

**Community Roundup**

**Compton**

**Stamp honors first black cabinet official**

The Postal Service today will unveil a stamp honoring Patricia Roberts Harris, the first African American to serve in a president's cabinet, in a ceremony beginning at 10 a.m. at Compton Library, 240 W. Compton Blvd.

President Jimmy Carter appointed Harris as secretary of housing and urban development in 1977. She later served as his secretary of health, education and welfare.

**Long Beach**

**School will showcase music magnet program**

Stevens Middle School in West Long Beach will highlight its music and academic magnet programs during a "Leap High Informational Night" at 7 p.m. today. The school is on Santa Fe Avenue at Columbia Street.

The Stephens Concert Band and Stephens Steel Drum Band will perform.

**Chess association plans tournament Saturday**

The Long Beach Chess Association will conduct a tournament Saturday at Red Buck's Cafe, 2741 E. Fourth St., near Temple Avenue. Registration will begin at 1 p.m. The entry fee is \$5 for members or \$9 for nonmembers.

**San Pedro**

**African-American storytelling to be offered**

Children and their families are invited to a program of African-American storytelling and music by Asha's Baba at 3:30 p.m. Friday at San Pedro Library, 931 S. Gaffey St.

**Wilmington**

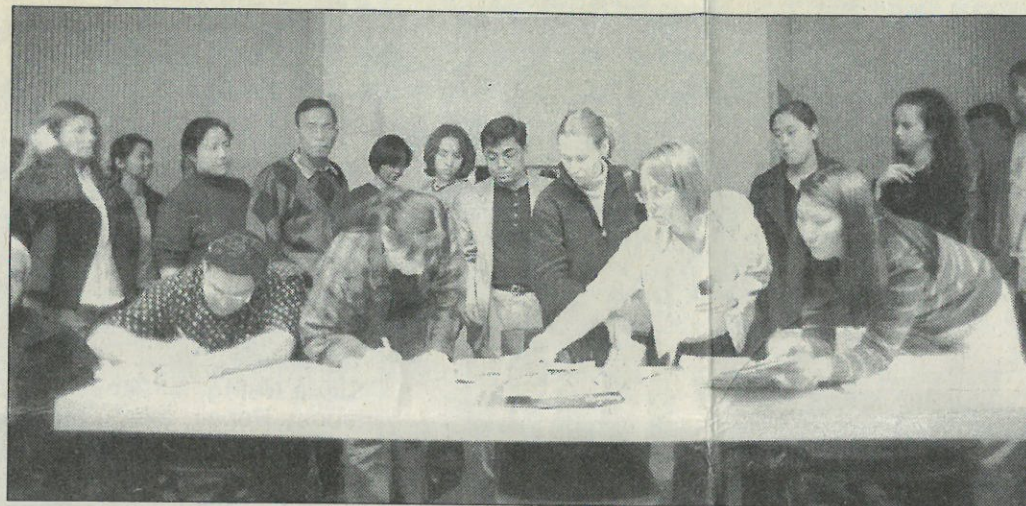
**Parents will discuss Harbor School District**

Parents, students and educators will talk about the proposed formation of a Harbor Unified School District at 7 p.m. today at Banning Recreational Center, 1331 Eubank Ave.

Additional information is available at [www.harborstudy.org](http://www.harborstudy.org).

**The Southland**

**USC Cancer Center**



Audience members gather materials on Asia Society Southern California before Kenneth Quinn's lecture at Cal State Long Beach. Marilynn Young / Press-Telegram

**Recalling Cambodia**

**CSULB: Khmer Rouge is the topic of former ambassador's lecture.**

By Ian Hanigan  
Staff writer

LONG BEACH — As an adviser to the State Department in June 1973, Kenneth Quinn made his way to the top of a hill in Vietnam to take a glimpse of neighboring Cambodia.

Four years earlier, the country's landscape had struck him as one of the most peaceful, tranquil pieces of scenery ever to pass before his eyes.

But on this day, every village was engulfed in flames.

It was the start of one of the bloodiest revolutions the world has seen, perpetuated by a party whose name has become nearly synonymous with a merciless brand of terror.

From 1975 until 1979, the Khmer Rouge executed about one quarter of Cambodia's population.

"Nobody would believe what I wrote," Quinn said of his initial reports to his United States superiors after interviewing fleeing refugees. "It was too incredible a story."

Quinn, who later served as U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia from 1995 to 1999, spoke about the events that led to genocide and about the future of the precarious nation Tuesday night at Cal State Long Beach. About

100 people attended the lecture, which was sponsored by Asia Society Southern California and held open to the public.

In his years as ambassador, Quinn's primary goals were to promote democracy and human rights, expand economic opportunities and, above all, ensure that the United States was doing everything it could to prevent the Khmer Rouge from reasserting itself.

The regime had seized power in Cambodia in 1975 and immediately began executing members of the country's previous government.

Led by leftist dictator Pol Pot, the regime

ultimately began torturing and killing those believed to be un-supportive of the communist revolution.

It has been estimated that 1.7 million Cambodians were murdered before the Khmer Rouge was finally toppled in 1979.

Quinn said that in 1990, the Khmer Rouge was still about 20,000 strong. But those numbers sharply declined during the past decade due in part to their own materialism, he said.

According to Quinn, Khmer Rouge soldiers were no longer living separatist lives, instead

growing accustomed to "creature comforts" such as television sets and cellular phones.

He said this became apparent when Pol Pot decided to make another run at taking control of the government in June 1996. The dictator demanded his troops turn in their material possessions. But Quinn said many members of the Khmer Rouge had no intention of giving up their comforts and instead opted to defect to the Cambodian army, thus ending the threat.

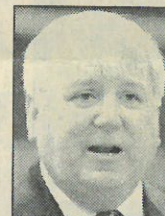
Even at the start of a new century, Quinn said the Khmer Rouge still has a powerful grip on the nation, if only psychological.

"The thought and the prospect of any kind of violence always brings the fear," he said. "What they did and how they did it lingers and festers."

A large percentage of ethnic Cambodians listened attentively to Quinn, who indulged in a question and answer session following the hourlong lecture.

Afterward, 28-year-old Oni Vitandham sat with mixed emotions. Vitandham, who endured three years in a Khmer Rouge camp starting at age 7, said she felt that some facts were omitted. But her overall review was positive.

"I think it was a useful lecture," said Vitandham, who now lives in Long Beach. "A lot of Americans don't know anything about the Khmer Rouge, as well as about what was going on with human rights."



Quinn

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