies he is a member, the

group campaigning in support of the bond — Committee for Excellent Public Schools — has received money from the hospitality industry in prior elections.

"This is the height of hypocrisy," Hatoy said. "They take their contributions for certain causes, and then they deny them (hotel operators) their first amendment rights to support or oppose candidates of their choice. It's absolutely ludicrous."

Zane is running the campaign for the passage of Measure V, however, he said the money he has received from the hotels has been used solely for that campaign and not SMRR activities. He went so far as to commend the hotels for their generosity.

"The environment and education are two issues which traditionally everyone can rally behind," Zane said. "I will support the hotels when they are doing something right. But when they are doing something wrong, I'm going to call them on it ... straight up."

Petz said the difference between supporting education or the environment and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to defeat a single council candidate are clear.

"The hotels have shown examples of being a good neighbor by supporting education and our students," Petz said. "But when it comes to upsetting the balance of local politics ... they go from being a good neighbor to being a bully."

Assistant City Clerk Beth Sanchez, the records and election services manager, said she has received the letter from SMSP calling for an investigation, however, the City Clerk does not investigate the types of allegations made by the group.

"So far, we have not seen one thing that would suggest (Open Democracy) has spent more than \$1,000," Sanchez said. "Those with concerns must file with the Fair Political Practices Commission."

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