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San Diego Community Newspaper Group



Catrina is a dog currently fostered by an Amazing Strays volunteer that is looking for her forever home. (Photo by Devan Johnson)

Amazing Strays

By CYNTHIA ROBERTSON | COLLEGE TIMES COURIER

In times past, you went to the local pet store and bought a dog. Not so anymore. It's all about adoption or setting up foster care, which is what Amazing Strays does.

Lisa Biel, founder of the Rolando neighborhood organization, has been personally involved with helping stray dogs find homes for 20 years.

"It all started out when I was needing a dog-friendly place to rent and I found it incredibly

difficult to find someone that would rent to someone with big dogs. At the time, I had a mastiff mix and a Great Dane," Biel said.

The place Biel did ultimately find for her dogs was actually very

SEE AMAZING STRAYS, Page 4

Zuma West project given go ahead

By EVA YAKUTIS | COLLEGE TIMES COURIER

At their Oct. 9 meeting, the College Area Community Planning Board (CACPB), after review of the most recent iteration of the plan by the CACPB's project review committee, voted unanimously to support the proposed five-story, 27-unit Zuma West student housing development.

Zuma West, a development by Keith Henderson of Zuma West, LLC, incorporates two off-site, affordable homes as well. Zuma West is anticipated to replace 11 existing apartments currently located at 6139-6147 Montezuma Road, while the



SEE ZUMA WEST, Page 3      Conceptual drawing of the proposed Zuma West project (Courtesy Zuma West, LLC)

Planning board makes recs on parking issues

By JEFF CLEMETSON | COLLEGE TIMES COURIER

College Area parking could soon see some drastic changes — that is, if the city of San Diego implements the recommendations of the College Area Community Council (CACC).

Among the items the council made recommendations on at its Oct. 9 meeting were parking permits, parking along Montezuma Road and parking issues related to SDSU shop vendors.

PARKING PERMITS

In an effort to curb the over-saturation of parked cars in College Area neighborhoods due to the recent explosion of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), City Attorney Mara Elliott has recommended changing language in the parking ordinances governing B-permit neighborhoods. Currently the language is murky with contradicting limits. One ordinance says that four permits can be granted per dwelling unit and another says it is four per address. The city has been using the latter language, which means that on properties that have added an ADU, there can now be eight permits issued whereas before the ADU was built, only four were allowed. The city attorney wants to clarify the language in both ordinances to say that only four parking permits will be issued per parcel.

At the Oct. 9 meeting, the CACC passed a motion to support the city attorney's recommendations.

Although there was some discussion on whether the changes would end up in court over a complaint about fair or discriminatory housing, a majority of the council argued that it is just as unfair to the homeowners that have only one unit on their parcel and

SEE PARKING, Page 12



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## Fire safety focus of station open house

By DOUG CURLEE | COLLEGE TIMES COURIER



The open house at Fire Station 10 was a chance for residents to learn about fire safety and meet their local fire fighters. (Photo by Doug Curlee)

The Oct. 8 open house at San Diego Fire Department Station 10 drew a pretty good crowd from the El Cerrito area, and it wasn't just to eat the free hot dogs and collect pictures of children climbing on fire trucks.

There was plenty of that, of course, but the message to the attendees was much more serious.

October is Fire Prevention and Safety Month, and that was what Station 10 commander Scott Fuller wanted to hammer home.

"Fire safety! That's our message. Always be aware of what's going on and always make a plan to escape a fire that may hit your home," he said. "Make a plan to get all your people to a nearby safe area as quickly as possible, so you can count noses and make sure everyone has escaped and is safe. Make sure everyone knows all there is to know. Practice escaping and reuniting, so that if it happens for real, you know everyone has it firmly in mind."

I spent 33 years covering news for television in San Diego. In that time, I was working during and after the 2003 and 2007 wildfires that decimated entire neighborhoods. In follow-up stories after the fires were finally put out, I was continually amazed at how many people who'd lost everything told me, "I had no idea

what to do. I never thought it could happen to us."

In addition to teaching about fire safety, the event was also an open house so that residents could meet and know their local firefighters — know that if they need help, the firefighters are a definite neighborhood resource.

Firefighters spent the evening talking with residents, and their children, answering question after question with smiles and good information.

The evening ended with a live firefighting demonstration by Station 10 and Station 17 firefighters.

Station 10 is a training base for new firefighters, and they have a huge facility that can imitate a roaring interior fire, and teach

how to extricate a fire victim from inside.

Laura Towers brought her children to the open house because she wanted them to see all this.

"My oldest son here really wants to be a firefighter someday, and I want all of them to understand that fire is a dangerous thing," she told me. "I want them to know that matches or lighters are things to never touch, never play with. I'm all for these kinds of demonstrations. I think they should have them more often."

Hopefully, the lessons were learned by people of all ages — but especially the children.

—Doug Curlee is a long-time San Diego journalist in both print and television.

## Clay Park facelift underway

By JEFF CLEMETSON | COLLEGE TIMES COURIER

Rolando residents will soon enjoy some long overdue improvements to Clay Park. Construction is currently underway on the first phase of upgrading the neighborhood park located next to Clay Elementary at 4759 Seminole Drive.

Rolando Community Council vice president Adam McLane gave a presentation on the status of the park improvements at the council's Oct. 15 meeting. One completed project — new fencing — has already brought some more accessibility to Clay Park.

"It has now really become a joint-use field because now Clay Elementary is allowed to use it during the school day without sending home permission slips to parents," McLane said.

Gates on the new 10-foot tall fences are locked one hour before school begins and opened one hour after school ends so students can use it freely during that period.

One area of fencing is still up in the air — an access point that leads to and from Reville Way. The unofficial access path to the park rests on private property and the new property owners are concerned about liability. As of now, the owners are allowing the public access to the park and have stated they do not mind the normal daytime uses of the path.

"The problem is the undesired activities that happen in the evening time," McLane said. A public meeting will be held at 9 a.m. on

SEE CLAY PARK, Page 12



Artist rendering of the Clay Park improvements currently under construction. (Courtesy Rolando Community Council)

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## Zuma West

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

project's affordable units will be new, single-family rental homes in the College Area neighborhood.

Henderson's original plan called for 10-foot setbacks from Mary Lane to the rear of the property with the building's upper floor corners being bumped in. The planning board and local residents, concerned about the transition between the single-family neighborhood and this apartment development, worked with Henderson and together they compromised on a plan that creates a less abrupt elevation change between the existing neighborhood and the new development. The revised plan includes 10-foot setbacks on the first and second floors of Zuma West, with that setback stepping back to 17 feet on the third, fourth, and fifth floors. Additional concessions include a 10 p.m. curfew on the fifth-floor outdoor deck, four planters with trees along the Mary Lane side, and green screening on the stairwell providing greater privacy for both student residents and the neighborhood.

Henderson will now be moving the project forward to the city and requesting a "concurrent cycle" for approval. The concurrent cycle will include city review of not only the construction drawings

but also the project's entitlement drawings. That process will represent the project's fifth cycle of review by the city. If the city's Planning Department approves the project, Zuma West is anticipated to break ground in 2020 and open in fall of 2021.

Zuma West is designed by the San Diego architectural and design firm of Joseph Wong Designs. The apartment community plan includes a secured lobby, internal trash collection area, curb cuts to accommodate deliveries and pick-ups, and amenity space/open terrace on the fifth floor with views to the north. The units are a mixture of three bedrooms and four bedrooms, with the majority being four bedrooms. The project provides 1,600 square feet of community common space for the residents. What the project will not include are parking spaces or a garage, which is in compliance with current zoning regulations. Instead, residents will be parking in the 24-hour SDSU lot directly across the street.

The two off-site, detached homes include garages and yards and will meet the building standards of the surrounding neighborhood. They will be offered for rent to qualifying very-low-income families and will be managed by the San Diego Housing Commission. The rent will be no more than 30% of 50% of the

area median income (\$86,300) as adjusted for household size. A family of four, for example, could have a combined income of up to \$53,500 a year. Covenants on the titles to these homes will require they remain affordable for a period of 55 years.

The project takes advantage of the city's affordable housing density bonus, which allows for extra density in a multi-family development in exchange for the addition of affordable housing units, either on site or off site. Zuma West is using the density bonus to move up from the allowable on-site unit number of 22 market rate apartments to 27. The developer indicates the project's two affordable homes will be built on Hobart Street, behind and inclusive of 6205 Pembroke Drive. The addresses are yet to be determined by the city.

There were congratulations all around following the CACPB's vote in support of the project, a representation of how by "working with each other, rather than against each other," as stated by Jim Jeffries, CACPB Project Review Committee chairman, both developers and neighbors can meet in middle.

—Eva Yakutis is an El Cerrito resident and former Housing and Neighborhoods manager for the city of Riverside.

## SDSU installs new system for parking fees

By DOUG CURLEE

Parking at San Diego State University has been a hassle for many years, as the school tries to somehow provide more and better parking on an increasingly overcrowded campus.

As the final year of a five-year plan kicked in this fall, it is easier to find a parking place — for the most part.

It's also become more expensive to rent that parking space. It's now up to \$3 an hour.

The cost is to help pay for the new PayByPhone system in place at student parking structures all over campus.

Students — and others — can now pay for parking with a smartphone app, which bills an associated credit card account for the parking fees. The computerized system allows you to enter your license plate number, which is preregistered in the system, confirms your identity, and grants you a one-hour parking slot. You can extend that hour by another one, again on your cell phone.

"It's a very good system for allowing us to keep a better eye on our parking lots, and make sure the people who are parking there are legally allowed to do so. It mostly does away with the old paper parking tickets you used to have to put on your dashboards to prove you paid," said SDSU Police Parking Sergeant Francisco Hernandez. "It has the very distinct feature of warning you when your time is about to expire, so you can either extend your time, or get your car out of the slot in time to avoid a ticket."

If students are worried about their credit card numbers being discovered, the system deeply encrypts that information, and it is never displayed in any part of the process.

However, not everyone is happy with the new system.

Tim Nash, a former Aztec, exercises at one the workout gyms on campus.



A new electronic parking kiosk at SDSU (Photo by Doug Curlee)

"It's really pretty expensive — probably more than it needs to be. It's just another way for the school to get into your pockets. I don't like it at all."

John Grady, another workout guy, agrees it's probably more expensive than it needs to be.

But, by and large, he likes the system.

"It's easy to do, and I do appreciate that it lets me know when I'm about to run out of time," he said.

Of course, not every student on campus has credit cards — or cell phones, as odd as that may seem these days. And some other campus visitors like visiting parents or grandparents don't have the same comfort level with technology to use downloaded apps. What do they do to get a temporary parking pass when they need one at SDSU?

As long as you've registered your license plate number with the school — which you can do in person or by calling a special number, 1-888-515-7275 — you can drive in and park, then go to the electronic kiosk in the structure, enter your license number, and pay your fee.

Right at the bottom of the electronic kiosk, where you enter the license number, you will see a small slot — which will be happy to accept your dollar bills.

—Doug Curlee is a longtime San Diego reporter for both print and television news.

## More student housing projects

By JEFF CLEMETSON | COLLEGE TIMES COURIER

At the Oct. 2 meeting of the College Area Community Council Project Review Committee, community members were introduced to two new student housing projects that will be coming down the pipeline for approval in the next few months.



Keith Henderson presents the initial plan for the proposed Monte student housing development. (Photos by Jeff Clemetson)

### MONTE

Developer Keith Henderson of Zuma West, LLC introduced a project named "Monte" proposed for the lot at the corner of 63rd Street and Montezuma Road. The project, as it was presented, would be a five-story building with one full level of underground parking with 34 parking spaces; 38 dwelling units; and an outdoor terrace at the corner of 63rd and Montezuma.

The project review committee was quick to critique the design of the building by architect Joe Wong, calling it "too urban," "like an office building," and

"just wrong." Another area of contention for the review committee was the "long, skinny" lot that the project will be built on, which the committee members described as being impossible to build something that is sensitive to neighboring single-family residences.

"We're going to take a good look at this and come back to you guys next month," Henderson said, adding that the committee "may see significant changes" to the project the next time it is presented.



Conceptual drawing of the proposed Topaz development

### TOPAZ

The next project presented was a mixed-use building proposed to replace the McDonalds restaurant and strip mall located at 5824 and 5838 Montezuma Road, adjacent to the SDSU campus.

The project, called "Topaz," is proposed by Pierce Education Properties, one of the largest owner/operators of student housing in the country with more than 16,000 beds at 23 universities in 17 states, said CEO Fred Pierce.

Frank Wolden, an urban conceptualist with architectural

firm AVR P Skyport, presented the project, which he said would be part of the community's vision to make College Area a campus village.

"A place that is great for the university and a place that is great for the community. This is a key site in completing that vision," he said.

The Topaz project is currently envisioned as a seven-story project with a bottom level containing two restaurants — one likely being the McDonalds that currently resides there — and at least one retail space. The second level would be for parking and some student amenities. The remaining levels would contain more amenities among the 52 three- to four-bed dwelling units for students.

The building would also include a terrace open to the public and a redesign of an adjacent alley that will "activate" it and serve as a promenade for students to walk along on the way to classes, although some project review committee members doubted that students would use the alley.

Other suggestions for the project by the committee included using native plants in the landscaping; adding art to the public spaces; and considering LEED certification.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdnews.com.

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## Amazing Strays

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

dog-friendly, with the owner of the property being the president of a local dog rescue. The woman preferred to rent to people who were dog owners and they introduced Biel to the idea of fostering.

Biel never lost a step from there. Over the years, she has volunteered for several local dog rescues. Many San Diego rescues focus on Tijuana or Rosarito, where street dogs run rampant.

"All of them need some sort of medical attention, whether it be as minor as flea and tick prevention or as major as broken limbs or jaws requiring surgery," she said.

As a result of seeing all the need — and wanting to give the animals a better life — in May of this year, Biel decided to start her own rescue.



William Remsbottom and Hilary Leong of Scrimshaw Coffee near SDSU adopted Sparkle as the coffeehouse dog. (Photo courtesy William Remsbottom)

"I feel such a purpose with Amazing Strays," she said.

It takes more than one person to run an ambitious organization like Amazing Strays. The board is still forming, but Biel said that she already has some great people helping her.

Morgan Travis is the treasurer; Yasmin Longoria, a director on the board, soon to take on the role of foster coordinator. Karin Von Kluegl is another director on the board; Devan Johnson, the secretary.

"They are true heroes for those in need," said Biel, who is the president of Amazing Strays.

Biel's own personal experiences with rescuing stray dogs began when she was just a kid.

The first dog she can remember as being her own dog, a St. Bernard, was a stray she had found back in the '80s in Tucson, Arizona. She brought him home and her parents said she could keep him until they found his owners. But there was no social media to check, and shelters were not known for their kindness and adoption focus, rather for their practice of euthanasia.

So Biel and her family went old school, posting signs on the neighborhood telephone poles.

"Nobody claimed him, so he was mine," Biel said.

Her love for dogs grew along with her passion to help them. As a result, anyone who loves dogs will benefit by connecting with Amazing Strays.



(l to r) Amazing Strays Rescue staff: Adam Marquez, Yasmin Longoria, Lisa Biel (Founder), Devan Johnson, and Morgan Travis (Photo courtesy Amazing Strays)

William Remsbottom and Hilary Leong, who own and operate Scrimshaw Coffee near SDSU, got their own puppy, Sparkle, from Amazing Strays. They had met Sparkle at the Talmadge Block Party where Longoria was parading puppies from Amazing Strays around in a wagon.

"Will experienced love at first sight with Sparkle, who was just adorable," said Longoria. "He kept leaving and sneaking back to peek at her. Obviously they just couldn't resist."

"Stray dogs are some of the nicest and most loving dogs you will ever come across," Biel said.

Amazing Strays focuses on mothers with puppies abandoned in dirt lots or on the sides of roads. Sometimes they are in abandoned buildings or in dumps.

"I have rescued from Mexicali, TJ, Rosarito, San Diego, Riverside and Los Angeles," she said.

Though Biel has a full-time career with the San Diego Sheriff's Department as an emergency services dispatcher, she refers to her rescue as her second full-time job.

"First and foremost, I foster. Fostering is imperative to rescue. If we don't have somewhere for the dogs to be safe while we are searching for a forever home, we cannot effectively help them," said Biel.

Going down to Mexico at least once a week to deliver supplies, going to medical appointments, or picking up dogs and bringing them back to San Diego is all part of the fostering work for Biel. She also administers vaccines to the rescues.

"If it needs to be done, the buck stops here, so I will do everything in my power to make something work for the benefit of the rescue," she said.

Still, Amazing Strays needs help. They desperately need fosters. Biel explained that most people think, "Oh, I would love to but I would probably get attached."

"My answer is, 'yes, you might, but what is the alternative?' They need help. If you take a foster in to your home and you get a little attached, that is totally normal, but once you see them adopted out into a good home, you get such a sense of pride and happiness for the pup that it outweighs the attachment.

"It is a win/win. It is dog-sitting for the greater good," Biel said.

And who knows? A fostered puppy may end up being part of the family. That's the story with Elkin and Heather Cifuentes. They had fostered a puppy named Lola. But when it was time to let her go, they just could not. So Heather's mother, Francine Villodas, adopted Lola, who gets along just fine with Chico, whom the Cifuentes had rescued about seven months earlier from the Humane Society. So now the family is a two-puppy one, thanks to Amazing Strays.

"We couldn't imagine our lives without Lola, and we're so happy the Amazing Strays team introduced us to her," said Cifuentes.

Amazing Strays will be holding an adoption event and fundraiser at Sidecar, 1310 Morena Blvd., on Nov. 3 from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. For more information about Amazing Strays, visit amazingstrays.com.

—Cynthia Robertson is a San Diego-based freelance reporter and author.

## College Area happenings

By JOSE REYNOSO

As many of you know, after two years of visioning sessions through its Beautification and Long-Term Planning Committee and other efforts, the CACC voted to move forward with a proposal to create a community-generated, community plan update for the College Area that would be submitted to the city in hopes that the end-result would become a basis and integral part of the formal community plan update that the city was being urged to begin.

The Beautification Committee was put on hiatus and a Steering Committee took over the effort, focused on putting the plan together. The committee engaged several outside sources; the New School of Architecture and Design and the urban planning department at San Diego State. A graduate-level studio class at SDSU took on the task of developing concepts and gathering data necessary for the basis of a plan update. Their and the committee's final report is being polished and edited and will be presented to the full CACC board at its meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 13 at 7 p.m. at Faith Presbyterian Church.

Once approved by the board, it will be submitted to the city and made public. The city expects the report to serve as a framework for the planning process that they must follow. We encourage residents to attend the meeting and to continue to stay informed. We need input, feedback and community involvement in determining what the College Area will look like over the next 10, 20 or 30 years. One way to stay informed and involved is to join the CACC so you can be on our email notification list.

The CACC is in the process of applying to become a 501c3 non-profit corporation. That will assist in fundraising; perhaps through grants as well as membership donations to fund things such as the costs of the plan update report mentioned above.

There are other projects that we want to get off the ground, for example, a collaborative project with the Campus Community Commission of the Associated Students at SDSU to assist primarily older residents that do not have the resources, financial or physical, to keep their yards up. Maybe planting more trees in the community or any worthwhile idea that we could raise funds to accomplish.

SEE COLLEGE AREA, Page 5



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# College View Estates news

By PATRICK HANSON

Can you believe College View Estates, which has 341 homes, had its annual Progressive Dinner on Saturday, Sept. 28, with 103 neighbors present?

This incredible evening, which has taken place yearly for more than 25 years, began with a creative array of appetizers and beverages at a home on Redding Road overlooking the canyon. Guests were also treated to live music from a pianist. From there, participants were sent to one of 15 homes that hosted either four or six guests for the entrée. Following dinner, the group reassembled at a home on Drover Drive for desserts. The dessert table overflowed with confections that would make a bakery jealous. The evening was organized by Lisa Vickers and her committee, who have coordinated this event for several years.

While desserts were being savored, the College View Estates Association recognized three neighbors for their contributions to help make this a community “Where Neighbors Care.” As president, I presented awards to the following:

**Cindy Gilbertson** — coordinator of our 25 block captains. She delivers them the community newsletter, flyers, etc. for distribution. She also keeps them updated on the membership statistics for their block and supports their efforts.

**Bart McCleskey** — webmaster for the College View Estates awesome website. If you are interested in our community, especially the history, visit collegeviewestates.org.

**Joe Jones** — board member, who oversees neighborhood beautification. Over the years, Joe has



The Progressive Dinner was well attended. (Courtesy Patrick Hanson)

promoted the planting of trees. He visited us 24 years ago, shortly after we moved in, and convinced us to plant trees in front of our home. A decision we do not regret!

We also awarded two door prizes — two passes each to the Cygnet Theatre. We appreciate Cygnet’s generosity to our event. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped to make this a memorable evening in College View Estates.

During September, a number of community members joined in celebrating LGBTQPride. We gathered at a beautiful home on a canyon and enjoyed good conversation, food and drink. This, too, has become a tradition over the years.

One welcome addition to the community is a new secure fence installed by SDSU along the canyon edge of the parking lot (10A) across the street from the tennis courts. The purpose of the fence is to prevent students and staff from frequenting the canyon to smoke. Their activity created a major fire hazard and concern to the homes along Hewlett Drive, as well as the university. This project was in the planning stage for about two years and we appreciate SDSU completing it in such an attractive fashion.

—Patrick Hanson is president of the College View Estates Association.

# News from Mesa Colony Community Group

By SAUL AMERLING

Sept. 28 was our first monthly meeting since the summer break. We were able to get updates from Council member Gomez’ representative, the director of the business district, and an overview from the College Area Community Council president regarding the progress of building development in the community.

Our guest speaker was Alonso Nunez, executive director of the Little Fish Comic Book Studio. He gave a wonderful talk about the nonprofit, and some of the classes and community opportunities they offer.

For one, I was very impressed. I have driven by their location at 6822 El Cajon Blvd. many times and assumed it was only a comic book store. They are an educational nonprofit dedicated to developing the skills of students of

all ages who are interested in the comic art form.

Classes and instructors teach digital art, pixel art, animation, script and story writing, illustration cartooning, and much more. Students range from elementary school through adult. They even run a series of camps. Visitors are welcome, so drop by!

On Sept. 26, some 17 members of Mesa Colony went to Wild Thyme Grill on El Cajon Boulevard and 58th Street. Each month, we support another local restaurant in the College Area. Everyone in attendance agreed we had a wild time.

All residents of the Mesa Colony community are welcome to attend our monthly meetings of the Mesa Colony Community Group. You can reach us at mesacolony@gmail.com

—Saul Amerling writes on behalf of the Mesa Colony Community Group.

# Alvarado Community Association news

By JOSE REYNOSO

The Alvarado Estates board is legally mandated to provide specific services and protections to its residents. These include maintaining our streets, providing garbage collection services, and enforcing rules so that, for example, health and safety, aesthetics and community spirit are maintained. However, the board strongly believes that as part of the greater community, we must be active partners with all other

communities and do our part in making the College Area a better place to live.

We are legally restricted to use our members’ funds (assessments), only for purposes for the benefit of our community. Despite this limitation, many of the projects we’ve embarked on have not been mutually exclusive with the good of the greater community. For example, a chronic complaint within the entire College Area

SEE ALVARADO, Page 9

# College Area

CONTINUED FROM Page 4

We anticipate that we will hear back on our application to the IRS in the next few weeks so that it could be in place when we have our annual membership drive at the end of the year. That means that going forward, the annual donations that many of you make, may be tax-deductible. Stay informed. Get involved. Join the CACC.

—Jose Reynoso is president of the College Area Community Council.

# El Cerrito Community Council news

By LORNA ZUKAS

In February this year, El Cerrito Community Council’s Beautification Committee started having a monthly clean-up of the neighborhood. The results have been remarkable, giving our neighborhood a new, clean feel everywhere they have been — 55th Street on the north side of El Cajon Blvd around the Lucky Lady Casino; 54th Street between El Cajon Boulevard to Adams Avenue; streets around Crawford High and Mann Middle Schools, and the latest — College Avenue from 60th Street to View Place.

After the cleanups, the crew goes to Scrimshaw Coffee on El Cajon Blvd for a bite to eat. Big thanks to its owner, Will, for the ongoing 10% discount he gives to the crew.

Every resident of El Cerrito is welcome to join the once per month clean-up. All hands are useful as there are big and little jobs. The committee works one Saturday day per month from 8:30–10:30 a.m. You can join for a short while if you can’t stay the whole time. You don’t have to come out every month

SEE EL CERRITO, Page 9



Beautification Committee members at the neighborhood clean-up on Sept. 21 (Courtesy ECCC)

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# Taking military funds for border wall hurts military families, national security

CA 53 BULLETIN

By REP. SUSAN DAVIS



San Diego has long been considered a military town. We understand how important it is to take care of our military families and veterans. We also understand the importance of national defense spending in supporting our service members and the economic impact it has on our region.

Our strong military presence is part of the reason I chose to serve on the House Armed Services Committee. Ensuring that our men and women in uniform and families have the resources and support they need has always been a priority.

The Trump administration's effort to take money from our military to build his border wall puts that support in jeopardy. Nearly \$3 billion in military construction projects are targeted to lose funding.

This will hurt our troops, national security, and violate the Constitution, which expressly gives Congress the power to determine how tax dollars are spent.

Military construction projects certainly may not get as much attention as other parts of the defense budget, but they are a critical component of our national security.

Our service members would simply not be able to do their

jobs without the infrastructure of bases, hangars, operation facilities, readiness centers, water supplies, and housing.

Each year, Congress allocates billions of tax dollars on projects around the globe to build up and improve that infrastructure. The appropriations process for military construction projects is a rare act of bipartisanship in Congress.

But the process has been thrown into uncertainty with President Trump's attempt to circumvent Congress and the Constitution by diverting funds for military construction to fund his border wall.

We know the President is desperate for his border wall. It was a campaign promise to his base. He shut the government down for weeks to force Congress to provide funds for his border wall, a wall he said Mexico was going to pay for.

Instead, it looks like our military is going to pay for it.

Unable to coerce Congress to fund the border wall due to bipartisan opposition for it in Congress, the president declared a national emergency. Such a declaration — which is being challenged in court — would allow the president take billions of tax dollars from military construction projects to construct his border wall.

In September, the Department of Defense sent to Congress a list of 127 projects

that will lose funding. The total amount was \$3.7 billion.

San Diego was spared from the chopping block, but that doesn't mean it might not impact our region or our service members and their families. When President Trump declared his national emergency in February, a preliminary list included almost \$1 billion in San Diego-area projects. So we know that some San Diego projects were on the radar and could be targeted in the future.

Cost estimates to build a border wall along the nearly 3,000-mile border with Mexico go as high as \$70 billion. So this round of \$3.7 billion being taken from our military will barely cover the initial costs.

While San Diego didn't lose any projects, California will lose \$8 million for a flight simulator at Channel Islands Air National Guard Station. This C-130 simulator is used to train pilots for disaster response.

San Diego has experienced its fair share of devastating wildfires. It is not uncommon for the California Air National Guard to aid firefighters. We want our pilots to have the best training with the best equipment, and taking this \$8 million from our pilots will only hurt readiness.

Congress continues to fight this unconstitutional money-grab. Using the Congressional Review Act

(CRA), which allows Congress to stop overreach by the executive branch, the House and Senate passed with a bipartisan vote to cancel President Trump's national emergency.

While the President vetoed that bill, the CRA gives Congress another bite of the apple in six months. The Senate last week passed another bill to end the national emergency to protect these vital military construction projects. The House will soon take up the Senate bill.

Multiple court cases are making their way through our judicial system. It was disappointing to have the Supreme Court rule that the administration can move forward with diverting funds while the lower courts deal with the legal challenges.

What kind of precedent will this set? Do these words in the Constitution, "No money shall be drawn from the treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law" have any meaning?

Our service members and their families should not be pawns in political fights, especially just to satisfy a campaign promise.

—Congresswoman Davis represents central San Diego, as well as La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley and parts of El Cajon and Chula Vista.

## Chollas Triangle Park gets funding

District Nine Notes

By GEORGETTE GÓMEZ



I'm excited to share great news with you this month. In October, the San Diego City Council voted to approve \$400,000 toward the development of Chollas Triangle Park.

In 2015, the Mid-City Community Plan was amended to include a five-acre park near the intersection of 54th Street and Chollas Parkway at the Chollas Triangle and the restoration of Chollas Creek adjacent to the future park.

With the approved funds, city staff will take the necessary next step of evaluating the site for the future park and the options for future amenities like space for games and sports, picnics, bikeways, landscaping, and more.

Chollas Triangle Park is an important improvement in quality of life for El Cerrito neighbors. It has been a priority of mine in every city budget discussion since I was elected.

I am pleased that funding to take the next step is moving forward — but we aren't done. I will continue to work hard until all the pieces from the community plan are in place. This will include a completed park, bikeway, housing, and more.

I invite you to reach out to me via email, phone, and your council representatives. We will also continue to hold office hours, coffees and cleanups in the communities.

—Georgette Gómez is Council President of the San Diego City Council and the and District 9 Council member.

## Working to clear low-level marijuana convictions

Law in the City

By MARA W. ELLIOTT



People deserve second chances in life, especially when a mistake from the past can have exaggerated consequences on their future.

That's why I'm working to dismiss convictions from the records of thousands of San Diegans who violated now-obsolete laws against possessing low-level amounts of marijuana.

These citizens often cannot fully participate in society because they once engaged in an activity that today is legal in the eyes of the courts, the state Legislature, and the voters of California.

They may be turned down for a job, or unable to rent a home. Having a criminal record can keep them from coaching their child's sports team, or affect their ability to obtain a student loan for college.

My office is currently reviewing more than 5,000 misdemeanor and infraction convictions from 2009 through 2018, and thousands more before then. Charges will be

systematically dismissed to clear conviction records for those who qualify, and records will be sealed.

We filed the first motions to dismiss 30 convictions on Sept. 25, and additional motions will be filed on a regular and ongoing basis.

Under a bill passed by the state Legislature, prosecutors like myself are tasked with clearing convictions before July 1, 2020. We are working with the Superior Court, San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan, and the Office of the Public Defender to develop a streamlined countywide process to identify all eligible individuals. We are conducting a thorough review of convictions documented in the databases of the Superior Court, City Attorney's Office, and California Department of Justice.

Since marijuana became legal in California, people convicted of low-level misdemeanors and infractions for marijuana possession could petition the court to have their records dismissed. However, few took advantage of the opportunity, likely



# Help us help our kids at Hardy

The Hardy Elementary PTA provides an array of services to the school. Given chronic budget shortages within the San Diego Unified School District, many things that we, as adults took for granted when we were school children are simply not there anymore. Things like field trips; sufficient classroom supplies; library books; and science projects, art, music and dance are simply not funded by the district.

That's where the PTA and under its umbrella, the Hardy Dad's Club, come in. Everything mentioned takes money so we have two of our biggest fundraisers coming up.



## FALL CARNIVAL

On Oct. 26, from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., we will be hosting our annual Fall Carnival. The theme this year is "Once Upon a Time." Please join us as we celebrate a magical day full of family fun, games, food and some special entertainment. You can purchase \$5 punch cards (10 punches of 50 cents) at the gate to use to play games, buy food and do activities like face painting, go through the Dad's Club haunted house, etc. Costumes and magical attire are encouraged.

## DAD'S CLUB CHRISTMAS TREE PRESALE

The Dad's Club puts together fun activities for kids and families, like movie nights, a camp-out on the Hardy field and funding for special programs, projects and equipment. As an example, we are looking to start a robotics club

at Hardy. To fund this, we do one big fundraiser every year — our annual Christmas tree sale.

Trees — Douglas firs, noble firs and Nordmann firs — come directly from the grower so they're fresh. You can also buy wreaths, swag or garland. Presale is now on and trees and other purchases can be picked up on Sunday, Dec. 1, at Hardy from 8 a.m.-noon.

Even if you don't celebrate Christmas or put up a tree, you can donate your purchase to the "trees for troops" program and make the holiday special for a military family.

You can pre-purchase trees through Nov. 13.

Please join us at the Fall Carnival, have some fun and buy a Christmas tree while you're there. This is your community and Hardy is your community school. Please support us!

# STEMM Foundation Mini Golf Challenge

By JAY WILSON

Karen Miller and Dr. Andrea Miyamoto, members of the Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation Board, are co-chairs of the fourth Mini Golf Challenge, and they have announced this year's event for Sunday, Oct. 27. This is the day all of the teams will set up their mini golf challenge hole which will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the San Carlos Community Garden located on the northwest corner of Lake Adlon and Boulder Lake. Put a team together of two to six students in grades K-12 from your school. This year's theme is "Big Ideas for Sustainability."



An all-girls team checking out their creative mini golf hole when the theme of the third Mini Golf Challenge was "Water." (Courtesy Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation)

## ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

There is no registration fee for student teams. Teams are to design and build a mini golf hole that reflects this year's theme, and bring it to the mini golf course on the day of the event. Each entry will have a 10-by-10-foot space to work with. In past years, the average size of each hole has been four-by-8 foot.

During the Mini Golf Challenge, team members will interact with

attendees (the golfers) to share what it was like working as a team, how they came up with their ideas, new knowledge they've acquired during the process, and other aspects of their experience. Event attendees will vote on the "Favorite Hole" and the winning team will bring back to their school the much-coveted Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation Mini Golf Challenge Trophy for display.

## ABOUT THE TEAMS

The teams should consist of two to six students, split as evenly

SEE STEMM, Page 12

# St. Katharine Drexel Academy news

By KELLY BONDE

We are already halfway through our first trimester here at St. Katharine Drexel Academy! Below are some of our big events coming up.

On Thursday, Nov. 7, we are hosting an open house for transitional kindergarten and kindergarten for the 2020-21 school year. The event will be held on campus from 5-7 p.m. and will be a chance to get a tour of the campus, meet the teachers and principal and chat with other parents. We will also be opening

up our waiting list that evening as well, pending assessment. Please join us!

St. Katharine Drexel Academy is a proud partner of the iDeal Institute at Loyola Marymount University. During the next few years, Drexel teachers are training to earn school-wide certification as a Blended Learning Next Generation Science & Technology Catholic School. At Drexel, NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) form the foundation of our project-based, integrated curriculum. With the assistance of online resources, teachers

personalize instruction and assessment to meet each student's learning needs in a station rotation, blended-learning environment.

All are welcome. If you would like to schedule a tour, please reach out through the main office at 619-582-3862 or email [mainoffice@skda-sd.org](mailto:mainoffice@skda-sd.org).

Learn how we empower great hearts and minds to change the world. Follow @drexelsd or find us on Facebook at St. Katharine Drexel Academy!

—Kelly Bonde is principal of St. Katharine Drexel Academy.

# New women's basketball head coach at Henry

By ELIZABETH GILLINGHAM

PHHS is thrilled to have named Branisha Jones as our new women's varsity head coach. Branisha is a native San Diegan and began her career in basketball as a young girl playing at the Skyline Recreation Center. She fell in love with the game and began building valuable friendships with girls on her team and with her coach at the time, Patrick Tabor.

Branisha stated, "Throughout my time playing at the recreation level, my coach made it a point to instill a lot of discipline in us as a team. I personally took all of the lessons I learned from basketball and implemented them into real life situations. Coach Pat always reminded us that basketball was a privilege, so to treat it as such. I learned that respect, discipline,



Coach Branisha Jones (Courtesy phpatriots.net)

SEE PHHS, Page 12

# Tubman is officially a 'Leader in Me' school

By RYAN WOODARD

This school year, Tubman began its journey to become a Leader In Me school. This journey will include our staff, students, and their families.

Leader in Me (LiM) is an evidence-based, comprehensive-school improvement model —developed in partnership with educators — that empowers students with the leadership and life skills they need to thrive in the 21st century. The model is based on a theory of change known as the "See-Do-Get Cycle." When you change the way you see things, it influences what you do and the results you get.

Being part of this program will provide Tubman with a unique approach to integrating highly effective practices throughout our school's culture. Instead of focusing on academic measures alone, LiM will embody a holistic approach to education while re-defining how Tubman measures success. This approach empowers our teachers with effective practices and tools to teach leadership to every student; create a culture of student empowerment; and align systems to drive results in our academics.

LiM will provide Tubman with a model and process that addresses common challenges that are unique to our students during these formative years. As a school community, Tubman is concerned about a student's physical, mental, social, and economic well-being, all of which are factors

that can contribute to or hinder academic success. Our teachers, staff, and administrators will be empowered to provide support in all of these areas by creating a learning environment that addresses whole-child education with these five core paradigms:

- Everyone can be a leader.
- Everyone has genius.
- Change starts with me.
- Educators empower students to lead their own learning.
- Develop the whole person.

In school, Tubman teachers will be focused on teaching these five paradigms as well as the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People." These habits include:

- Be proactive. (You're in charge.)
- Begin with the end in mind. (Have a plan.)
- Put first things first. (Work first, then play.)

- Think "win-win." (Everyone can win.)
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood. (Listen before you talk.)
- Synergize. (Together is better.)
- Sharpen the saw. (Balance feels best.)

The LiM program will take five years to fully implement. We look forward to working with our Tubman families and stakeholders to help make this program successful in supporting and strengthening our students emotionally, socially, and academically.

For more information about Leader in Me, visit [leader-in-me.org](http://leader-in-me.org).

—Ryan Woodard is principal of Harriet Tubman Village Charter School.

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## Best Western holds remodel ribbon-cutting

By ANDY VELEZ | COLLEGE TIMES COURIER

On Oct. 2, community members, business organizations and local officials gathered to celebrate the re-opening of the Best Western Hotel, at 6474 El Cajon Blvd. The hotel, which has operated in College Area since the 1940s, recently underwent a beautification of its exterior.

Gilda Prado, general manager for the property, held the honor of cutting the ribbon.

"This is the ribbon-cutting ceremony where we are celebrating the property improvements that have been made, including a new lobby and breakfast area," Prado said. "We are working in a way to expand business and provide a better experience for our customers."

Major improvements to the hotel include a new lobby and breakfast lounge, where new items have been added to the menu. Prado also confirmed further renovation will soon be made to improve guest rooms for an even better customer experience.

The hotel has been owned and operated by the Lyon family since 1971. Back then, it was called the

Lamplighter Inn, before becoming a Best Western in 2000. Over the years, the Lyon family has made many renovations to continue to provide a better experience for their guests. The hotel started off as an 18-unit inn but later construction added two 26-unit buildings, known as Building B and C. The hotel now holds 60 units to better house their guests, but adding guest rooms isn't the hotel's only focus.

"Building more units is done to get more revenue — obviously, in order to make more money, you need to have more rooms," said property owner John Lyon. "But one thing we focus on here is the landscape."

One of the business leaders at the ribbon cutting was Jim Schneider, executive director of the College Area Business Improvement District (CABID). He said that although Best Western did not utilize the program, CABID can help other businesses in the area improve their exterior by helping them utilize the city's Storefront Improvement Program



Best Western general manager Gina Prado cuts the ribbon on the hotel's grand re-opening following a remodel of the lobby and landscaping areas. (Photo by Andy Velez)

— a fund to pay for half the cost of improving the façade of a building or business up to \$8,000.

"This is a great and immediate return on investment on any façade improvement project that is usually considered an expense," he said. "The College Area Business District strongly recommends and offers our expertise and guidance with this program to any of the College Area businesses and commercial property owners who are ready to invest in their building façade."

—Andy Velez is a San Diego-based freelance journalist.

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

#### BUSINESS DISTRICT FALL MIXER

The College Area Business District is hosting a fall mixer on Wednesday, Oct. 23, from 5:30–7 p.m. at Corbin's Q, 6548 El Cajon Blvd. The event is open to the public and tickets will be \$10 per person. Admission includes two drinks and samples of Corbin's Q menu items.

The fall mixer will also double as an anniversary party for Corbin's Q, which will be celebrating its second year in business.



#### LOCAL BUSINESSES SUPPORT AZTECS ROCK HUNGER

Aztecs Rock Hunger (ARH) is an annual university-wide campaign led by Associated Students at SDSU with the goal of raising as much food as possible for the Jacobs and Cushman San Diego Food Bank.

This year's event will be held Oct. 18–Nov. 10 with a goal of collecting 619,000 pounds of food. In 2018, ARH collected 590,000 pounds. Since ARH's inception, SDSU has raised more than 2.7 million pounds of donated food.

There are six easy ways to donate to Aztecs Rock Hunger:

1. Make a monetary donation online to the Virtual Food Pantry at [bit.ly/2VzU5nS](http://bit.ly/2VzU5nS); Venmo money to @AztecsRockHunger2019; or donate money online through the Aztec Proud Campaign.
2. Donate at all campus Starbucks, eateries, markets and the SDSU Bookstore.
3. Donate at the Aztec Proud events on campus.
4. Place nonperishable food in the red bins throughout campus.
5. Make a donation at SDSU athletic events.
6. Donate at special events.

Some of the local College Area businesses hosting ARH events include Corbin's Q, Black Market Brewing and Woodstock's Pizza. A full list can be found at [bit.ly/33fIWEN](http://bit.ly/33fIWEN).

SEE BUSINESS BRIEFS, Page 9

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Business briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 8

As part of ARH, 20% of the monetary donations are donated directly to the Economic Crisis and Response Team (ECRT). The ECRT is a university program that assists students who are facing crises such as housing or food insecurity. Additionally, the food collected through ARH provides the food, including fresh produce, given at the A.S. Food Pantry, which provides additional resources and education on other programs that fight against food insecurity. During the 2018-19 academic school year, the pantry distributed more than 111,000 pounds of food to students in need.

CHUY'S ANNIVERSARY PARTY

On Wednesday, Oct. 2, Chuy's Taco Shop at 6663 El Cajon Blvd. held a two-year anniversary party. To celebrate, the shop restaurant closed for the day and offered free tacos and refreshments to guests from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The celebration also featured games, raffles and prizes. Proceeds from the raffle drawings benefited the National Peace Officers Association.

Alvarado

CONTINUED FROM Page 5

was the chronic litter problem along Montezuma Road from Collwood Boulevard to Fairmount Avenue. Given the tight city budget, regular cleanups were few and far between.

Our association now conducts regular litter cleanups and unlike in the past, one of the principal gateways to the College Area now looks presentable. The same will be true for the east side of Fairmount Avenue from Montezuma Road to Interstate 8, once a major clearing of brush and debris is completed.

The sidewalk was impassible in places and the brush presented a clear, potential fire hazard for our community directly — but also for the area as a whole (for example, from a possible lit cigarette tossed out of a passing car). Similarly, access to the bus stop on Montezuma at Collwood was practically non-existent because of vegetation growth. It has been cleared.

Recently, we voted to make improvements to Yerba Santa Drive between Montezuma Road and Mesquite Road — essentially our front door. The goal was to restore the declining tree canopy that enhanced the approach to the community.

In addition, because of the amount of traffic on that section of roadway and the fact that there are no sidewalks within Alvarado Estates, pedestrian safety was a key concern. So we decided to provide a walking path that provides a safe route for the many joggers and strollers.

There are many other examples of Alvarado Estates rolling up its sleeves and participating in making the College Area a better place to live, despite the limitations set by our governing documents. We encourage all our sister College Area communities to take action and get involved for all our benefit.

—Jose Reynoso writes on behalf of the Alvarado Community Association.

El Cerrito

CONTINUED FROM Page 5

— just join us when you have the urge to volunteer. We provide gloves, trash bags, and some tools.

A super thank you to the team of neighbors who gathered on Saturday, Sept. 21 to pick up litter and clean-up the west side of College Avenue from 60th College to View Place (and the dead ends at Estelle and College and Meade and College). The small team of volunteers pulled sidewalk weeds, picked-up trash, swept gutters, and cleaned the sidewalk to beautify the neighborhood. A million thanks to April, Jim, Gwain, Alex, and

Lorna who collected 25 bags of rubbish. It looks great! A big thank you to Kenneth and his team from SD City Environmental Services who picked up the bags Saturday afternoon. You cannot miss the nice, clean feel when driving down this section of College Avenue.

If you have any questions about the cleanup, or know an area in El Cerrito that needs attention, please email, text, or call Lorna at, elcerritocommunity-council@gmail.com or 619-538-9689. The next Community cleanup will be on Saturday, Oct. 19 on El Cajon Boulevard. Please join us.

—Lorna Zukas writes on behalf of the El Cerrito Community Council.

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## NEWS BRIEFS



Community garden volunteers (Courtesy College Area Community Garden)

### COMMUNITY GARDEN WORK PARTY

The College Area Community Garden will host a work party on Saturday, Nov. 16, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

New and returning volunteers will spread organic soil, pull weeds, rake debris, move materials and help with routine maintenance. Interested volunteers need to RSVP to communications@collegeareagarden.org. New volunteers also need to fill out a liability waiver form.

"The College Area Community Garden board members would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteers," said Carolyn Sanders, the garden's event coordinator, in a press release. "Over six years, nearly 2000 volunteers — church groups, SDSU alumni groups, youth groups, service organizations, sororities, fraternities and more — have assisted us in growing, maintaining, adding, building and beautifying in ways we could only dream of before."

The Nov. 16 work party will be one of just two more garden work parties this year. For more information, visit collegeareagarden.org.

### COMMUNITY COUNCIL TO HOST MOVIE NIGHT

In an effort to attract new members, the College Area Community Council's Outreach Committee has formed a party planning committee to host free community events.

"We're looking at doing movie nights, ice cream socials and other fun events throughout the year," said Sarah Ward, head of the CACC Outreach Committee.

The first event planned is a family movie night featuring "Shrek" on Nov. 16 at Hardy Elementary. "We'll be offering socializing, fun and snacks starting at 4 p.m. and showing the movie as soon as it gets dark," Ward said, adding that movie night and other events are for CACC members only, but membership is free and there will be a signup sheet at the events. "So bring some beach chairs or blankets and join us for a fun movie night."

Ward is also looking for CACC members or other community members who are "passionate about putting on fun events" to join the party planning committee. For more information about CACC membership or the party planning committee, Ward said to email her at sarahward021@gmail.com or call 858-431-6043.



# Curry callings

A charitable Thai restaurant spreads its wings

## Restaurant Review

By FRANK SABATINI JR.



You'll be hard-pressed finding massaman curry any tastier and more complex than what's served at 55 Thai Kitchen.

The highly affordable eatery, founded by a practiced chef from Thailand, has gradually expanded to four San Diego locations, including one that sits a stone's throw from San Diego State University.

Vijit Pipatkhaionchai began cooking as a young teenager at his family's restaurant in Bangkok. He would later run several kitchens, emigrate to the U.S., and become co-owner of J&T Thai Street Food in Linda Vista.

But it wasn't until he launched the original location of 55 Thai Kitchen in the back of a modest grocer in Golden Hill more than

two years ago that he began unleashing flavors and recipes inherent to his homeland. Consumers and food critics suddenly began applauding his concise menu while bestowing rousing encores to the chicken massaman curry in particular.

When I spoke to Pipatkhaionchai shortly after he first opened, he emphasized the dark-brown curry is made exactly like it's done in his native Bangkok, meaning it's rich in meat stock, brown sugar, cloves, cumin, tamarind, chili paste and a host of other ingredients.

Massaman is paired often to beef or lamb in Thailand, although here it permeates chunks of tender chicken thigh meat, which appear more like pot roast than poultry because of the curry's deep color. There's also tenderly cooked potatoes and bell peppers in the mix. And the end result is sensational.

As with most of the curries, stir fries, and rice and noodle dishes served at 55 Thai Kitchen, you're given a choice of spice level — not from the usual 10-point heat scale, but rather from an uncomplicated selection of "none, mild, medium or hot."

I chose "medium" for the massaman. It translated easily to a "4" with its slow, steady burn. But it was nothing that a few



Chicken massaman

swigs of house-made limeade couldn't quell.

My dining companion opted for "mild" when ordering his yellow curry with chicken. After steering my spoon into the sweetish coconut-spiked liquid, and stealing a piece of scalloped breast meat, I can attest the spice level is safe for the wimpiest of palates.

He requested "mild" as well for a bowl of tom kha soup we shared, and skipped over a choice of protein additions (beef, shrimp, chicken and tofu) in lieu of veggies. Despite falling way below my preferred spice level, the soup struck that classic, spellbinding allure of when coconut milk, lemon grass, galanga, kaffir lime and cilantro unite. Floating within the pearly broth were scallions, cabbage, mushrooms and zucchini.

Our only caveat about the meal was the disjointed sequence in which our food came out. The yellow-curry entree preceded the soup. An order of pleasantly crispy spring rolls materialized several minutes later, only to be trailed climactically by the coveted massaman curry.

The garbled timing is a consequence of fast-casual restaurants that have us placing full meal orders at front counters before seizing a table. I'm afraid the days of receiving soups or salads or appetizers first are fast disappearing.

All menu items are served in sturdy cardboard bowls or boxes. The eating utensils are plastic.



Authentic Thai food on College Avenue (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

Though the quality of the food rises to the level of a nice full-service restaurant. Indeed, the lack of porcelain plates and silverware conserves on overhead, and such savings are passed on to customers. For example, egg rolls are 85 cents apiece, and most entrees are priced below \$9 for adequate portions.

Pipatkhaionchai should also be commended for his philanthropy. He donates meals and portions of his profits to local schools, first responders, and military personnel. It's been one of his goals since starting the business, which also involves helping under-privileged children in Thailand.

And if you're wondering what the "55" in the name represents, we're told it's simply a lucky number for Pipatkhaionchai.

In addition to operating in The College Area and Golden Hill, the restaurant's other locations are in the East Village and Pacific Beach.

—Frank Sabatini Jr. is the author of 'Secret San Diego' (ECW Press) and began his local writing career more than two decades ago as a staffer for the former San Diego Tribune. You can reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.

### 55 Thai Kitchen

5157 College Ave.

619-230-5791,  
www.55thaikitchen.com

Prices: Appetizers, 85 cents to \$5; soups and salads, \$3.75 to \$9; noodles and rice dishes, \$8.50 to \$9.50; curries and house specialties, \$8.50 to \$9.50



(l-r) Tom kha soup; Yellow curry with chicken

# Where nothing comes from a can

By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON | COLLEGE TIMES COURIER

Penelope's Restaurant at 7102 El Cajon Blvd., is serving up Mexican food Guadalajara style. Chef Sergio Gutierrez, has created a menu reflecting foods

locals are familiar with, but with a touch more spices and zest than Baja style.

Owner Luis Zamora has created a welcoming neighborhood restaurant with a feeling of what would be cooked at home in Mama's kitchen.

"Our philosophy is to make foods the closest to how they are made at home. Nothing comes from a can. Everything is made in-house," Zamora said. "My mother comes every day and makes the pozole. I've loved her pozole since I was a little boy. No one makes it like her."

The newly remodeled restaurant has a fresh feel to its interior with barn wood siding, bright lighting, white walls and large windows. There is also a drive-up window if you don't have time to dine inside. They are open 7 a.m.-11 p.m. most days, and they stay open until 2:30 a.m. on Fridays and midnight on Saturdays.



Penelope's tacos



The Penelope's sign (Photos courtesy Penelope's)

The menu has all the standard favorites: burritos, tacos, carnitas, tortas and bowls. Try any of these with shrimp. Menudo lovers can enjoy the Penelope's version on the weekends or try their unique fries. They have adobada, carne asada, surf and turf, birria, chorizo. They are the only restaurant in San Diego making a breakfast of chorizo, eggs and cheese fries.

The salsa has great flavors, not too spicy, not too bland.

"We boil the peppers fresh, blend them and add spices. Our carrots are just like Grandma used to make. People say they're not too spicy, not too crunchy nor too soft," Zamora said. They're just perfect.

Check out their website at penelopesmexfood.com.

—Robin Dohrn-Simpson is a freelance food, wind and travel writer.





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## Parking

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

that they lose their street parking due to overcrowding. Another argument in favor of changing the parking rules was that the streets were not designed for eight cars per parcel and that the overcrowded streets are a public safety issue.

Only one board member voted against the motion to support the city attorney's proposal. The council also wanted to express urgency in passing the rules so they are in place before SDSU's fall 2020 semester. Permits that are issued for this year will expire in one year and if the rules are in place by then, there will be some parking relief in the neighborhoods. Also, there are currently around 119 approved ADUs that could be built in the next year or two, which would add even more strain on neighborhood streets in College Area.

### MONTEZUMA PARKING

In another motion, the CACC voted to send a proposal to eliminate all parking along Montezuma Road between 55th Street and Campanile Drive.

Although the council admitted that students who live in the neighborhood would oppose the proposal, CACC President Jose Reynoso said that SDSU officials he's talked to about the plan support it. In addition to removing the parking along Montezuma, the long-term plan is to improve pedestrian sidewalks and create safe bike lanes.

Parked cars along Montezuma have become a safety issue for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers alike, argued the CACC board. No bike lanes means bikers are currently encouraged to navigate between cars or in the flow of traffic. Also, cars stopping to back into parking spaces hold up the flow of traffic on Montezuma, causing a lot of traffic accidents.

The CACC board voted unanimously to send their recommendation to the city, stressing the need for a safer Montezuma Road.

Board member Jim Schneider also floated an alternative "plan B" to recommend later if the proposal is rejected by the city — installing parking meters along Montezuma and using funds for other College Area needs.

### VENDOR PARKING ISSUES

The CACC board also discussed issues related to vendors who are double parking on streets near SDSU campus shops. Vendors and students are supposed to use cutouts along the road, but have been parking along the curbs or double parking and loading into crosswalks and blocking handicap ramps on sidewalks. Students during move-in and move-out are also supposed to use the cutouts, but were reported to have also parked along the curbs.

The CACC board voted to send a letter to SDSU asking the university to enforce the rules.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at [jeff@sdnews.com](mailto:jeff@sdnews.com).

## Clay Park

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

Saturday, Nov. 2 at the Revillo Way access path to discuss possible solutions to keep the path open. Some of the solutions already being considered include a timed turnstile gate that would stop turning during evening hours.

Besides fencing, Clay Park will soon include a new archway into the park; demonstration gardens with native and water-wise plants; a new area with concrete seats that are positioned so they can't be used as beds; concrete cornhole tables; a concrete ping-pong table; new permanent trash receptacles; new benches and

tables; and new parkour exercise equipment installed along the pathway leading to the field. Construction is estimated to be finished sometime in December.

The estimated cost of the new park upgrades is estimated to be between \$110,000 to \$130,000. Funding for the project came from a \$150,000 settlement the city received from a lawsuit against the Centerpoint development several years ago. The Clay Park fund has around \$165,000 in it currently and the leftover money will go to fund other projects at the park.

The most likely project to be built next at Clay is an off-leash dog park, which would be the only one of its kind in the area. Other future projects at Clay Park include replacing the outdated

children's play area equipment and making the park ADA compliant. Both those projects would require substantially more funding, perhaps in the millions of dollars, McLane said, adding that the RCC will continue its push for funding from the city, grants and community fundraising until the park is completed.

"We want Clay Park to be awesome," he said. "We want it to be a center point. We want people to say, 'I want to move to Rolando because of Clay Park and Clay Elementary.' Because who doesn't want to live in a neighborhood that has a great school and a great park?"

—Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at [jeff@sdnews.com](mailto:jeff@sdnews.com).

## PHHS

CONTINUED FROM Page 7

hustle and attitude were not only the tools I needed to play the game, but also to succeed in life. Coach Pat is the reason that I have the respect, knowledge and love for the game of basketball. May his knowledge and legacy live through me moving forward."

Following recreation level basketball, she began to play for Morse High School as a freshman. She played one year of freshman basketball and followed that up with three years on varsity. She continued

playing at the collegiate level at Southwestern Community College. She also began her coaching career by assisting at her high school alma mater for the next four years. She also started working at the city of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, where she now coaches multiple sports including basketball and volleyball for youth ages 6-15.

Banisha stated in an interview, "I am honored to now step in as the head coach of the Patrick Henry women's basketball team and wish to create not only a genuine bond with my team but also challenge each and every player to reach their personal goals. I am excited to pass on every bit of expertise that was introduced to me."

### COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

College applications have opened up. Seniors interested in

applying to four-year universities should be actively applying to campuses now. Below are three links for three different university systems. Patrick Henry counselors will be hosting a senior college application student-and-parent meeting Oct. 17 at 6 p.m. in our PHAME building. The meeting will go over specific university systems as well as applications. Everyone is welcome to attend and it's free.

**CSU application:** Open Oct. 1, 2019; deadline Nov. 30, 2019. Application at [calstate.edu/apply](http://calstate.edu/apply).

**UC application:** Open Nov. 1, 2019; deadline Nov. 30, 2019. Application at [bit.ly/336R1mr](http://bit.ly/336R1mr).

**Common application:** Currently open; deadline on various dates. University application found at [commonapp.org](http://commonapp.org).

—Elizabeth Gillingham is principal of Patrick Henry High School.

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## STEMM

CONTINUED FROM Page 7

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For more information and to register your team, go to [hc-stemm.org/minigolf](http://hc-stemm.org/minigolf).

—Jay Wilson writes on behalf of the Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation.

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# COLLEGE TIMES COURIER

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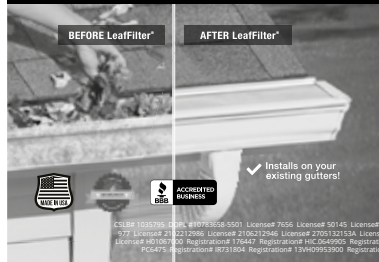
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# Granny flat requirements being loosened again

By SARAH WARD

Several years ago, legislators in Sacramento were again debating the strategies of increasing available housing in the state. Think about traveling in a helicopter above San Diego and looking down for parcels to build additional housing. There is not a lot of available open land for building in San Diego but as the helicopter hovers over large neighborhoods in Clairemont, La Mesa, College Area, etc. what you see are thousands of single-family residences, many with just two or three people living on a 1/8 or a 1/4 acre. Well, hiding in plain sight is part of the solution, right there — increase density in existing neighborhoods. So in 2017, Sacramento passed a number of bills allowing and encouraging more accessory dwelling units (ADUs, granny flats) to be built in existing neighborhoods.

The 2017 legislation certainly started the process but many cities in California (such

as Ventura, Santa Barbara, Walnut Creek, and Brentwood) fought that initiative by raising permit fees (sometimes to more than \$40,000), requiring larger lots, greater setback requirements, and additional parking necessities. These strategies effectively slowed down ADU development in many areas. So Sacramento has recently passed more laws such as AB 68, passed by both the California Assembly and Senate, and currently awaiting signature by Governor Gavin Newsom as of early October 2019.

AB 68 allows some ADUs to be built within four feet of a property line. More than one ADU can now be built on one property, multi-family lots can now build an ADU, parking requirements are again reduced and permit fees are limited. Also a junior ADU (a mini-granny flat) can now be built. This effectively overrides something called R1 zoning, single-family residence zoning, throughout the state. Obviously, the details are complicated and detailed,

so check with an expert prior to relying on this information.

As far as College Area, there are obviously many rental properties here, whereby many landlords are now surveying their backyards for how many ADUs can be shoehorned into their existing lots. Clearly over the coming years, the density of College Area will increase. With the lack of ADU on-site parking spot requirements, expect street parking to become denser, especially near the university.

Another issue is the continuing effort to increase density near high-traffic transit stops. Several bills are pending in Sacramento but I believe one of these days, one will be passed and this will become a reality. Within a certain radius of a high-traffic transit stop (such as within a 1/2 mile), high-density housing will be allowed with very few restrictions. As crazy as this sounds, family neighborhoods near the SDSU transit stop could allow large apartment buildings, not just

along Montezuma Road and College Avenue, for example, but literally *in* a quiet neighborhood on a side street. These bills have stalled but I will keep an eye on it for you.

As far as the local real estate trend, the median sales price has finally begun to level off in San Diego County after six years of steady increases. However, the median price of a single family residence in 92115 rose 9.2% year-over-year to a median sales price of \$627,500, and the days on market decreased substantially to just 15 days on active market! College Area remains a sought-after area with demand remaining strong and home price increases outpacing the median for the county. And now with the loosened ADU requirements, properties in College Area (especially with slightly larger lots) are becoming more valuable.

—Sarah Ward is a Realtor with College Area Realty. Reach her at CollegeAreaRealty@gmail.com or 858-431-6043.

# Convictions

CONTINUED FROM Page 6

because they didn't know about it, or perhaps found the process lengthy, daunting, and expensive.

Since the city will be proactively dismissing these convictions, the defendants will not have to file a petition, hire a lawyer, or take any other actions.

This effort will wipe the slate clean for thousands of San Diegans who can then start over without having to disclose a criminal record on any job, property rental, volunteer, or loan application.

When our work is done, thousands of San Diegans will be able to move forward with their lives without this mark on their records.

Everyone makes mistakes, and we all deserve second chances. Most use the opportunity to make better lives for themselves and their loved ones.

Questions concerning the conviction dismissal process can be sent to CityAttorney@sandiego.gov at the City Attorney's Office.

—Mara W. Elliott was elected City Attorney of San Diego in 2016 after serving as the chief deputy attorney for the office's Public Services Section and legal adviser to the city's Independent Audit Committee and Environment Committee.

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