



PENINSULA BEACON



SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER GROUP

Tuesday, December 23, 2014



A VERY, VERY, VERY FINE HOUSE If you were a member of the Ocean Beach Town Council and you couldn't get enough of the holidays, you'd probably try a house decorating contest – and that's exactly what happened on the heels of OB's yule caravan, which traversed Newport Avenue Dec. 6. Residences were festooned with lights in the spirit of the evening and the season, and the creativity was what you'd expect from the geniuses that are the neighborhood. Here are two pretty decent illustrations of the winning contingents – kinda makes you long for Christmas year-round. **PHOTOS BY MIKE MCCARTHY**



Civil penalties are assessed in marijuana dispensaries flap

A landlord who repeatedly allowed illegal marijuana dispensaries to operate from his San Diego properties will pay the City \$250,000 as a civil penalty, with an additional civil penalty of \$300,000 suspended by the Court so long as he complies with the terms of the stipulated judgment.

John Nobel has been named in numerous actions by the City Attorney's Office as it cracks down on unpermitted dispensaries.

As part of a global stipulated court judgment of those cases, Nobel was assessed \$550,000 in civil penalties, with \$300,000 of that amount suspended, and was ordered to pay the City for investigative costs of \$8,000. The penalties include \$80,000 of a \$120,000 judgment that previously was awarded the City and that Nobel had appealed.

Under the terms of the stipulated final judgment, Nobel may be forced to pay

the \$300,000 suspended penalty if any of his properties is used for any unlawful marijuana operations or for any use not permitted by the City. In addition, he must ensure that any remaining dispensaries vacate his properties, and he must remove their fixtures, effects and signage. Failure to abide by the stipulated court judgment may also result in a contempt of court citation.

The penalty is the largest attained by the City Attorney's Office since it began using civil enforcement action against dispensaries that operate in violation of City zoning regulations.

The City Attorney's Office has closed down more than 200 dispensaries in the past four years. In that time, Nobel-owned properties in Pacific Beach, the Midway district and North Park were leased to dispensary operators despite the fact that they were not allowed

SEE **NOBEL**, Page 10

10,000th tutoring program participant is ACES with Mission Bay High School

By **DAVE SCHWAB** | THE BEACON

Mission Bay High School students got the red carpet treatment Dec. 17 in honor of the 10,000th student to have taken part in the ACES after-school tutoring program.

"We hit the 10,000th person yesterday (Dec. 16), so we're celebrating that person today," said Lisa McDonnell, San Diego Unified School District supervisor for ACES, the After-school Center for Excellence and Support.

ACES offers helpful reference materials, access to computers, printers, and supplies, free and healthful snacks, college tutoring from SDSU and UCSD students, specialized help for CAHSEE, PSAT and SAT prep, college application counseling and mentorship for life, college and career.

"We started the ACES program here about 1½ years ago in my classroom with a bunch of volunteer teachers," said Ron Lancia, ACES program coordinator. "We did it to have a safe, positive



From left, student Harmony Ordaz, ACES coordinator Ron Lancia and student Tyrese Reed, 10,000th ACES participant, celebrate the event with a ribbon-cutting. **Photo by Dave Schwab**

place for kids to go every day and interact with their teachers on a different level than they do in the classroom. These kinds of relationships, that's

SEE **ACES**, Page 3





STANDING ROOM ONLY The Point Loma Association (PLA) annual dinner, held Oct. 17, was a sellout, with nearly 500 attending. 52nd District Congressman Scott Peters, accompanied by then City Councilmember Ed Harris and his successor Lorie Zapf, presented a proclamation for Dick Lareau honoring his 44 years of service to the PLA (left). The dinner was provided by To The Point Catering. Lareau put on his



last slide show depicting Point Loma from 1973 until now. Supervisors Greg Cox and Ron Roberts extended Lareau another proclamation before a Marilyn Monroe look-alike showed up to sing happy birthday to him on his 87th birthday that evening (right). To close, Cecilia Carrick received the Light House Award as most outstanding volunteer of the year.

COURTESY PHOTOS

Casteel cited for work with air rescue unit

The son of a Pacific Beach man was recently selected to receive the Air Rescue Association (ARA) Richard T. Kight award.

Senior Master Sgt. Brandon Casteel distinguished himself as a Guardian Angel Operations Superintendent in the United Kingdom from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. During this period, Casteel was vital to the United States Air Force in Europe's build-up of Guardian Angel forces to perform combat search and rescue in support of personnel recovery operations.

As a lead planner for U.S.-U.K. search and rescue exercises, Casteel integrated special operations and rescue forces into a five-platform scenario, strengthening coalition partnerships and refining personnel recovery techniques and procedures.

Casteel also organized a high-visibility demonstration involving aircraft,

ground forces and enemy combatants, showcasing personnel recovery to 30 local leaders. In response to a contingency deployment change, Casteel was instrumental in preparing 15 mission-ready pararescuemen, providing the United States Africa Command Commander with rescue forces for six named operations. Jane's International Defense Review selected him to highlight personnel recovery during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Casteel is on active duty in New England. He and his wife Conchita have two daughters and a son. Gary, Casteel's father, lives in Pacific Beach. The younger Casteel graduated from Spring Valley's Monte Vista High School in 1990. He received a master's degree in criminal justice from Excelsior College in 2014.

The ARA is an organization of some 2,500 dedicated retired and active

duty veterans whose goal is to keep alive the spirit of air rescue. For more information, go to internet site home.roadrunner.com/~airrescue/.

The Kight Trophy is presented annually by the ARA to an active-duty or reserve-component rescuer or woman who has made outstanding contributions to the Air Force's search and rescue mission. The winner is selected by an Air Force board.

Kight was the first commander of the Air Rescue Service in 1946 and is considered the "Father of Air Rescue." He coined the motto "These Things We Do That Others May Live" and originated this award.

Brandon Casteel is shown here with wife Conchita and their friends.
COURTESY PHOTO



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Point Loma man named SEAL unit head

Point Loma resident William Fenick, former director of public affairs and corporate communication for the Naval Special Warfare Command in Coronado, has been named executive director of the SEAL-Naval Special Warfare Family Foundation.

The nonprofit foundation raises awareness and funds for special programs in direct support of Naval Special Warfare families on a local, national and global scale.

In his new role, Fenick will be responsible for the execution of the foundation's fundraising, fiscal management and program execution, all designed to enhance the naval special operators' ability to train, deploy and balance their unique family

needs.

"Bill brings the right level of energy, intellect and passion to our family foundation team," foundation president John Moninger said. "His years of active duty service in combination with his working knowledge of the naval special warfare command add great value and will assist us in moving our family foundation forward. The naval special warfare community will be better for his efforts and energy, and I'm honored and pleased he joined our great team."

Fenick has more than 25 years' experience advising Navy leadership and military staffs, with a focus on strategic communication, messaging, issues

management and teamwork. He has served as director of public affairs and corporate communication for the Naval Special Warfare Command since 2010, and it was there he led a corporate communication and engagement strategy to manage the increased public, legislative, media and stakeholder interests related to all aspects of Naval Special Warfare.

The SEAL-Naval Special Warfare Family Foundation supports individual and family readiness through programs that assist the naval special warfare community. For more information or to make a donation, visit www.sealnswwff.org.

A dog's life: Do-it-yourself OB wash clientele stands at a cool half-million

By DAVE SCHWAB | THE BEACON

Dog Beach Dog Wash, the original do-it-yourself dog wash in Ocean Beach, just celebrated a milestone on Nov. 22 with its 500,000th dog washed.

"GusGus," a 4-year-old Wheaten Terrier-poodle mix, and mom, Chris Uzeta, were honored when they came in at 8:10 a.m. that day after playing at Dog Beach. Uzeta was given a free dog wash and a gift basket of coupons, toys and treats worth more than \$200.

Uzeta said GusGus was adopted a year ago from Second Chance Rescue in San Diego. She noted the pooch's favorite things are playing with his friends at Dog Beach, his tug toy and sleeping on her pillow.

Dog Beach Dog Wash bills itself as Southern California's premier dog wash, providing outstanding service and accessories. Co-owners Jane Donley and Mindy Pellissier wish to thank all their human and canine friends for making their 22nd year in business a true celebration.

Dog Beach and its dog wash go

hand in hand, said Pellissier. But she was quick to add it wasn't always that way, as dog washing was a pretty novel idea when they started out more than two decades ago.

Pellissier talked about how she and Donley became canine entrepreneurs.

"Back in 1992," she said, "I had a dog who was highly allergic to fleas, and I had to wash him with medicated shampoo daily, and it was a mess: soap on the ceiling and mirrors and walls. And he was never very clean — or well rinsed." Pellissier noted OB's Dog Beach concurrently had become the region's de facto dog beach because such beaches had been closed nearly everywhere else.

Pellissier, who used to walk her pets daily at OB Dog Beach, said she and Donley, who had previous experience setting up hospital clinics, got the notion for opening a dog-washing business (only one existed county-wide then) and launched into some market research.

The pair buttonholed dog walkers

in OB at all hours of the day, seeking their input on whether a dog wash would fly in the coastal community and what products and services would need to be offered.

After hearing enough of, "Oh, I wish there was a place to wash my dog," Pellissier said they knew their business venture was a go.

So Pellissier and Donley started out at 4933 Voltaire St., two and a half blocks from OB Dog Beach, with five tubs for dogs and a large sink for cats and puppies.

"We thought with enough volume, we could do it," said Pellissier. "We figured we could break even with eight dogs a day. The very first day, we had 26 washes."

"Normally with small businesses, you plan on breaking even in three to five years, and we broke even in 18 months," added Pellissier, noting, "Now we have eight or nine employees and are open every day of the year, because dogs need to go out every day of the year."

SEE DOGWASH, Page 9



GusGus the 500,000th customer at OB's Dog Beach Dog Wash, netted his mom a gift basket of coupons, toys and treats just for showing up.

Photo by Dave Schwab

ACES

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

when the real tutoring and enrichment begins."

Tyrese Reed, the 10,000th ACES participant, said he's been involved in the program since its start.

"I was a freshman, and I had eight classes and it's kind of hard to balance," he said about his motivation for participating. "So I came to ACES, and the teachers helped me with everything, really gave me the support system that I needed. Ever since, I've been coming here, because I get help — and the resources — for any subject that I need."

Harmony Ordaz agreed that the after-school tutoring program has really been her ace in the hole.

"The teachers are really supportive, and they always help you no matter what," she said.

Asked what subject she needed help in, Ordaz replied, "Calculus. It's a very rigorous course."

Mission Bay High School principal Ernest Remillard said it's amazing how far the ACES program has come in less than two years.

"It's been fully supported school-wide," Remillard said of the program. "They were running 60 to 80 kids last year, and it can accommodate about 120 students, though 100 is a nice number."

Asked if ACES could be a prototype for other schools in SDUSD, Remillard replied, "We definitely want it to be a model." The principal added that teachers in the program started out volunteering their time but are now being paid through school grant funding.

Currently, about 100 students a day

are working at ACES under the direction of a staff of teachers from all content areas. The program's mantra is "Every student, every time," which refers to the program's commitment to engage with every one of the 100-plus students who enters ACES after school to help him and her continue his and her education every single day.

ACES is strictly voluntary and is designed after the metaphorical four suits from a deck of cards. The ace of hearts represents a holistic approach to mentoring, providing access to an array of services to benefit social and emotional growth. The ace of clubs represents a club/community effect, providing a consistent place for students to gather to further their education. The ace of diamonds represents a balanced approach to support English/history, math/science, foreign language/fine arts and special populations such as international baccalaureate, English learner or special education students. The Ace of spades represents digging deeper through access to one-on-one instruction with expert teachers.

Funding is made possible by the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) grant. The ASSETs grant is a state-administered federal grant that provides five years' funding to establish or expand before- and after-school programs that provide disadvantaged students with academic enrichment opportunities and supportive services to help the students meet state and local standards in core content areas.

Navy's pipeline plan invites several emergencies

The Navy has installed a state-of-the-art fuel storage facility and is preparing a fuel pier to be installed after demolition of the 1950s facility, yet they intend to apply a Band-aid fix and cherry-pick areas of the subject pipeline to repair. This vintage fuel pipeline is the glue that holds the entire facility together.

The Navy also proposes to relocate portions of the vintage fuel pipeline along the Rosecrans traffic corridor in Point Loma (the backbone of the Peninsula traffic flow) This does not make economic or operational sense, as it will cause gridlock and catastrophic public safety risks as well as possible structural failures to other vintage service piping, substandard, deteriorating roads, outdated traffic

signals and signs designed decades ago for fewer vehicles, all against a background of construction in earthquake country. Additionally, the following existing conditions on the Peninsula only highlights that this is a bad idea!

The construction will restrict the flow and merger of already congested business traffic, university/school and church access, heavy military use to and from state highways, residential/public access to Lindbergh Field and downtown San Diego. It will also restrict emergency egress from all points off the Peninsula to trauma hospitals, because we are surrounded by water on three sides and do not have a hospital on the Peninsula. (The Navy does not have an emergency

plan in place for proposed fuel pipeline construction.)

The Navy, the mayor and City Council must realize that the risk of catastrophes and emergencies is likely to be more critical and massive from the Peninsula community than from neighboring communities amid airport access, the fueling facility's sprawl, Liberty Station and the area's businesses, beach areas, thousands of students and glut of vehicular traffic.

Think about the effect of a six-month pipeline construction schedule on Rosecrans, the backbone of traffic. Total gridlock.

Jim Gilhooly
Point Loma



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OPINIONS

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HAD ENOUGH OF THE SEASON?

We thought not. Ocean Beach loves a party, and this one is the biggest of the year. Photographer Mike McCarthy took these shots of the community Christmas tree and some of the finalists in the house decorating contest, which wrapped things up nicely for 2014.



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ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO AN END
And that's what happened on Dec. 19, when the Ocean Beach Food & Toy Drive gave away its last fare for 2013. The Ocean Beach Town Council, which puts on the event every Christmas, donates food and toys to more than 80 needy kids and families in the neighborhood in the spirit of giving for which the neighborhood is known. At right, San Diego Councilmember Lorie Zapf, whose District 2 includes OB, beams a holiday wish to the drive's supporters, while the left photo illustrates the busy-ness of the event. In the middle photo, a kindly volunteer strains for a good cause amid the weight of her package. PHOTOS BY MKE MCCARTHY

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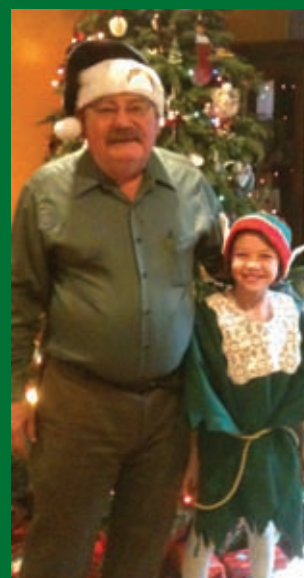
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De Anza Cove pact ends legal dispute with City

By DAVE SCHWAB | THE BEACON

A 35-year legal dispute between the city and tenants of the De Anza Cove mobile-home park has been resolved, with tenants agreeing to voluntarily move out of the park within a year in return for relocation compensation averaging \$77,000 per household — \$22 million total.

Peter Zamoyski of the law firm Tatro & Zamoyski, representing De Anza mobile-home park residents, commented on the settlement.

“It was a fair settlement,” Zamoyski said. “Was it as much as we had hope for? No. But overall, it’s enough to get them (residents) off to a new home and a new place to live and was done in a manner that the court deemed completely fair and reasonable.”

Zamoyski noted many De Anza residents are seniors, pointing out that many left the park already prior to the final settlement.

“It was very important to be able to fund those relocating, giving certainty, and finality, to a lot of these folks in their golden years,” Zamoyski said.

In October, the De Anza Cove Homeowners Association voted to accept the City of San Diego’s terms for settling the case. City Council has approved the settlement. Both sides agreed to the terms of a Superior Court judgment on the amount and terms upon which the City should

compensate the tenants.

The City’s obligation to compensate the tenants had been established in 2005, and for the nine years since, the principal dispute centered on the amount the City was required to pay. The legal dispute, which began with a City Attorney’s opinion in 1978, spanned 19 City Councils and eight mayors.

With the close of this chapter, the property can return to recreational, commercial and educational uses, as intended by state law, said City Attorney Jan Goldsmith.

“Mission Bay was never intended to be a mobile-home park,” Goldsmith said. “It is an active and accessible public park — the world’s largest water park — and a place for recreation and tourism, for paddle-boarding and picnics. This settlement fairly compensates the tenants who will be displaced, but most importantly, it returns to San Diego 76 waterfront acres we never should have lost.”

In addition to compensating the tenants, the City will pay attorney fees equal to one-third of the total amount paid.

Tenant compensation will be determined by a combination of factors. In cases where the coach can be physically relocated, the tenant will receive an allowance based on the coach’s size plus \$1,660 to defray additional



Displaced De Anza Cove tenants will receive an average \$77,000 per household and have 12 months to leave the park. Photo by Dave Schwab

costs. Where it is not feasible to relocate the coach, the tenant will receive a \$1,660 moving allowance plus the rent differential for the first four years. Tenants who do not own their coach will receive a \$1,660 moving allowance plus an amount equal to two months’ rent for a comparably sized apartment.

The property beneath the mobile homes was originally owned by the State of California, which in 1945 granted it to the City of San Diego as a “tidelands trust” to be used solely for educational, commercial and recreational purposes, to include parks, playgrounds and facilities. Residential uses were not permitted by the terms of the grant.

When the City granted a 50-year ground lease to a master tenant in 1953, that tenant agreed to use the

property exclusively for “a tourist and trailer park,” language that contemplated camper-trailers, not permanent housing. However, De Anza Park soon evolved into a mobile-home park with long-term residents.

In 1978, the City Attorney’s Office issued a legal opinion stating that De Anza Park “may be in violation of the tidelands trust [of 1945]” because of its residential users.

In 1980, the State Lands Commission agreed that “residential use of these lands is not a public use,” setting the stage for eviction.

The tenants were given a reprieve in 1981 when the state Legislature, in an action that required City concurrence, allowed them to continue living on Mission Bay until the 50-year ground lease expired in 2003.

On August 27, 1982, the tenants

were notified of an eviction date of Nov. 23, 2003.

Nonetheless, the residents did not leave. Instead, they sued, winning a court injunction to prevent the City from enforcing the 1982 eviction notice.

Although the City argued that it was not required to compensate the tenants for relocation, the court’s ruling in 2005 was to the contrary. This year, the court set forth the amount and terms of payment.

Tenants have 12 months to vacate the park. Future uses of the property will be decided by City Council.

The City, however, is bound by the terms of the trust and may only use the property for educational, commercial and recreational purposes, to include parks, playgrounds and facilities.

DOGWASH

CONTINUED FROM Page 3

When the business pair started, they had an old-style cash register that tallied every dog washed. They started marking milestones: 5,000 dogs washed, then 50,000, then 100,000, 250,000 and now half a million.

Very little has changed at Dog Beach Dog Wash over the years. The business still carries a variety of dog shampoo and health care accessories as well as pet treats given to pets during the wash to reward them.

The price of a dog wash, like everything else over more than 20 years, has increased. It used to cost \$5 to

wash your dog. Now it’s up to \$14, with a possible nominal hike in store for 2015.

Dog Beach Dog Wash is strictly self-service, though if someone is injured or disabled, staff will help them wash their pets. It’s a very pleasant experience all around.

The owners have also been

extremely active locally with pet-oriented issues. They’ve been instrumental in getting free doggie-doo bags placed at Dog Beach and Dusty Rhodes Park. Consequently, dog-walking areas are much cleaner now than they’ve ever been, as dog owners are good about picking up after their charges.

Owning a dog wash isn’t something you do if you want to get rich. But Pellissier and Donley are doing OK.

“You’re not going to get rich in this industry unless you’re the founder of Petco or something,” said Pellissier. “But we’re wealthy in so many important ways. Our dogs are happy. Their owners are too.”

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Reflecting on fall sports at Point Loma Nazarene in 2014

The PLNU Sea Lions' first year as an active NCAA member has been a memorable one, and we are only through the fall seasons. PLNU is ranked third in the Pacific West Conference Commissioner's Cup Standings through the fall.

The Point Loma women's soccer team earned the first PacWest title in the history of the school as it became the first team to ever go undefeated (11-0-1) in a 12-match PacWest season. PLNU allowed just two goals in its 12 conference contests, and it shut out 10 of its 12 PacWest opponents. The two goals allowed in conference play is the lowest ever in PacWest play.

Head coach Tim Hall was named the PacWest Coach of the Year, while Ariel Oriarte was voted Goalkeeper of the Year. Claire Mathews earned Defender of the Year and Sami Swanson picked up Freshman of the Year. The Sea Lions advanced to the NCAA West Regional as a No. 6 seed and met No. 3 Cal Poly Pomona in the first round. Point Loma lost in the first round 3-2 after CPP scored in the final



Everybody was all smiles as the PLNU women's soccer team earned the school's first PacWest title.

seconds of regulation.

The PLNU volleyball team placed third in the PacWest standings with a 16-4 record (19-9 overall). The Sea Lions ranked in the NCAA West Regional poll on multiple occasions. They ended the season winning seven straight matches but were the last team out when the regional bracket was announced. Savannah Wedemeyer was named the PacWest Setter of the Year. She and Heather Leavitt were both voted All-Americans.

The Point Loma men's soccer team placed sixth in the 13-team league with a 6-5-1 record. The Sea Lions put together an undefeated six-match streak in the middle of their schedule to climb the conference standings.

The Sea Lion cross-country team placed eighth at the PacWest Championships. Alexandra Hernandez led the way by placing 23rd. It was the sixth time in six races that she paced the Sea Lions.

NOBEL

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

under zoning laws. Four dispensaries operated from a building on Rosecrans Street that is 600 feet from an elementary school, a violation of state law.

When an illegal dispensary case is referred to the City Attorney's Office by the City's code enforcement division, a court order to close the dispensary is usually obtained within 30 days. The City Attorney's Office can later seek permanent injunctions and penalties against the property owners and dispensary operators.

To date, City Attorney's Office enforcement actions have resulted in court awards of more than \$1.1 million in civil penalties.

"This case underscores that landlords will be held accountable for renting to illegal marijuana dispensaries," City Attorney Jan Goldsmith said. "There is a process in place for legally zoned dispensaries and that process should be followed."

All complaints also named Mahin Nobel. Some named co-owners Parviz Hakakha and Judith Hakakha. Others named co-owners David Abeles and Melody Abeles.

The settlement resolves cases against

the following dispensaries in Pacific Beach and the Midway district (principal defendants in parentheses):

• **San Diego Organic Wellness**, 1150 Garnet Ave. (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel);

• **Fresh Alternative Consulting, Inc.**, 3045 Rosecrans St., #208 (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel, Parviz Hakakha, Judith Hakakha);

• **Green Wellness Association, Inc.**, 3045 Rosecrans St., #207 (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel, Parviz Hakakha, Judith Hakakha);

• **SB Health, Inc.**, 3045 Rosecrans St., #310 (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel, Parviz Hakakha, Judith Hakakha);

• **S.C.C.G., Inc., 3045 Rosecrans St.**, #214 (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel, Parviz Hakakha, Judith Hakakha);

• **PB 45 CAP, Inc.**, 4688 Cass St. (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel);

• **Lemoine Corp.**, 936 Garnet St. (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel, David Abeles, Melody Abeles);

• **Patient Med Aid**, 2015 Garnet Ave. (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel); and

• **Dank on Turquoise, Inc.**, 841 Turquoise St., (John Nobel, Mahin Nobel)

Complaints on pot dispensaries may be referred to the Code Enforcement Division of the City at (619) 236-5500.

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Do the math! Santa works his magic in 24 hours, eh? *Humbug!* BY MARTIN JONES WESTLIN

He's been called everything from Sinterklaas, the Dutch handle for "St. Nicholas," to Black Peter, whose job it is to whup up on naughty kids no matter the time of year – but you and I and God know him as Santa Claus, the year's glad-hander in chief, who stokes his multi-trillion-dollar empire with nothing less innocuous than eight arthritic reindeer and a flaming red parka he proly got on special. He's aged fairly well since the 1880s, when the fabled Christmas present story made him the central figure of the secular Western world. His solid reputation precedes him from his days as the bona fide St. Nicholas, an ancient Greek bishop who used to put little presents in people's shoes and who paid young ladies' dowries to save them from the world's oldest profession (i.e., pillowfighting).

But the real hooker here is the phony-baloney himself, who royally punks the world every 25th of December with his sleight of hand on land, sea and air. He's sworn his legion of yes-men to secrecy, lining his legacy with the fruits of their labor as they stand at the back of the bus like so many – well – passengers. I beseech you: Don't blame the messenger for what you're about to read, but do embrace his message in the true spirit of the season.

Think NASA put one over on the country when it staged those bogus Apollo moon-walks? You ain't heard nothin' yet.

Universe Today says the earth takes 23 hours, 56 minutes and 4.1 seconds to complete one axial rotation. That's up a mite from, say, 600,000 years ago, when our day was thought to be about 22 hours long, but it's still nowhere near the time lard-butt needs to make his rounds. The current day lasts 87,154.1 seconds – and if fatso stops for one of those seconds

at each house, he's still only hit that many homes. Assuming each household includes four members, he's parceled his booty to 348,616.4 people, roughly the population of Santa Ana. Given a global population flirting with 7.3 billion, it would take him about 277 days, as opposed to the fabled 24 hours, to complete his passes of one house per second everywhere in the world.

Figures don't lie, peeps.

While we're at it, let's take a serious gander at that measly excuse for a sleigh, which looks suspiciously like a claw-foot bathtub with a double-wide seat. Claw-foot tubs are made of cast iron and can tip the scales at 300 pounds – couple that with Santa's weight (which the North American Aerospace Defense Command estimates on its website at 275) and the weight of 7.3 billion gifts (assuming each weighs four pounds), and we're talking a little over 14 million tons of payload, which would require two Space Shuttle rockets to achieve escape velocity, or 25,000 miles an hour.

True, achieving this speed would leave Fat-Fat the Water Rat and his cargo weightless, which is a partial explanation for his maneuverability – but to get him into space, his eight tiny reindeer would have to generate a force that translates to 3,125 miles an hour apiece. At a paltry 425 pounds each, the guys don't stand a chance in hell getting airborne. Even if they did, breathable air runs out at 65,000 feet – after that, they're instant reindeer steak, with Rudolph's nose the appetizer.

I swear: It's not me. It's the physics of the thing.

And the elves? Don't even get me started.

Northpole.com says that Santa contracts an

"unlimited" number of helpers, as it takes a lot of upkeep to prepare for the year's big day. What nobody ever tells you is that, unlike the South Pole (which sits on a continental land mass), the North Pole is one big glob of sea ice, whose shift properties make it nearly impossible to build any kind of station on, let alone one with an "unlimited" cast of characters. The Russians established a weather base there in 2002, and it's generally open for a few weeks in the spring – but with an annual mean temperature of -40, the pole is almost another planet, and the Russians would be hard-pressed to report another class of being beyond the polar bear and her kids.

(Full disclosure: Shakespeare says elves are as big as human beings. Assuming that's true, Fatty's charges would be toast before they'd be missed, as humans die long before they literally freeze.)

Baseball's "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, who after 1919 crashed and burned in a World Series betting scandal. Alan Freed, the man who coined the term "rock and roll" in the 1950s and was later shamed in a payola controversy. Milli Vanilli, the pop group whose 1990 Emmy was withdrawn following a falsifying of their voices on an album. And, of course, the Apollo moon-walk fakes. Yes, these are among the opprobria that have shaken this nation to its core over its long and roily history – but the Santa Claus hoax assumes otherworldly implications, as it involves humanity itself.



No amount of money, time or holiday cheer weighs in the conversation. In one swoop, and year after year, the planet as we know it is irrevocably doomed. The blame lays squarely at the feet of its seasonal harbinger of faith, hope and trust – and if you listen closely, you can hear his maniacal screed pepper the interminable, weightless irony.

God bless us, every one. Seriously.

San Diego Community Newspaper Group has expended considerable talent and treasure in the compilation of this story, and its staff and management trust that its readers will take it for the public service it is. The company strongly cautions that this piece contains pointed refutations of a legend central to the world's sense of itself. It thus disclaims responsibility for possible repercussions that might totally mess with your kid's head for, like, a really long time.

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Are you having more difficulty opening and shutting the door or turning on faucets? Replacing door-knobs and faucets with a lever handle helps as you are using your whole hand to turn inside of possibly stiff fingers.

Are you afraid of falling in the shower or bathtub? A curbless shower or a walk-in bathtub is a major change but a simpler idea could be a shower chair so you can sit while showering. Add a hand-held showerhead and cleaning yourself becomes a breeze.

Are you having a harder time getting up and down from the toilet? A new higher toilet will help but another idea might be to purchase a raised toilet seat. Remember to have some grab bars installed next to the toilet or shower to also help. As we get older, our extensor muscles that allow us to straighten our knees get weaker so getting up and down is harder.

Are you having more difficulty reaching for your plates and glassware? Stop reaching up into the cabinets. Move the things you use every day to a lower cabinet or drawer.

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After a year of carefully searching for the perfect flagship location, we are proud to say that Ocean Beach is now home to The Holistic Science Co. Located in a historic black and white brick building at 4852 Voltaire Street—which by the way was once used as a movie set for Arnold Schwarzenegger's documentary, "Pumping Iron"—one can capture the magical aromas of precious essential oils, listen to an array of beauty products being conjured up in the back room and watch stunning beauties working the assembly line through a looking glass. Just walk through the front door and you'll instantly feel the positive vibes, the warmth and old world charm that was created using vintage, reclaimed or upcycled materials from local businesses such as Vintage Revivals.

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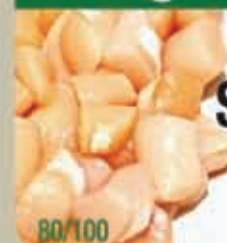
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