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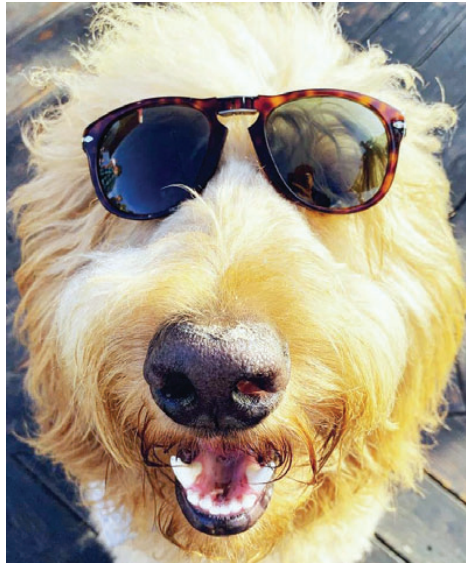
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Beach & Bay

PRESS

THIS WEEK



The curious case of Noodle the Doodle in Pacific Beach

SEE PAGE 4



Popular Cass Street Bar & Grill known for fantastic food

SEE PAGE 10

PUPPY PAUSE

SEE PAGE 2

PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES PLAN THAT WOULD REDUCE OFF-LEASH DOG PARK ACCESS

Pacific Beach resident Julia Gray runs after her dog Whiskers at the off-leash dog park on Fiesta Island.

KATHY MILLER-GRAY / BEACH & BAY PRESS

San Diego Community Newspaper Group acquires five newspapers

By KENDRA SITTON | BEACH & BAY PRESS

In a deal made official on April 1, San Diego Community Newspaper Group purchased five of San Diego Community News Network's six publications.

Julie Main, owner and publisher of San Diego Community Newspaper Group, adds San Diego Uptown News, San Diego Downtown News, Mission Times Courier, and La Mesa Courier to the company's stable of La Jolla Village News, Peninsula Beacon, and Beach & Bay Press.

Also included in the purchase was Mission Valley News, which will be discontinued. San Diego Community News Network retained Gay San Diego as its only publication.

As a result of the purchase, the bi-weekly Beach & Bay Press will

move from publishing on Thursdays to coming out on Fridays, starting with this week's edition.

With the addition of San Diego Community News Network's papers, Main runs the largest independent newspaper group in the region. As a woman in the male-dominated media industry,

this marks a significant achievement for Main.

"It's a rewarding industry. One of the more rewarding things about the community newspaper industry is everyone has a story to tell. It's very gratifying to peel

'Not all news has to be bad news. Isn't it refreshing to come home and read about positive things happening in your community for a change.'

— JULIE MAIN, OWNER AND PUBLISHER OF SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER GROUP

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City Planning Commission votes for Option A to develop Fiesta Island

MB Park Committee approved the more dog-friendly Option B

By DAVE SCHWAB | BEACH & BAY PRESS

Like the Mission Bay Park Committee before it, the City Planning Commission voted unanimously in favor of one of two options for reconfiguring 470-acre Fiesta Island. Unfortunately, for off-leash dog owners, the City Planning Commission's preference wasn't theirs.

On April 11, the Planning Commission voted 6-0 in favor of Option A, which would divide the man-made island with a road and reduce access for off-leash dog park users.

The dog owner's camp, and Mission Bay Park Committee before it in January, preferred Option B, which would keep the island intact and undivided while increasing the fenced, off-leash area.

The turf battle on Fiesta Island pits non-motorized boat users, such as kayakers and paddle boarders, against dog owners represented by FIDO, Fiesta Island Dog Owners. The issue will ultimately go before the City Council for a final decision, likely in June.

Water recreationalists argue boating use should be a higher priority than the off-leash dog park, an activity that can be done elsewhere

on land. They contend Option B would leave them without appropriate spots on Fiesta Island from which to launch their watercraft.

"Of course we are disappointed that the commissioners ignored the unanimous recommendation of the Mission Bay Park Committee for Option B," reacted FIDO president Carolyn Chase. "We believe the City Council will be interested in finding a location for the paddling groups that doesn't displace thousands of existing, and future, off-leash users, and that would be faster and cheaper for them and for taxpayers."

"Option B remains, and the Planning Commission comments confirmed, that Option B is the lower-cost, lower-impact alternative," Chase said.

She disputed the claim that FIDO is unwilling to "share" space with other uses. "It is the paddlers who are seeking to take over acres of currently open, multi-use public park land for their private storage of gear and equipment thereby reducing access for all other users ... in the process that is supposed to be planning for growth in all uses, it is instead planning to reduce the single largest existing use today."

At issue is an amendment to the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and

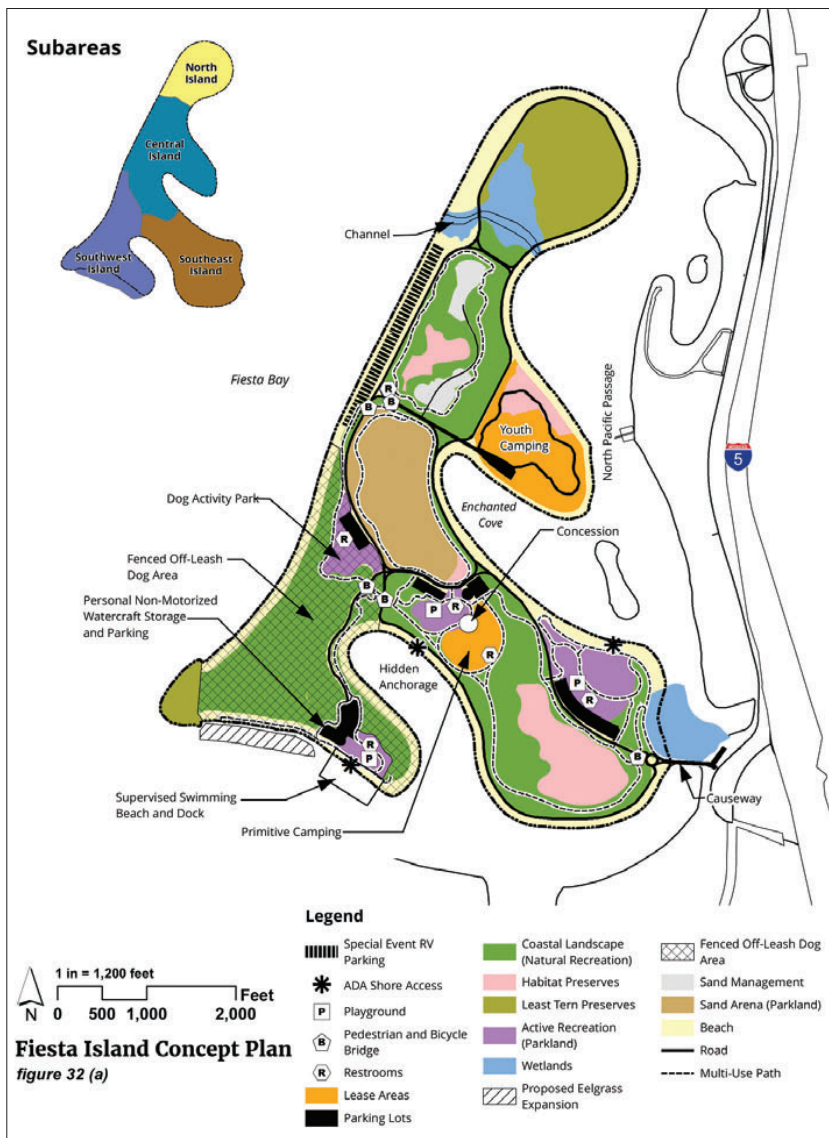
Local Coastal Program to update the land uses and vision guiding future uses and improvements to Fiesta Island. The amendment includes recommendations for island-wide improvements to recreation facilities, access and circulation, parking, soft-surface trails and paved multi-use paths, grading and landscaping, habitat areas, water quality, eelgrass bed plantings, and enhancements to directional signs and utilities upgrades.

At least three planning commissioners, who had been leaning the other way, changed their minds after being swayed by public testimony April 11.

Noting there are no other designated areas for paddling outside of Fiesta Island, Planning Commission chair Susan Pearson said. "That to me is really compelling. Though Option B is less impactful, Option A is accessible to everyone. We need to provide equal access to all."

Planning Commission vice chair William Hofman said he, too, had been leaning toward favoring Option B. "It's nice to listen to testimony and be convinced to change," he said. "With Option B, paddling is precluded."

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com



Option A adds an access road to a non-motorized watercraft storage space and launch area, which would run through the current off-leash dog park.

Pacific Beach 'Puppy Stork' helps save stray dogs in Tijuana and Ensenada

By VICTORIA DAVIS | BEACH & BAY PRESS

The "Puppy Stork" may be the name Pacific Beach resident Alexis Noelle gave herself "just for fun," but it effectively sums up her mission: to safely bring stray dogs across the Mexico border into the loving arms of San Diego families.

For the past year, Noelle has been volunteering at Los Adoptables, a no-kill rescue shelter for stray, sick and traumatically scarred dogs in Ensenada, Mexico. Twice a month, Noelle makes the three-hour trip across the border in her small Volkswagen to pick up foster dogs from the shelter and help them find homes.

"I'll pack in as many dogs as I can to where the whole back seat is just kennels," said Noelle. "I don't get to go down there as much as I'd like to, unfortunately, but it's important to get these dogs out of Mexico and healthy. So, when I do visit, I take as many as my car can hold."

According to Noelle, dogs are much more prone to diseases in places like Tijuana and Ensenada because of both the high population of dogs and the fact that none of them are vaccinated. One of the most common diseases stray animals are prone to in Mexico is Distemper, a virus that affects dogs' respiratory, gastrointestinal, respiratory and central nervous systems.

"It's such a horrible, painful disease for them to get and it's almost guaranteed that these puppies on the streets will get it at some point



Alex Noelle (left), of Pacific Beach, and her friend Elle, bring back puppy rescues from Los Adoptables.

because most people just can't afford to vaccinate their animals or even neuter them," said Noelle, who lived in Rosarito for a year and would drive around the city with dog food and water in her trunk, offering help to the area's many stray dogs.

"Distemper is everywhere down there and it's so easily spread. It's like children getting the common cold in school, and there's really nothing we can do about it."

But Los Adoptables is dedicated to saving as many dogs as they can.

Founded in 2016, the shelter began with four volunteers trying to find homes for 177 dogs that a local woman in Ensenada had been sheltering. Through the efforts of the community and local veterinarians, most of the dogs were able to find forever homes. The rest became fosters, and one of the four volunteers, Pris Austin, became the new owner of Los Adoptables.

"I've always loved dogs, but never thought I was going to be in charge of a shelter," said Austin, who hous-

es between 30-50 animals at a time, including both dogs and cats. "Now that I do, I don't see myself doing anything else."

Austin says that, according to the municipal dog pound, there are six dogs per every one person in Ensenada and neutering is still a low priority for locals. There have been many efforts to change this way of thinking from other animal protection organizations in the area. But while the treatment towards the animals is starting to shift, the outskirts

WANT TO HELP?

Those interested in donating to Los Adoptables, volunteering or adopting an animal themselves, may visit losadoptables.org, and check out their Instagram, @losadoptablesorg.

of the city still have a long way to go.

"Our main goal is to get steady income so we can offer low-cost spay and neuter events for the community," said Austin. "Also, going to the schools and talking to the kids about the importance of having a healthy pet is key to changing our society and the way the animals get treated. We can't do it with some of the adults, so we have to do it with the kids."

The abuse and abandonment of animals is also a common occurrence in Mexico, and even the practice of dog fighting is still often being left unchecked. Noelle says Los Adoptables has helped save many animals that have been left on street corners, kept chained in yards or used as "bait dogs" in fighting circles. People will often even throw animals over Austin's fence and leave them there.

"Pris doesn't turn any animals down," said Noelle. "The hardest part of living down there was seeing these dogs hurting and alone every day. But now we get to help them get lucky and live happy lives."

Since volunteering at Los Adoptables, Noelle has helped transport and save 35 dogs. Her goal is 100.

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

PB ANNUAL GRAFFITI CLEAN-UP

The Pacific Beach Town Council's annual Graffiti Clean-Up will be held 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 4 starting at PB Presbyterian Church, 1675 Garnet Ave. Volunteers are needed. PBTC will provide all the training and supplies.

Each year, volunteers get rid of about 1,000 tags in just a few hours. This event builds community pride and gives everyone a sense of satisfaction as they "take-back" and beautify Pacific Beach. Participants can earn community service hours (under 18 must have waiver signed by parent.) For more information or to print a waiver, visit pbtowncouncil.org.

MAYOR FAULCONER EXPANDS SAFE PARKING PROGRAM

As a way to provide more opportunities for homeless individuals living out of their vehicles, Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer on April 16 announced the expansion of the City's Safe Parking Program with a third lot where people can park overnight and that – for the first time – allows recreational vehicles.

Joined at a Mission Valley parking lot near SDCCU Stadium by City Councilmember Scott Sherman and representatives from Jewish Family Service (JFS), Faulconer said the City plans to open the parking lot to cars and RVs within the next 45 days. JFS manages the City's other two safe parking lots and will run the new lot as well, bringing case managers, housing specialists and more to the site to help individuals move toward long-term stable housing.

The lot, located near the corner of Friars Road and Mission Village Drive, will operate between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. and will include holistic services focused on basic needs assistance, employment, family wellness, school success, financial education, credit repair and housing. This lot can accommodate up to 80 RVs or 200 standard vehicles.

The other two City-run Safe Parking lots combine to accommodate 120 cars and up to 200 people per night. There are also two safe parking lots operated in the City by a private non-profit organization.

BIKES, BOARDS AND BREWS FESTIVAL AT CROWN POINT

Bikes, Boards and Brews will take place 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 20 at Crown Point Park. This event features PB restaurants paired with local breweries to celebrate Pacific Beach surf, bike and skate culture and take in the views on Mission Bay.

Participating restaurants: PB Fish Shop, Board and Brew, Bareback Grill, PB Local, SD Taproom, Tavern at the Beach, Maverick's Beach Club, Sandbar, Cerveza Jack's and Moonshine Beach

Participating breweries: Amplified Ale Works, Thorn Brewing Co., Firestone Walker Brewing Co., Coronado Brewing Co., Mike Hess Brewing, Owl Drug Co., 10 Barrel Brewing, Little Miss Brewing, Green Flash, St. Archer Brewing, White Claw Hard Seltzer.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit pacificbeach.org/event/bikes-boards-and-brews/.



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The curious case of Noodle, a dognapping, and social media

Goldendoodle now safe at home in PB

By DAVE SCHWAB | BEACH & BAY PRESS

What is known is that a 2-year-old Goldendoodle named Noodle was allegedly “dognapped” from a Pacific Beach home in mid-day before being returned four days later.

The mysterious incident occurred Wednesday, April 10 shortly after noon. The incident was captured on the homeowner’s Ring security camera. Video showed a long-haired, somewhat heavy-set bearded man going through the unlocked front door, taking Noodle, then walking out with him while the homeowner was temporarily away.

What’s missing – and perplexing – is the back story to exactly how it all happened, and why. Also, subsequent social-media postings about Noodle’s alleged kidnapping netted oodles of responses on Instagram, and on Noodles’ and Social Pacific Beach Facebook pages. Even several “Free Noodle” memes were trending on local social media.

On Monday, April 15, Noodle’s “dad,” Kevin Cho, told Beach & Bay Press, “I got him back yesterday evening.” In a CBS News 8 interview, Cho said Noodle had been recovered from Grants Pass, Ore.

Cho said his initial thought on



PB resident Noodle at Kate Sessions Park.

PHOTO FROM NOODLE'S FACEBOOK PAGE

finding Noodle gone was that “it was an April Fool’s joke by one of my friends.”

During the CBS News 8 interview, Cho said, after witnessing his security-camera footage, that he knew who stole his dog. “I called him repeatedly,” said Cho, adding, “I have no idea why he did it. This is baffling to me.”

Cho filed a police report. A friend

of his then reached out to social media for help, posting on Next Door: “My friend’s dog was stolen yesterday and we need help finding the man who stole him. Pleeeasse help us if you can!”

CBS News 8 reported that social media posts about Noodle had been viewed “hundreds of times,” and that the video footage Cho released showing Noodle being taken was

‘I got him back [Sunday] evening. I have no idea why [the dognapper] did it.’

KEVIN CHO
NOODLE’S PERSON

viewed “tens of thousands of times.”

Noodle has been described as a Pacific Beach “fixture.” The dog has his own Instagram account (@liondoodlenoodle) with more than 11,600 followers.

The Goldendoodle is a cross-breed dog obtained by breeding a Golden Retriever with a Poodle. The name, which alters “poodle” to “doodle,” was coined in 1992. Golden retrievers are considered a great family dog, which is why they have been used to cross breed with poodles.

The Goldendoodle is referred to as a designer dog, a term tracing its origin to the late 20th century when breeders began to cross purebred Poodles with other purebred breeds in hopes of obtaining a dog with the Poodle’s non-shedding coat, (though there is no guarantee they will inherit the coat of the poodle), along with various desirable characteristics from other breeds.

Cho told CBS News 8 he had no immediate plans for filing charges against the man who allegedly took his dog.

LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS AWARDS DINNER

United Cerebral Palsy of San Diego County will honor Shelley Zimmerman, retired San Diego Police chief, and District 3 Supervisor Kristin Gaspar, County Board of Supervisors, at the annual Life Without Limits event on April 25. The program will include short testimonials to the honorees from those in the business and philanthropic community.

The emcee for the event is KUSI-TV news anchor Lauren Phinney. Cocktails are at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Visit ucpsd.org for more information.

TEDDY BEAR FUN RUN IN MISSION BAY

The Teddy Bear Fun Run, family-friendly 5K, will take place 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 28 at De Anza Cove, 300 N. Mission Bay Drive. Participants are encouraged to bring a new teddy bear that will be donated to children at various mission-based organizations supported by the Junior League of San Diego. Register at jlsd.org.

VOLUNTEERS COLLECT 137 POUNDS OF TRASH

Volunteers from Oroweat Bread and locals recently came together to pick up trash in Mission Beach. In this effort, 87 volunteers joined together to remove 137 pounds of trash – including more than 300 cigarette butts – in partnership with I Love a Clean San Diego. For more information about future clean ups, visit ilacsd.org. The cleanup was inspired by the bread brand’s removing all artificial preservatives, colors and flavors from their popular whole grain line.

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PB leaders weigh in on loosening of parking requirements for housing developments

By DAVE SCHWAB | BEACH & BAY PRESS

Pacific Beach residents surveyed are largely skeptical that the City's recent trade-off in reducing parking requirements to make it cheaper to build new affordable housing will work.

Recently, the City Council voted 8-1, with District 2 Councilmember Dr. Jen Campbell dissenting, to reduce parking requirements to a zero minimum at new multifamily residential developments within transit priority areas (TPAs). A TPA is defined as any area sitting within a half-mile of one or more planned or existing transit stops.

PB resident Marcie Beckett characterized the City Council action as legislative slight of hand. "The City is using the 'housing crisis' to give developers a huge underserved gift: maximum density with no parking required," she said. "If the City were really serious about providing housing, they would put deed restrictions on all these new developments requiring rentals to be at least 30 days and requiring buyers and renters to swear they will not own a car."

Longtime Pacific Beach resident and community planner Scott Chipman concurred.

"For years we have fought for appropriate off-street parking in new construction projects," noted Chipman. "Units with three bedrooms are

'I support the no-parking policy. It doesn't mean current developments lose their parking, or all new development has no-parking.'

— HENISH PULICKAL, PB PLANNING GROUP CHAIR

allowed with only two off-street parking spaces. Three people nearly always have three cars. We have seen tandem garage parking allowed with one or more of those cars ending up on the street."

Added Chipman: "Apartments are rented without garages included as part of the rent. Now no parking requirements? That only works if the person living in that development gives up their right to own a car. Will people moving into these developments agree not to store a car on any city street? If not it burdens the community."

PB community planner Chris Olson, on vacation in Vietnam, noted the city he was in, Hanoi, "Has no parking and they close off many streets for what they call a 'walking and cycling city.' The town is wonderful and a major tourist attraction."

Added Olson: "Local government has an important role for transportation and housing to promote the well being of all, and it should provide a vision and leadership. We are slowly coming around to the realities of how to deal with population

growth, the future of transportation and protecting the environment. I foresee a time in the future when we look back and marvel at the era when we prioritized land use for private motor vehicles."

PB Planning Group chair Henish Pulickal saw scaling-back parking for new developments differently.

"I support the no-parking policy," Pulickal said. "It doesn't mean current developments lose their parking, or all new development has no-parking. It means that developers can build some units without parking based on what they think the market will bear. Maybe it's only 5 percent of units to start. But I know there is a growing population of residents that don't have cars, aren't getting their driver's licenses and are using Uber/Lyft to go everywhere."

Added Pulickal: "Considering parking costs more than \$35,000 to \$90,000 per space to build, and owning a car costs more than \$700 a month, housing should be cheaper for people who don't need a parking spot."

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

Gang leader pleads guilty to stealing Jeeps in Pacific Beach

By NEAL PUTNAM | BEACH & BAY PRESS

The leader of a motorcycle gang has pleaded guilty to stealing Jeep Wranglers in Pacific Beach, Ocean Beach, and other areas that were taken to Mexico to be sold or stripped for parts.

The guilty plea by Jimmy Josue Martinez, 33, who is also known as "Motas," was in U.S. District Court on March 26 on the charge of conspiracy to commit transportation of stolen vehicles in foreign commerce.

"The joy ride is over for Mr. Martinez," said U.S. Attorney Robert Brewer in a statement.

Martinez was named as one of the leaders for the Hooligans motorcycle gang, which is based in Tijuana, where he lived until he was arrested in December.

The gang is believed responsible for the theft of more than 150 Jeep Wranglers worth approximately \$4.5 million within San Diego County since 2014, according to the U.S. Attorney's office. They used high-tech methods to disable security systems and steel Jeeps in just a few minutes — often in the middle of the night.

Martinez admitted to leading one of the Hooligans' theft crews,

which would target a specific Jeep days before the actual theft would take place. Martinez and others obtained the vehicle identification number in advance and managed to get secret key codes, which allowed them to create a duplicate key for that particular Jeep.

During the theft, the gang members would disable the alarm system and program a duplicate key using a handheld electronic device. They would quietly drive away without notice.

Martinez faces a maximum sentence of five years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine plus restitution. Sentencing was set for June 24.

As part of his plea, Martinez agreed to pay \$246,396 in restitution to four insurance companies.

Martinez was ordered detained without bail by a U.S. magistrate who wrote he had fled to Mexico to avoid prosecution and lacked any U.S. residence or employment, according to court records.

"This case is a reminder that our proximity to the international border provides increased opportunity for transnational organized crime," said Suzanne Turner, the FBI acting special agent in charge.

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Changing of the guard at SD Lifeguard Union

Chris Vanos faces many challenges as he takes over for retiring Ed Harris

By DAVE SCHWAB | BEACH & BAY PRESS

There's been a change at the top in San Diego Lifeguard Union Teamsters 911 with Chris Vanos replacing Ed Harris as head steward.

"After 10 years I have passed the torch in preparation for my retirement in 14 months," said Harris. "Chris Vanos is a talented Lifeguard II who will serve the lifeguards well."

Last year, the lifeguard's union voted 76 in favor, 18 opposed, to leave the San Diego Fire Rescue Department. A turf battle has ensued over how duties are being apportioned among lifeguards and firefighters, with some lifeguards claiming that rerouting communication calls through fire has slowed emergency response.

Vanos noted there's subsequently been fallout from the proposed separation of the two departments. "It was seen that if you supported the lifeguard union you were on a 'black list' for promotional opportunities," he said.

Vanos said personnel shortages are among guard's most pressing needs, which he said includes filling positions for the BSU/Mission Bay harbor patrol, and at Children's Pool and La Jolla Shores.

"Boating safety positions are needed both for winter and summer due to the impact of tourism and recreational boaters on Mission Bay," Vanos said. "The Children's Pool positions are based on the needs for officer safety during rescue calls,



Chris Vanos

enforcement issues both on the rocks and at La Jolla Shores, to better protect the public."

Concerning health coverage, Vanos said lifeguards are seeking "to have the same coverage as both SD Fire and SDPD do for heart and cancer. We all perform duties that fall under law enforcement and fire suppression, yet lifeguards do not receive coverage for cancer- and heart- related health issues."

What are the issues in improving the lifeguard department?

"One of the largest issues is that our lifeguard chief answers to both the fire chief and his assistant," said Vanos. "He/she is not in a role to advocate for lifeguard needs directly to City Council or the mayor. If the LGC was able to advocate for lifeguard needs, we would be able to fix a lot of

issues that have come up. We have made the case, both to lifeguard and fire chiefs, for why lifeguards should be dispatching river- and water-rescue calls.

"Though we understand the SDFD has its roles and responsibilities the question is, when you have one of the best swift water rescue teams in the nation, why send a firefighter instead of a water specialist?"

What are the challenges confronting today's lifeguards?

"The current challenges we have are similar to the issues of SDPD and SDFD," replied Vanos. "The city is in a wave of retirement. The institutional knowledge is being lost as some of our most senior guards are walking out the door. The front-line lifeguards and firefighter's who work hand-in-hand on calls have no issues. The issues arise in upper management because the lifeguard chief answers to the fire chief, which creates road blocks."

Any new developments with equipment/infrastructure?

This summer South Mission Beach will have a new main lifeguard station in the works after having been held up in the courts," said Vanos. "It is set to open prior to Memorial Day. The lifeguard service is also working on plans for North Pacific Beach and Ocean Beach to receive new main stations. We hope to have these completed very soon to provide the utmost safety for beach goers in those areas."

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

SDCNG >>
CONT. FROM PG. 1

back the layers and find these treasures (stories) and share it with our readers," Main said. "These people help shape the community."

"We also try to be transparent and unbiased in our reporting. People are inundated daily with troubling news regionally and from around the world. It is hard to sort through fact and fiction these days. Not all news has to be bad news. Isn't it refreshing to come home and read about positive things happening in your community for a change," Main said.

Over the years, control of the newspapers has passed between Main and San Diego Community News Network owner David Mannis. The former married couple founded San Diego Community Newspaper Group together in the 1980s. Even after their divorce in 2002, they worked together on La Jolla Village News, Peninsula Beacon, Beach & Bay Press, and Downtown News until Main took full control at the end of 2008.

Mannis decided to enter the newspaper industry again in 2009 and founded San Diego Uptown News. He later bought Downtown News from San Diego Com-

munity Newspaper Group and grew his newspaper network to include six papers stretching across the county. After 40 years in the newspaper industry, he has decided to enter semi-retirement.

The acquisition led to a shuffle in the editors leading each of the newspapers. Albert Fulcher will stay at San Diego Community News Network as the editor for Gay San Diego.

Jeff Clemetson is moving to San Diego Community Newspaper Group's Pacific Beach office to continue leading Mission Times Courier and La Mesa Courier. Recently-hired editor Kendra Sitton is also moving to the PB office and will continue her work at San Diego Uptown News. In addition, she is now the editor of San Diego Downtown News, which was formerly under the purview of Fulcher.

"The idea of having more regional coverage in the communities and the ZIP codes we are picking up is exciting. We share a lot of common issues with our coastal communities that will tie in directly with Uptown and Downtown. La Mesa Courier and Mission Times Courier cover well-established, solid communities. It doesn't get much better than this," Main said.

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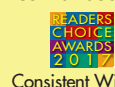
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Steve Slocum, founder of Salaam, with a rector from St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral and Muslim rep Yusef Miller at a recent inter-faith get-together. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Christian missionary promotes positive dialogue with Muslims in Pacific Beach

By DAVE SCHWAB | BEACH & BAY PRESS

Five years as a Christian missionary in Asian Kazakhstan was a game changer for Steve Slocum altering forever his view of Islam.

Now the Pacific Beach resident is sharing his epiphany with San Diegans, fostering a positive dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Kazakhstan borders Russia and China and is the world's largest landlocked country. It is Central Asia's dominant nation economically, generating 60 percent of the region's GDP, mostly through oil and gas.

Slocum's outreach comes at a watershed time following an anti-Muslim attack on a New Zealand mosque that felled 50 innocent people, and escalating anti-Muslim hate crimes worldwide.

Slocum has created a nonprofit, non-religious and non-partisan organization, Salaam, meaning "peace." Salaam is hosting a weekly series of rotating workshops featuring powerful personal stories from local Muslims and interfaith

activists, along with shared meals and discussions.

Slocum's view of Islam changed when he lived in Kazakhstan.

"I was a hardcore, hyperkinetic evangelical Christian back in the early '90s when I took my wife and three kids to be missionaries in Kazakhstan," Slocum said. "It turned out to be a life-changing experience. A lot of my attitudes changed."

Added Slocum, "Even though we were Christians, they (Muslims) respected us and helped us in every way. Their warmth, friendliness and hospitality just left a warmth in my belly for their culture and toward Muslim people."

Now back in the States, Slocum wanted to return the favor.

Noting there is "a lot of misinformation" out there, while pointing out 75 percent of Americans "don't know a Muslim," Slocum has set out to dispel rumors, myths and post-9/11 xenophobia, which is what Salaam is all about.

"I needed to speak about my own experiences, what I found," he said. "I decided to write a soon-to-be pub-

lished book about it, 'Why do they Hate Us?'

"In it, I tell stories of the voice of the mainstream Muslim, about their faith, what they believe in."

Salaam's process involves:

- Educating communities with free workshops that debunk misconceptions about Islam.

- Building cross-cultural friendships by inviting Muslims and non-Muslims to enjoy meals together.

- Organizing mosque visits to help locals connect with Islamic culture in their own communities.

- Leading international trips to help residents expand their world view of Muslims.

Salaam employee a six-step process to change people's minds about Muslims.

"The first step is awareness," Slocum said. "Step two is a mosque visit. Step three are friendship dinners. It goes on from there, with the final step being traveling together to a Muslim country to get a first-hand experience on their turf."

For more information visit salaamusa.org. "Why Do They Hate Us" is scheduled for publication in July.

Jury convicts robber of pregnant woman in Pacific Beach

By NEAL PUTNAM | BEACH & BAY PRESS

After deliberating for 1 hour and 45 minutes, a jury on March 22 convicted James Lee Graham of robbing a pregnant woman and burglarizing her Pacific Beach home in December 2017.

The seven-man, five-woman jury also found Graham guilty of committing false imprisonment upon Carolina Souza and resisting arrest in the Dec. 14, 2017, incident at 9 p.m. at the Cedar Shore Apartments at 2150 Pacific Beach Drive.

"They obviously considered the evidence," said Deputy District Attorney Lucille Yturalde.

Graham, 41, appeared disappointed with the verdict. San Diego Superior Court Judge Robert O'Neill set sentencing for April 26, and Graham remains in jail without bail.

Yturalde said Graham faces a maximum sentence of 55 years to life in prison as a "three strike" defendant, having been convicted of 10 robberies in 2008. O'Neill looked at court documents after the verdict and determined the 2008 convictions were valid.

Yturalde said Graham faces 25 years to life for the robbery plus 25 years for the residential burglary. She said he could also receive a consecutive 5-year term for having a

prior felony conviction.

Jurors did not stick around to talk to attorneys afterwards.

Graham's girlfriend, Stephanie Nicole Majsterski, 25, pleaded guilty to all charges as well as auto theft in escaping the scene in a San Diego Police car. She drove it to Fiesta Island and into the water. The police car was tracked to Fiesta Island, where she was arrested. She was sentenced Sept. 28 to five years in prison.

Souza testified her husband had left the front door unlocked while he went to do laundry on another floor.

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Cass Street Bar & Grill — a neighborhood place with high quality food

By DAVE SCHWAB | BEACH & BAY PRESS

To its new owner and staff, Cass Street Bar & Grill in Pacific Beach is as much a museum as it is an eatery.

"We're trying to preserve and pay homage to a piece of PB history, while updating, adapting it to right now," said Ben Palmer, longtime general manager of the restaurant. "These bars are kind of the last of a dying breed."

Noting there's "a little bit of gentrification going on in PB," Palmer said, "We're bringing something you're not going to get down at the beach."

The popular establishment at 4612 Cass St. was purchased a couple years ago by John Rudolph of La Jolla, who also owns iconic Harry's Coffee Shop founded by his parents in 1960 on Girard Avenue, as well as Mike's Taco Club in Ocean Beach.

Cass Street celebrated its second anniversary under Rudolph's ownership and management March 23.

Rudolph took over for Mike Campagna and his wife, who'd owned Cass Street since 1996. Rudolph is the third owner of the pub that opened in 1984 and holds one of PB's oldest liquor licenses.

What makes the restaurant-bar good now, is what's always made it attractive. "A big part of our reputation revolves around our food," said Palmer.

Cuisine at Cass Street serving breakfast, lunch and dinner daily is definitely not traditional bar fare. For example, very little, other than French fries, is fried.

"It's American with a Mexican twist," said Palmer, noting head chef Alfredo has been there for years in the kitchen, which opens at 11 a.m. and closes at 11 p.m.

"The oriental salad is the one (item) you'll hear talked about all around," Palmer said of the menu. "We're also known for our baguette sandwiches. The cool thing about us is everything's made to order in-house, including all the sauces and



The popular fishburger at Cass Street Bar & Grill.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

dressings."

Authentic Mexican breakfasts are served with homemade chilaquiles and tomatillo sauce. "Alfredo's recipe is to die for," said Palmer, adding the "oriental salad is probably the most popular dish with the teriyaki-marinated steak baguette with onions a close second."

All Cass Street bread comes from French Gourmet. "It's delivered fresh daily every single morning," Palmer said.

Pointing to a huge mural of fishing photos adorning the entire back wall, Palmer noted, "It's definitely a piece of PB history, this place has always been a fishing hang with lots

CASS STREET BAR & GRILL

Where: 4612 Cass St.

Hours: Mondays-Fridays 11 a.m. to 2 a.m.,
Saturdays and Sundays 9:30 a.m. to 2 a.m.

Info: cassstbar.com.

of regulars who still come in."

Palmer praised Rudolph for polishing Cass Street's image rather than trying to alter it.

"John could have torn the whole thing down and done something differently, but he didn't," Palmer said.

This is a passion project for him. He repainted the outside making it look fresher and brighter, put up new hanging signs. We've tried to update a little bit, but did not try to make it too fancy."

Cass Street has a homier feel than you'll find most anywhere else. "A lot of places are turn and burn; you'll hardly get a 'thank you' or a 'nice to see you,'" Palmer said. "Everyone knows each other's names here. It's like Cheers."

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Egg hunts, brunches and Easter sunrise service in PB and Mission Bay

By EMILY BLACKWOOD | BEACH & BAY PRESS

Whether your Easter features brunch and mimosas or egg hunts and bunny ears, we've got you covered. Check out these egg hunts, Easter brunches and sunrise services happening all in your backyard.

Egg hunts

Belmont Park – This all-day event will be jam-packed with Easter fun from park to boardwalk including egg hunts (sold out), free activities for children, an Easter Bunny photo op, live music and more. The egg hunts on the beach and in the park will nest 20,000-plus fun-filled eggs and a limited supply of “Golden Eggs” with exclusive prizes ranging from free rides to restaurant gift cards. Feast on Easter brunch at Draft or sip on champagne and OJ at Cannonball's Mimosa Bubbles Bar. Held on Sunday, April 21 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit belmont-park.com.

Playa Pacifica Park – This free community egg hunt at 10 a.m. will be a fun activity for all. Two rounds (for different groups) of 1,000 eggs will be hidden around the park. Bring



Children run to pick up plastic eggs during one of Belmont Park's annual Easter egg hunts at Mission Beach. THOMAS MELVILLE / BEACH & BAY PRESS

a basket or bag to collect the eggs. Enjoy light refreshments, and hang out with your community.

Firefly Eatery & Bar at the Dana Hotel – Annual Easter brunch complete with brioche French toast, buttermilk pancakes, roast beef and ham carving stations, assorted pastries, omelet station, pasta station, bloody marys, mimosas and more. In addition to this bountiful brunch being served from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., two egg hunts will take place at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Cost is \$50 for adults and

\$20 for children ages 10 and under. Reservations are encouraged. Call at 619-225-2125. thedana.com.

Sunrise service

Crown Point Park – Join Pacific Beach UMC and the Water's Edge Faith Community for an Easter Sunrise Service on Sunday, April 21 at 6 a.m. Gather at Crown Point Park on Mission Bay with hot cups of coffee, donuts, and worship music, followed by the Easter story. Pastor Bob Rhodes will offer a message of the joy of dis-

covering the presence of Christ, and Pastor Jessica Stryko will lead in sharing Holy Communion together. Feel free to bring a chair or blanket. Visit pbumc.org for more information.

Easter brunches

Pacific Beach AleHouse – Head to Pacific Beach AleHouse on Easter Sunday for \$4 AleHouse drafts all day, plus \$10 champagne bottles available from 9 a.m. to noon and brunch from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., including AleHouse favorites such as Pecan Crusted French Toast and Loaded Skillet Hash, plus plenty of brunch libations to go around. pbalehouse.com.

Waterbar – Perched along the shoreline in Pacific Beach, this coastal hotspot will offer endless rosé, along with Loaded Cinnamon Buns (a plate of three homemade cinnamon buns smothered in white icing and topped with sliced bananas), Cinnamon Toast Crunch and blueberry compote, Eggs Benedict, stacked with an English muffin, Canadian bacon, poached eggs and hollandaise, served with your choice of side. And finally, their Spring Fling Scramble, featuring English peas, asparagus, baby heirloom tomato, chives, crumbled goat cheese, sliced avocado and

choice of toast. The special brunch menu will be available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. waterbarsd.com.

Backyard Kitchen & Tap – Since no Easter is complete without an Easter bunny photo-op, the restaurant will host its Easter Egg-Extravaganza, complete with a brunch buffet and pancake station from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., priced at \$17.95 for adults and \$9.95 for kids, and special Easter cocktails for the adults. Enjoy live acoustic entertainment from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and bring the youngsters to meet the Easter bunny – furbabies included! backyardpb.com.

Breakfast Republic – Have your most important meal of the day at the Breakfast Republic this Easter, and indulge in April food and drink specials, including their Peep Show Mocha prepared with toasted marshmallow, espresso, mocha, milk, whipped cream and a Peep garnish for good measure. If a boozy brunch is in order, try your hand at their Sunrise Service Mimosa, crafted from raspberry, orange juice, prosecco, and an orange garnish. Specials are available throughout April. Breakfastrepublic.com.

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

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Spring sports updates for Mission Bay Bucs

By DAVE THOMAS | BEACH & BAY PRESS

Golf

The Bucs, under head coach Gebel Anderson, come into the week with a mark of 13-4. The team has been led to date by sophomore Andy Knight and senior Aydan Lopresti.

"This is by far the most competitive team in the last decade," Anderson remarked. "We actually have a shot to go to the CIF tournament in May as a team. Andy is currently ranked No. 17 in the county and ranked No. 2 in City schools."

Boys lacrosse

Head coach Brandon Rhodes' team came into play this week at 7-2 overall (4-0 league).

According to Rhodes, key players to date have included junior midfielder Carson Wells, senior midfielder Deshaun Bailey, sophomore attack man Keegan Kroeger, senior attack man Dylan Upton, senior defenseman Nick Tropio and junior defenseman Jaron Fuentes.

"We are off to a great start, playing very well as a team, led by junior, face-off midfielder and captain Wells," Rhodes noted. "Carson has been dominant at face-offs this year, winning more than 75 percent of attempts."

"Kroeger and Upton have been great on the offensive side of the ball, with Bailey playing great on both sides of the ball as a middle. As well as great defensive work from Tropio and Fuentes holding opposing teams to less than five goals per game on average. It's been a great first half of the season and the Bucs will look to continue to have success and grow together as a team," Rhodes said.

Girls sand volleyball

The Bucs, under head coach Brittany Johnson, come into action this week at 5-1. Mission Bay's loss was to Our Lady of Peace.

"The whole team is strong and phenomenal, but our consistent top players are juniors Juliette Castner and Chloe Gallego," Johnson



Mission Bay High's Emma Denton competes in the triple jump.

STEVE SIDELL / BEACH & BAY PRESS

remarked.

According to Johnson, the season is going great. "I really couldn't have asked for a better group of talented, dedicated athletes," Johnson said. "They have all made significant improvements to their games, and I'm looking forward to a strong finish."

Track

Head coach Danny Perez says the teams are battling for another win as the regular season winds down. The boys head into the week at 1-4, while the girls sit at 0-5.

According to Perez, key members to date include Gina Queck (league leader in the 3200m, and second in the 1600m and 800m), Nick Archer (top jumper with a triple jump of 43'0.50 and second in the league) and TK Berhe (lifetime best of 4:36 at the Elmer Runge Classic back in March and ran 10:09 at the Jim Cerveny Invite this month).

"This season been a tougher challenge with stiffer competition, our league has very talented athletes in it and we been plagued with the injury bug," Perez commented. "Rather than forcing athletes to compete to win, we rested them in preparation for our league finals. We are looking to finish the season strong with many of our athletes qualifying for CIFs at Mt. Carmel May 11."

Boys volleyball

The Bucs swept league rivals Morse High and Lincoln High with 3-0 wins and included a win by the junior varsity team versus Morse last week. The Bucs are 7-0 in league and in first place, ranked in the top six in Division III.

Junior outside hitter Ian Briski leads the team in kills and hitting percentage. Against Lincoln High, Briski had 22 kills and hit almost .800. Senior outside hitter Zander Caufield is second on the team in kills, digs and passing percentage. Senior middle blocker Josh Leon is second in hitting percentage and third in kills and leads the team in blocks. Junior libero Ryan Derry leads the team in passing percentage and digs.

"We are excited about being in first place in league and just need to finish out with wins against San Diego, Crawford and Kearney to secure the league title," head coach Nikki Caufield stated. "We have a freshman setter Aric Johnson that is still learning as we go but improving every week."

"If we play consistent the boys are a lot of fun to watch. We have a good group of players like junior Jackson Priest and some freshmen and sophomores that are also playing really well and could be amazing in the future. With only two seniors on the roster, our team is young and still learning but we are excited about the level of play we are seeing," Caufield said.

Boys tennis

Mission Bay headed into action this week with a record of 10-2 overall (8-1 league play) for head coach Trong Tong.

"While Jacob Price (No. 3 singles) is coming into his own, our top two singles players Jake Stone and Nicolas Guevara are truly the anchors of our team," Tong stated. "Jake is one of most dominant players in our league as he only has a handful of losses out of almost three dozen matches."

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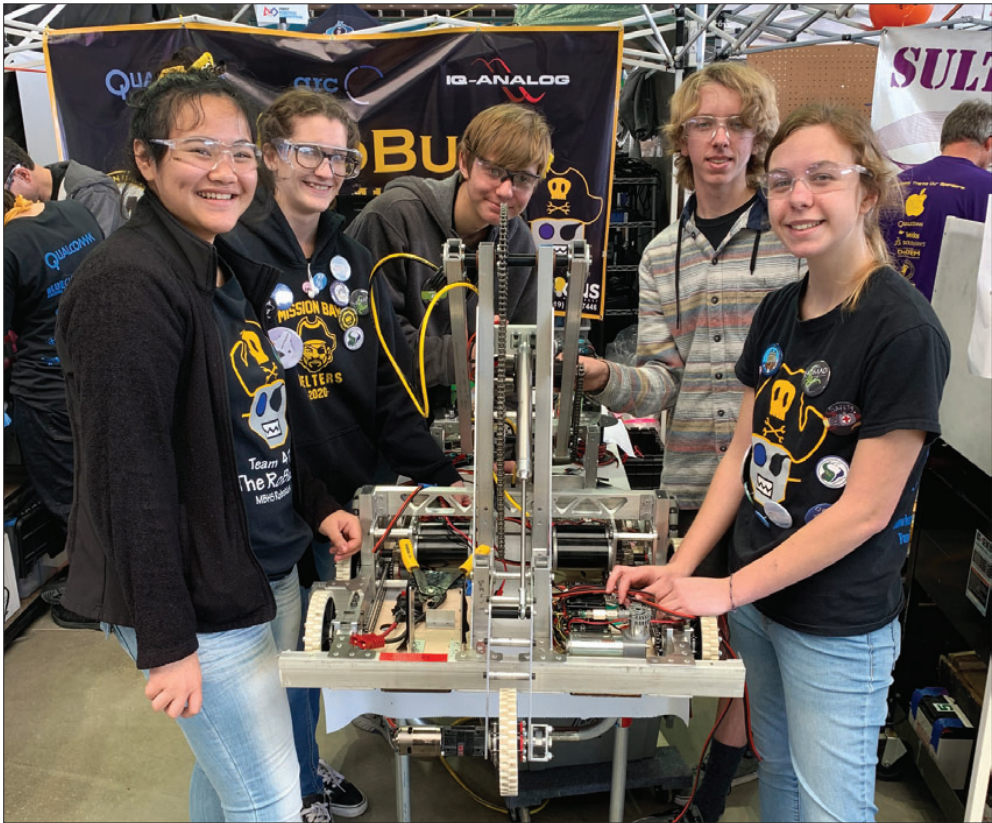
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Mission Bay High School students Laura Torre, Alyssa Welters, William Freit, Ian O'Neill, and Rory Knight show off their robot. MBHS's Robotics Team, The RoBucs, ended their season with a place in the finals at the Lancaster Regional Competition in Aerospace Valley, Calif. The robotics team at Mission Bay gives students the opportunity to work together as a team to build a robot from the ground up, which then competes against other robots in a tournament setting. Led by mentors Mark Perino, Attila Rakosi, and Alex Cannon, the students use their skills in engineering design, computer programming, electronic knowledge, manufacturing, marketing, and outreach.



April is the 'Month of the Military Child' and Crown Point Junior Music Academy held a special breakfast and all-school assembly to thank our service member parents and to celebrate the sacrifices their students make.



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PACIFIC BEACH MIDDLE
■ Help support Adrian Scavone to raise money to buy a Flowater Refill Station at PBMS. His eighth-grade community service project will reduce single-use plastic pollution on campus and provide filtered drinking water. "Flowater Stations have been installed in several San Diego schools and we are looking for community sponsors to make it happen at PBMS," Scavone said. His campaign can be found on [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) under "Flowater Refill Station Community Service Project."

PACIFIC BEACH ELEMENTARY
■ Pacific Beach Elementary is holding a Family Math Night with Greg Tang Jr. on Thursday, April 18, from 6 to 7 p.m. in the school auditorium. Sponsored by PBE teacher Jennifer Cromar and her fourth graders, this is a fun hour of math and games for kids of all ages. It's free and members of the community are welcome.
■ "A Night at the Speakeasy," PBE's annual auction, will be held 6 to 11 p.m. on Friday, April 26 at Marina Village. Enjoy a night of fun, food, and entertainment while raising funds to support science, music, and art programs at PBE. Tickets can be purchased at [fopbe.org](https://www.fopbe.org). The school thanks parent volunteers: Kristen Everett, Elizabeth Agia, Jessica Cohen, Tricia Spangler, Elyse Locatelli, Jenny Panettiere, and many others for their work in putting together PBE's biggest fundraiser.

BARNARD ELEMENTARY
■ The students of Barnard Mandarin Magnet Elementary School showcased their singing and acting talents on March 22, in Missoula Children's Theatre's production of "The Secret Garden." More than 50 first through fifth-grade students performed in this light-hearted adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's clas-



Christopher Adamson

sic novel. Auditions took place on Monday; rehearsals were held throughout the week; and the show was performed on Friday night. "Being in this play helped me realize that I am capable of doing amazing things, like learning a lot of lines in a short time, acting in front of people, and showing the emotions of my character," said fifth grade student Angelia C, who played Mary in the production. "I love the Missoula program because it brings more art activities to my school and also because I get to do it with my friends."

KATE SESSIONS
■ The Sessions community is thankful for the many opportunities presented to them and one such opportunity involves fifth-grader, Christopher Adamson. He has been attending KSE since preschool and is visually impaired. He is an example of patience, perseverance, and determination and taught his classmates that they don't need to "sweat the small stuff." A heartfelt "thank you" goes out to the Adamson family for sharing their inspirational son with the Kate Sessions' community.

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Blaise Guld to play crowd pleasers at Cannonball in Mission Beach

By BART MENDOZA | BEACH & BAY PRESS

Singer-songwriter Blaise Guld stops in at Cannonball on April 30. Performing on acoustic guitar, Guld turns in excellent covers of artists ranging from the omnipresent Bruno Mars to the Doors, for a well rounded set list full of crowd-pleasers.

Even better, however, is his original music, with songs such as “Mr. Impossible” full of classic pop melody, and tunes such as “Song on the Water” custom made for radio play. Guld’s music is deserving of much wider recognition than it’s received to date. With a distinct picking and strumming style, heartfelt performing style and a resonant honey-tinged voice, Guld is just one

lucky break away from national recognition.

Blaise Guld: Tuesday, April 30 at Cannonball, 3105 Ocean Front Walk. 5 p.m. 21 and up. cannonballsds.com.

The Now Time Quartet returns to The Turquoise on April 20. Featuring two lead instruments in Adam Wolff’s keyboards and Alicia Previn’s violin, with a rock-solid bottom end provided by bassist Michael Oletta and drummer Jeff Dalrymple, this is instrumental music at it’s best. While the Now Time Quartet’s songs are by definition jazz, the four-some take standards on improvisational journeys that will appeal to a wide range of music fans, from those who admire the likes of rock groups

such as Yes, to those who count composer Mancini as a favorite.

Now Time Quartet: Saturday, April 20 at Café-Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St. 9 p.m. 21 and up. theturquoise.com/wordpress.

The “yacht rock” phenomenon continues at Tio Leo’s on April 26 with an appearance from Band Overboard. The Point Loma-based, eight-piece group, performs Top 40 pop songs that were popular on AM radio from the mid-1970s through the early 1980s. While this might seem limiting, that era was the hey-day of the 45-rpm single and that’s reflected in Band Overboard’s terrific set list, which includes both obvious favorites by the likes of Hall & Oates as well as less covered classics

by the likes of Wings and E.L.O.

Band Overboard: Friday, April 26 at Tio Leo’s, 5302 Napa St. 9 p.m. 21 and up. Cover TBD. tioleos.com.

The Pacific Beach Library continues its free concert series on April 28 with a performance from the Martin Luther King Community Choir of San Diego. Due to the size of the group, which can number up to 80 members, this will be an outdoor concert on the library’s Cass Street Plaza. Notably, the choir performs both classic spirituals and inspirational music as well as new original material, including songs penned by director Kenneth Anderson as heard on their latest album, “Make A Joyful Noise.” The choir’s uplifting songs

are the perfect way to prepare for the coming week.

Martin Luther King Community Choir: Sunday, April 28 at the Pacific Beach Library, 4275 Cass St. 2 p.m. All ages. No cover. pblibraryfriends.org/concert.htm.

Named after a 1939 Duke Ellington song, nine-piece jazz band, The Mellotones, perform at Dizzy’s on April 29. The date marks what would have been the prolific jazz composer and bandleader’s 120th birthday, with a set list that’s sure to take in such classics as “Satin Doll” and “Caravan.”

The Mellotones: Monday, April 29, at Dizzy’s at Arias Hall, 1717 Morena Blvd. 8 p.m. dizzysjazz.com.

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