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Vote today!



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Clint Stromberg and Molly Rust partnered to open La Mesa's first craft brewery. (Photo by Jeremy Ogul)

The craft beer wave hits La Mesa

Jen
Van Tieghem



For as much of a beer mecca as San Diego County has become, La Mesa may not spring to mind for those looking for a craft brew. But while we may be a little late to the party, our neck of the woods is making up for lost time with a brand new brewery, growing tap lists around town and a forthcoming

brewery restaurant.

Bolt Brewery opened in December at 8179 Center St. after a lengthy city approval process. Nestled in an industrial area just north of Interstate 8, the site has been everything from a roofing company to a military supply warehouse over the years; most recently it was basically a dump site, which left Bolt's owners with their work cut out for them.

After approximately a year of building and brewing,

See **BEER** page 13



A homeowner on Mayapan Drive installed solar panels this year. (Photo courtesy Sullivan Solar Power)

La Mesa goes green

Residents can now use new financing models for energy efficiency

Margie
Palmer

Rising energy costs have always been a concern for homeowners, but thanks to recent decisions by the La Mesa City Council, residents can take advantage of key programs that will allow them to go solar without breaking the bank.

In May of this year the council voted to allow residents to participate in new Property

Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs, which enables homeowners to finance renewal energy improvements with little to no up-front cost.

Financing for single-family home upgrades is available through the Home Energy Renovation Opportunity (HERO) program; ultimately, eligible applicants will be able to finance 100 percent of their purchase and installation costs and will make annual payments through their property taxes.

Repayment terms are varied, with options ranging from five to 20 years. The five-year option, however, seems to be the most popular.

David Savarese, director of project development at Sullivan Solar Power, said the associated tax benefits and incentives that run alongside PACE/HERO help take a big bite out of the total cost.

"With the PACE program you

See **GREEN** page 17



LeRoy Knutson (Courtesy Vicki Wallace)

Remembering LeRoy Knutson, former city attorney

Jeremy
Ogul
Editor

Lee Knutson's passion for community was so strong that it is difficult to find a civic institution or organization he was not involved in at some point over the past 55 years.

Knutson served as La Mesa's city attorney for decades, was president of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce, was president of the La Mesa Rotary Club, managed political campaigns and led numerous other professional and civic organizations.

But more than anything else, friends and colleagues remember him as an exceptionally affable man.

"He was everybody's friend," said Duane Palmer, Knutson's friend and doctor for 50 years. "His favorite comment was 'my friend,' or 'thank you, my friend.' It was a friendship that he had with everybody."

Knutson, 85, died peacefully Dec. 13 at LakeView Hospice Residence in La Mesa, a facility he helped raise funds to open in the early 2000s. The cause of death was lung cancer, said his daughter, Beth Silvey.

LeRoy "Lee" Wayne Knutson was born Aug. 7, 1929 in the rural town of Ladysmith, Wisconsin, to Elmer Knutson and Hilma (Maki) Knutson. His parents were the children of Scandinavian immigrants; his father was a handyman who made a living doing odd jobs around town. He was their only child.

After graduating from Ladysmith High School in 1947, Knutson enlisted in the Army with his cousin and was sent to Germany, where he worked in a medical laboratory at the 98th General Hospital in Munich. There, he met his wife, JoAnn, whom he married in 1952.

Knutson was discharged in 1952 and attended the University

See **KNUTSON** page 5



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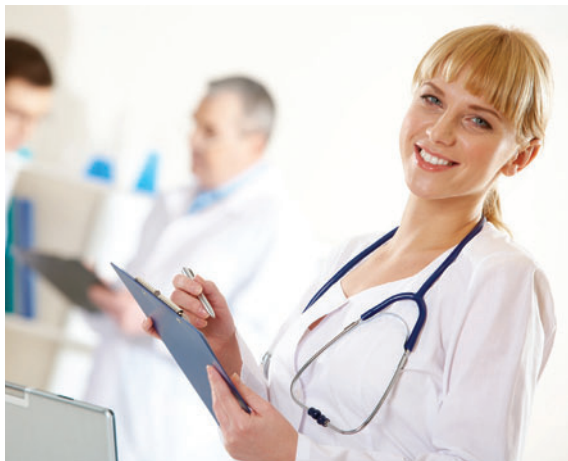
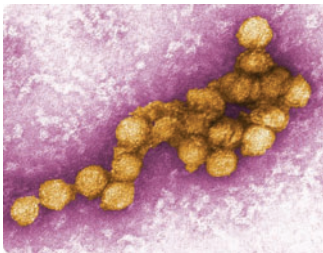
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INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Public health officials warn against West Nile virus

County officials have found four dead birds recently that tested positive for West Nile virus bringing the total number to 41 in 2014, the most since 38 dead birds tested positive in 2009. In a news release, director of County Environmental Health Department Elizabeth Pozzebon stated that mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn and that people out at those times should wear long-sleeves and use insect repellent.

Residents should also clear their yards of standing water to keep mosquitoes from breeding. The recent rain and climbing temperatures are optimal for mosquito breeding. Eleven county residents have been diagnosed with West Nile virus in 2014 including a 78-year-old La Mesa man who died from the disease. From 2010 – 2013 only two people were diagnosed in the county. To report a dead bird or green swimming pool to the Vector Control Program call 858-694-2888 or email vector@sdcounty.ca.gov. For more information on West Nile virus visit sandiegocounty.gov/deh/pests/wnv.html. ■



Grossmont College and Point Loma Nazarene University partner on four-year nursing degree

Starting in fall 2015, graduates of Grossmont College's nursing program will be able to continue their education on the community college campus and receive their bachelor of science in nursing degree from Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU). The two educational institutions announced their partnership in December to address workforce demands and the increased demand for nurses with bachelor's degrees.

The program will take students 15 months to complete and cost \$16,200, which includes the cost of books. A press release by both schools stated that Grossmont's nursing students will "benefit from the instruction and student support resources from the university." A fulltime PLNU advisor will be at Grossmont to assist with enrollment and provide scholarship information. PLNU's nursing program recently celebrated its 40th anniversary and is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and licensed by the California Board of Registered Nursing. For more information visit pointloma.edu/RNtoBSN. ■

Haggen to buy two Vons stores in La Mesa

Two Vons grocery stores in La Mesa will become Haggen stores in 2015 if the Federal Trade Commission approves the merger of grocery giants Safeway and Albertsons.

Safeway and Albertsons will sell 168 stores in the U.S., including 25 in San Diego County, to secure FTC clearance of the proposed Safeway-Albertsons merger.

The stores to be sold in La Mesa include the Vons stores at 5630 Lake Murray Blvd. and 3681 Avocado Ave., both of which are currently owned by Safeway. The buyer, Washington-based Haggen, agreed to acquire the stores, equipment and inventory and will hire most of the store employees upon the closing of the transaction, according to a news release.

"We're pleased to have found strong buyers for these stores and to have completed this important step toward combining Albertsons and Safeway," said Safeway President and CEO Robert Edwards in a written statement.

The merger is expected to be complete in January 2015. ■

Assemblymember Weber introduces body camera bill

Assemblymember Shirley N. Weber, who represents La Mesa and other parts of San Diego in the California Assembly, recently introduced a bill aimed at "developing policies based on best practices" for the use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement personnel. The bill, AB 66, would create a task force to study the effectiveness of body-worn cameras and take input from experts and communities already implementing body camera programs. The task force would make policy recommendations to the Legislature based on information gathered. ■

Central Park La Mesa apartments sold

San Diego-based R&V Management (through its VLD Sweetwater, LP, and Central Park Partners, LP) purchased the Central Park La Mesa apartments at 5636 Amaya Drive, near the intersection with Fletcher Parkway, for \$28.3 million from Newport Beach-based JH Real Estate (through its JH/TMP La Mesa affiliate).

The sale included all 124 rental units in the Central Park La Mesa community but did not include 92 units that were converted to condominiums between 2006 and 2008. The rental units include both one- and two-bedroom units that average 865 square feet. They are situated near the Amaya trolley station and state Route 125. The property includes a clubhouse, fitness center, swimming pool, spa and barbecue areas.

CBRE Multifamily represented the buyer. ■

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How to Sell Your La Mesa Home Without an Agent

La Mesa - If you've tried to sell your home yourself, you know that the minute you put the "For Sale by Owner" sign up, the phone will start to ring off the hook. Unfortunately, most calls aren't from prospective buyers, but rather from every real estate agent in town who will start to hound you for your listing.

Like other "For Sale by Owners", you'll be subjected to a hundred sales pitches from agents who will tell you how great they are and how you can't possibly sell your home by yourself. After all, without the proper information, selling a home isn't easy. Perhaps you've had your home on the market for several months with no offers from qualified buyers. This can be a very frustrating time, and many homeowners have given up their dreams of selling their homes themselves. But don't give up until you've read a new report entitled "Sell Your Own Home" which has been prepared especially for homesellers like you. You'll find that selling your home by yourself is entirely possible once you understand the process.

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Courtesy of Dan Smith Re/Max Lic. 01346593

Pageant organizers seek contestants for Miss La Mesa

The city of La Mesa will host its annual Miss La Mesa Pageant on March 6, 2015. Organizers are currently seeking residents ages 13 – 26 to participate in the pageant sponsored by the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce.

The program has been a tradition since the 1960s, focusing on community service, networking, public speaking and interview skills. Contestants will be scored on personal interview, speech, poise and personality, evening gown, and on-stage impromptu question. Photographers at the pageant will present the Miss Photogenic award, contestants will vote for Miss Congeniality and a local educator will award a winner in the essay-writing contest.

Winners will serve as ambassadors to the city attending grand openings, parades and other events throughout the year. The 2015 titleholders will receive a scholarship of \$500 or more and a prize package.

For more information and to download an entry packet from 4pointsevents.com and entries will be accepted until Feb. 8, 2015. ■

Sharp Grossmont Hospital receives award for stroke care

The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association bestowed its highest honor for stroke care — the "Get with the Guidelines" Stroke Gold-Plus Award — to Sharp Grossmont Hospital. The award was earned by the hospital by demonstrating at least 85 percent compliance in specific quality achievement measures for 24 or more consecutive months.

The hospital almost made the American Heart Association Target Stroke Honor Roll for reducing time to less than 60 minutes between hospital arrival and tissue plasminogen activator treatment (tPA) for 50 percent or more of stroke patients. tPA is a medication sometimes given to patients within three hours of a stroke to dissolve blood clots in the brain. People who receive the drug within three hours of the onset of stroke symptoms are less likely to suffer severe disability.

Sharp Grossmont Hospital treats more than 800 patients with stroke and transient ischemic attack each year. For more on their Stroke Center visit sharp.com/grossmont/stroke-center.cfm. ■




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**Central Congregational Church
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Celebrating the restoration of the 1926 Pilcher organ and featuring Robert Plimpton.

The program will include a wide variety of classical and sacred organ music that will demonstrate the unique beauty of this instrument including compositions by Bach, Mendelssohn, Franck and Widor.

Plimpton has been resident organist of the First United Methodist Church of San Diego since August of 2004.

A native of Pennsylvania, Plimpton's career was established in the Philadelphia area. In 1983 he moved to San Diego to become organist of the First Presbyterian Church. In 1984 he was named San Diego Civic Organist, performing weekly recitals on the Spreckels outdoor pipe organ in Balboa Park, a position he held for over 16 years.

Plimpton's community involvement includes being adjunct professor of organ at San Diego State as well as performing with the San Diego Chamber Orchestra, San Diego Master Chorale, Grossmont Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony and many solo organ recitals. He has performed in Europe, Israel, and Taiwan and also for several American Guild of Organists conventions.

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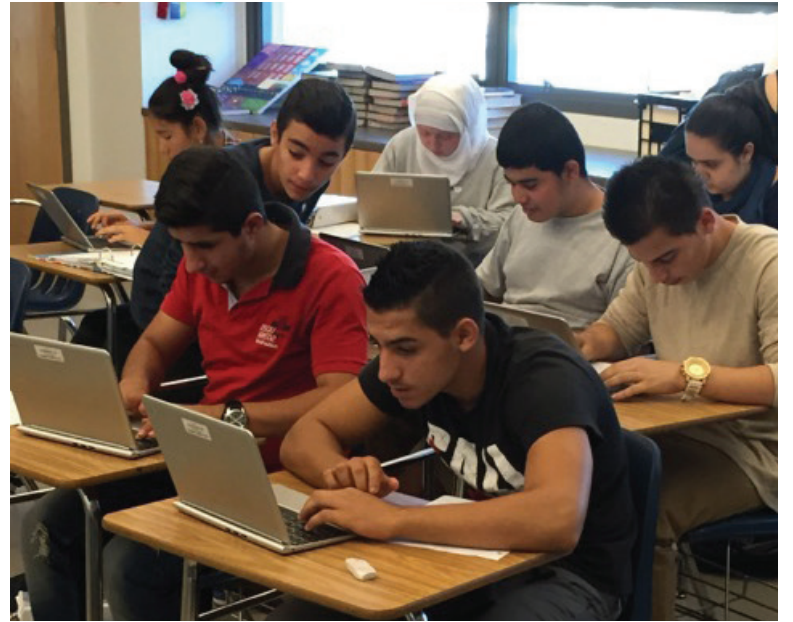
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Students in Grossmont High School's ELD class (Photo courtesy GHS Museum)



Foothiller Footsteps

English learners advance at Grossmont High School

Connie and Lynn
Baer

Grossmont High School offered its first English as a Second Language courses in fall 1991, when the district decentralized ESL from El Cajon Valley High School to each school site that had at least 30 ESL students.

Due to her ability to speak Spanish, English teacher Suzanne Geba was selected as the Grossmont class's teacher. One of her first class activities was a campus tour to familiarize the students with their new high school. As they toured the campus with a map with Spanish translations on it, Geba quickly realized that not all the students spoke Spanish. In fact, their diversity included Vietnamese, Arabic, Chaldean, Polish, Bulgarian and Chinese.

For the next 15 years as the program evolved, Geba was the guide and advocate for English language learners. Geba was one of the first educators who studied and passed the Language Development Specialist exam. Until her retirement in 2006, she taught all levels of ESL and was Grossmont's bilingual coordinator.

"I loved to see the students from different cultures bond and enjoy each other," Geba recalled. "For example, when the Macarena dance was popular, the Mexican girls would practice in my classroom at lunch and show the Middle Eastern girls the moves. Also, many of the Mexican students invited their European and Middle Eastern friends to their quinceañeras, where everyone socialized as one."

Today, there are 313 English learners at Grossmont.

"The purpose of ELD is to bridge the learning gap between language acquisition and content knowledge for students whose first language is not English,"

said English language development (ELD) coordinator Joann Philips.

This semester there are three levels of ELD: beginning, intermediate and advanced English. Each class pairs with a reading elective.

In addition, there are four sheltered history classes while math and science have traditionally sheltered students mainstreamed into their courses. Also, there are three transitional English courses that support mainstreamed English learner (EL) students, much like AVID classes. An adult Arabic-speaking EL aide, Rasha Kiryakos, offers support as well.

Upon graduation from Grossmont, most of the EL students go on to Grossmont College for post-secondary education. Several students who began at Grossmont in the ELD sheltered classes challenged themselves and were able to take Advanced Placement English as juniors or seniors.

Last year seniors Reem Alsafar and Ivana Salim graduated with honors after being in the U.S. fewer than five years!

Programs such as ELD provide the support students need to achieve their potential. For questions about the GHS ELD program, contact Joann Phillips at jphillips@guhsd.net. Grossmont High School's staff is constantly looking for ways to enable our students to succeed in high school and in life.

Visit the GHS Museum to see the wonders of our Foothiller past and present. GHS Museum's regular public hours are noon to 4 p.m. on Jan. 7 or by appointment.

—Connie and Lynn Baer are Foothiller alumni and coordinators of the GHS Museum. Contact the museum by phone at 619-668-6140, by email at ghsmuseum@guhsd.net or visit the website at foothillermuseum.com. ■

► **Knutson**, from page 1

of Wisconsin, Madison, for both a bachelor's degree and a law degree, which he earned in 1957. Having visited JoAnn's parents in San Diego County, the couple decided to move to here.

"We had some pretty bad snow storms [in Wisconsin]," JoAnn said. "If you shovel snow you know why you like to live in southern California."

Knutson worked as a trust officer at First National Bank until he passed the California bar exam. Gilbert Harelson, then La Mesa's city attorney, invited Knutson in 1961 to join his La Mesa law firm, Harelson Enright Levitt. As a result, Knutson became assistant city attorney. In 1970, Harelson was appointed Superior Court judge, and Knutson stepped up as city attorney. He remained in the position until 1993.

As city attorney, Knutson advised the City Council and city manager on legal matters and represented the city in negotiations with other parties. In 1988, for example, he helped the city negotiate an agreement to get a toxic gas manufacturer to leave the city. A couple years later, he helped the city fight a court ruling that banned the use of the Mt. Helix cross on city insignia.

"Like any successful attorney, he was smart, hardworking and had absolute trust and integrity," said Superior Court Judge John S. Meyer, who was an attorney

and partner in Knutson's firm for 26 years before joining the judicial bench. "He had a wonderful reputation. I don't know of anybody who didn't like him."

Knutson enjoyed political life. He managed the congressional campaigns of Clair Burgener, who represented the area in the California Assembly and the U.S. House of Representatives, in 1972, 1976 and 1980.

"Lee liked working in the back-

Knutson co-chaired the campaign for Proposition G, the \$247 million general obligation bond to support the expansion of Grossmont Hospital. He served stints on the advisory boards of the Automobile Club of Southern California, the San Diego Opera and the San Diego County Bar Association. He was president of the Foothills Bar Association, president of the local Estate Planning Council and secretary-treasurer of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Bar Association. He also served on the board of Langley Corp., an aircraft parts manufacturer.

Family members attribute his success to his love of people.

"He was just a people person," said daughter Beth Silvey. "I always joke around and say that if my dad hadn't been an attorney he would have been a good talk show host."

Knutson is survived by his wife, JoAnn; daughters Vicki Wallace and Sarah Buskirk of El Cajon; daughter Beth Silvey of Altadena, California; seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A public memorial service will be held Jan. 17, 2015, at 2 p.m. at First Lutheran Church, 867 South Lincoln Avenue, El Cajon. The family will gather for a private interment at Singing Hills Memorial Park before the afternoon memorial service.■

"He was just a people person. I always joke around and say that if my dad hadn't been an attorney he would have been a good talk show host."

—*Beth Silvey, daughter*

ground capacity of helping him out," JoAnn Knutson said.

Knutson also supported Pete Wilson's campaigns. He was a close friend of Edwin Meese, chief of staff to Gov. Ronald Reagan and later U.S. Attorney General. The two met as neighbors in a hillside neighborhood off Avocado Avenue.

"He was a model public servant and he represented La Mesa with distinction," said San Diego County Supervisor Dianne Jacob.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Anthony's Fish Grotto

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La Mesa is known as the "Jewel of the Hills" and Anthony's La Mesa is one of its crown jewels. Nestled on a small private lake, Anthony's ambiance is unlike any other in East County. Shooting fountains, lush grounds and abundant waterfowl makes Anthony's a peaceful oasis, a respite from the hustle and bustle of life.

Anthony's newly refreshed interior offers a comfortable and scenic view of the lake while dining. Outdoors Anthony's really shines! Check out the verdant and cheerful outdoor patio illuminated by candles and festive string lights, the expansive dog-friendly dining area with its own dog run and the lake-side cabana that's perfect for small parties. New is the Bocce Ball court; enjoy a spirited game before or after dinner. The bocce court has special drink and appetizer menus and can be reserved for private parties.

Celebrating its 53rd year in La Mesa, Anthony's is more than just a beautiful setting. Anthony's has won the Union Tribune best seafood award more times than all other seafood restaurants combined. With a variety of sustainable fresh catches, to Mama Ghios'

famous fish 'n chips, shrimp, sauces, chowders and dressings, Anthony's knows seafood and steaks too!

Anthony's menu continues to evolve, showcasing such trendy items as crispy Brussels sprouts, grilled flatbreads, and artisanal salads such as Mediterranean quinoa, and spinach, beet and goat cheese.

Lunch at Anthony's features some truly great sandwiches; squid steak on ciabatta, salmon Reuben on marble rye, grilled crab and cheese on sourdough and even a great burger served on an Hawaiian egg roll. Salads range from the new artisanal to traditional seafood salads featuring shrimp, crab and salmon.

Happy hour at Anthony's is always special with value priced appetizers, beer, wine and cocktails. Celebrate in the bar, outdoors alongside the lake, or at the bocce court. La Mesa's most scenic Happy hour is a must for visiting friends and family!

With its long history of great food, attentive service and unmatched setting, it's easy to understand why Anthony's is deemed East County's only true destination restaurant. It's time to rediscover Anthony's.■

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EDITORIAL

Better effort needed on local climate action plans

Jeffrey Meyer

The release of still another United Nations report on the catastrophic global impact of climate change comes on the heels of disarray in our community efforts to confront this crisis. With the recent court decision rejecting the San Diego County climate action plan and the ongoing development of a state-mandated plan by the city of San Diego, we have to ask ourselves if we have the will to do enough. Can we really ever be a carbon-neutral community?

Cities like La Mesa are joining the fray with their own climate plan, but with recent statements from La Mesa City Councilmember Kristine Alessio, it is hard to imagine any progress. As a SANDAG board member she seems more concerned with freeway off-ramps than public transportation, defending that board's almost unanimous decision to appeal a court ruling on their Regional Transportation Plan. The recent California appellate court ruling stated SANDAG had not adequately considered the environmental consequences of its 2050 plan.

The warning from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an urgent signal for our elected officials to not only meet state laws on reducing

greenhouse gas emissions but to explore higher standards. Mandated by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), under goals established by the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32), we are required to take minimum steps, but we have no ceiling on ideas and imagination.

Critics still chafe at the impact of A.B. 32 and portray it as a symbol of legislators running amok over the poor and middle class. Their reasoning wrongfully centers on increases at the gas pump of at least 15 cents a gallon and how that will also impact fuel-dependent businesses. But those living from paycheck to paycheck are doomed to suffer the most when climate change drives an economic collapse. Profit-driven efforts to mislead them have succeeded in creating an immobilized electorate.

The recent IPCC report says that climate change is set to inflict "severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts" on people and the planet unless carbon emissions are cut sharply and rapidly. This comes on the heels of a new government report released this year showing our nation will suffer \$150 billion in economic damages every year that we fail to rein in rising temperatures. Still another recent report found that climate change will cost the nation up to \$507 billion in property damages by 2100 if we fail to take action now.

The world and the U.S. political labyrinth suffer a debilitating inertia in dealing with climate change. Even with the new U.S.-China climate agreement, the United Nations will likely be unable to agree to an effective climate change agreement in Paris next year. This is why our best efforts to deal with climate change may be through communities, like those in La Mesa and throughout the San Diego region. We have a capacity for imagining and producing extraordinary opportunities without the excessive bureaucracy embraced by nation states.

There have already been innovative community models developed by Amsterdam, Buenos Aires, London, Vancouver and Melbourne. It has carried to Shenzhen, which is leading the world on urban transportation, and to Seoul, leading the world with green energy technology. This phenomena of change is creating new business opportunities and employment for these regions, and it can do so for San Diego as well.

County officials need to return to ground zero and explore better ideas and options for its climate action plan. The appellate court ruling said their plan lacked detailed deadlines and measures to ensure emissions are reduced. If not for the lawsuit brought by the Sierra Club against the county, we would be without a credible county climate action plan.

The City of San Diego is still in the adoption phase with its plan to meet mandatory targets but it needs to do more. It lacks a connection to neighboring cities and a corresponding synergy of purpose. Where are ground breaking ideas like virtual power plants? La Mesa just completed its public meetings on a proposed climate plan and it is hoped they will reach higher than SANDAG and the county, avoiding what seems to be a pattern of dodging California environmental law.

Merely meeting the reduction targets set by CEQA and AB 32 is not enough. When they were set eight years ago, there was less known about timelines for adequate action to avoid the projected collapse of economic and ecological systems. At this point we need to be creating a bolder move to carbon neutrality and not just meeting outdated state laws. This is a trailblazing opportunity for us and we should ask our elected representatives to model a new paradigm for communities to confront climate change and not just fulfill a state mandate.

—Jeffrey Meyer is a member of SanDiego350, an all-volunteer organization that is concerned about climate change and its very real effects on our livelihoods, well-being and the future for our children.■

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Mission Trails offers more educational programming in 2015

Audrey F. Baker



With the sparkling reflection of Cowles Mountain mirrored in its waters and a shoreline dotted with multiple bird species, Lake Murray is a serene and active habitat that showcases the variety of landscapes offered at Mission Trails Region Park.

Lording over this scenic gem is an extraordinary nester, the osprey. The envy of anglers, for its feet-first fishing technique, and naturalists, for its status as North America's only exclusively fish-eating raptor — the osprey's story is a tale of regeneration and renewal, benefiting from public awareness of environmental threats. Whether you visit the park under sunlight or sunset, we invite you to experience that same sense rebirth with your own excursion into nature.

Our MTRP Trail Guide walks are an opportunity to learn more about natural Southern California, with its unique landscapes, habitats, local history, plant and animal life. The walks are free, interesting, fact-filled, and geared to all ages and interests. Grab sturdy shoes, that comfortable hat, water bottle and sunscreen and hit the trail!

Morning walks are offered



The osprey, North America's only exclusively fish-eating raptor (Photos courtesy of Wendy Esterly and David Cooksy)



Campground Entry Station, Two Father Junipero Serra Trail, at the San Carlos-Santee border, gives a different perspective of the park and its diverse habitats.

These walks are offered from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month, and take in historic Old Mission Dam. We meet by the flag poles.

Wildlife Tracking reveals the

secret life of animals and brings insight into their survival techniques and habits. Tracking Team members assist in identifying and interpreting tracks, scat and habitats. Join us at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 3, in front of the Visitor Center for a two-hour tracking adventure.

Reading with the Ranger combines a captivating nature story with an embellishing activity and arts-and-crafts project based on the story theme. Ranger Heidi invites 5 – 7 year-olds to join her on Saturday, Jan. 3, 10 – 11 a.m.

and 8 – 10 year-olds to attend on Saturday, Jan. 17, 10 – 11 a.m. Reserve your spot at 619-668-3279 to meet Ranger Heidi in the Visitor Center Library.

Discovery Table: Critter Camouflage is hands-on science presented by MTRP Trail Guides. You'll explore the many forms of camouflage and the surprising variety of critters that depend upon it to enhance their lifestyles and thrive in nature. See you Saturday, Jan. 10, between 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. inside the Visitor Center.

Explore Bird Spring Canyon and Grasslands with expert MTRP birders Jeanne Raimond and Millie Basden for avian adventure amid sweeping grasslands and chiseled Spring Canyon to identify birds that thrive within each habitat. Bring binoculars and bird book if you've got 'em. See you Saturday, Jan. 17, 8 – 10 a.m. at East Fortuna Staging area lot off Hwy. 52 and Mast Blvd., Santee.

La Mesa Walk 'n Talk enjoins ambling along scenic shores with your MTRP Trail Guide with chatting up topics in nature. Lake Murray is a magnet for multiple animal and plant species, and is rich with engaging

See MTRP page 17 —————>

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The Sun Shines Sooner Standing tall in the 'grace years'

Pam
Crooks



"I'm looking forward to the 'grace' years!" I commented to my college roommate as I examined a few expression lines on my forehead in the mirror. I thought I was being funny. I guess I thought if I did get there, I would look exactly the same as I did then. And those expression lines were kinda cute.

Well, guess what? Forty-something years later, here I am at the entrance to the "grace years." Now when I look in the mirror there are laugh tracks and expression lines all over the place.

Now that I'm eligible for Social Security, I'm fascinated by that image and the transformation that has taken place over the decades.

Several women I know have chosen to assist Mother Nature (or thwart her), with the help of a plastic surgeon. Nothing wrong with that, but it's just not for me. But who doesn't want to look their best as they age?

So I began looking at older women I admire with a new eye — especially those who show their aging face proudly. And I noticed something I hadn't before. They aren't all gorgeous, but because they stand tall, move gracefully and lift their gaze, they are very attractive. I decided to make a real effort at improving my posture.

This is no simple matter. I've been working for a number of months now to correct six decades of slouchy habits, develop a stronger core to support my spine and lengthen tight muscles and ligaments. With the help of some wonderful women at Pilates Mind and Body in La Mesa, I'm hopeful.

Owner Rebecca Pagdan, a clas-

sically trained Pilates instructor, is also a licensed physical therapist who assures me improving posture is still possible at my age. Not easy, but I'm making it my New Year's resolution to keep trying.

Are you also resolved to improve your fitness, strength or posture in 2015? There is no shortage of resources to help you in the La Mesa area. Many privately owned Pilates, yoga and fitness studios offer reasonably priced programs, and inexpensive classes are also available through the East County YMCA, the Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Center, the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center, Grossmont Adult School and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District's Continuing Education programs.

In fact, the La Mesa Community Services Department is offering an eight-week series of Pilates mat classes for adults this spring that average less than \$15 a week. Pilates not your thing? They also offer cardio classes, yoga and "boot camp" fitness courses to name a few. But hurry to sign up; all of these less expensive options fill up early!

Someone commented recently that I appeared taller than they remembered. I hope that means I'm making progress. I'm truly glad to be approaching the "grace years." I've had a rich and fulfilling life so far, and look forward to the next phase. But I want to do it with my back straight and head held high.

Find all the great fitness programs offered by the city of La Mesa at cityoflamesa.com/classes (click on "Spring 2015 Rec Guide" and scroll through their booklet).

—Pam Crooks is the founding editor of La Mesa Courier and lives in Mt. Helix. You can reach her by email at SunShinesSooner@gmail.com.

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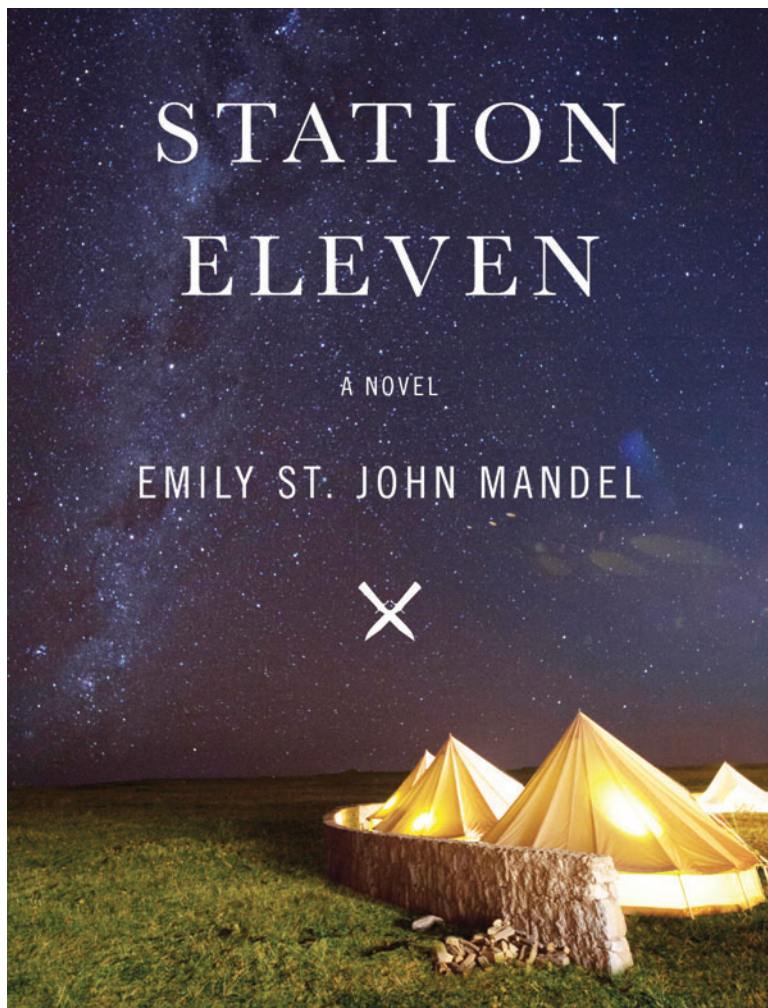
La Mesa Reads What to read in 2015

Heather
Pisani-Kristi

The needles have barely fallen off the Christmas tree, and avid readers are already perusing lists of the best books of the year. Readers of literary fiction and nonfiction seek NPR's staff picks; readers in book clubs are prepping with lists from Time Magazine and Goodreads. But if you want the story most likely to be produced by Netflix, you might try National Book Award runner-up (and Entertainment Weekly's Best Book of the Year) "Station Eleven" by Emily St. John Mandel, a dystopian tale of survival and Shakespeare.

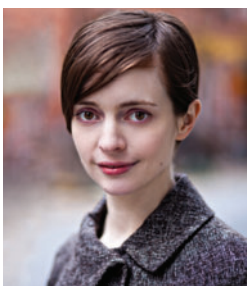
A Toronto performance of "King Lear" ends abruptly when the beloved lead actor collapses and dies of a heart attack. This is obviously traumatic for the cast and audience, but the major unraveling event is a pandemic influenza that spreads across North America within hours of the play's end, eventually reducing the planet's population by 90 percent. Over fifteen years, the novel's characters move from the world as we know it to a post-apocalyptic landscape lacking agribusiness, air travel and insulin. A fragment of the original "King Lear" cast survives as the Symphony, itinerant Shakespeareans who preserve music and literature through free performances. Other survivors occupy the local airport, plundering the infrastructure to create gardens, homes and the Museum of Civilization. My favorite character is Jeevan Chaudhary, a tightly wound paparazzi-turned-paramedic, whose friend in the local emergency room warns him to isolate himself from others until the flu burns itself out. Jeevan's life before the pandemic is tense and unfulfilling, but by losing everything, he finds a surprising peace in the new world. I'm hoping St. John Mandel decides to write a sequel featuring her memorable survivors. Place your request for this popular novel online at sdcl.org.

If you are haunted by the Ghost



(Courtesy Emily St. John Mandel)

of Christmas Past and found yourself unable to enjoy the holidays, you may benefit from the free mindfulness classes offered at the library this winter. Mark Kennedy, a licensed clinical social worker, will provide two series of classes to teach the art of being in the here-and-now. Participants will understand the basic concepts of mindfulness and will be introduced to a variety of mindful awareness practices (sitting, walking, or eating meditation) to use in managing feelings of anxiety or depression. The first series will be held on Tuesdays — Jan. 13, Jan. 27 and Feb. 10 — from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Enrollment is limited to 10 students, and participants are asked to commit to all three classes in the series. Sign up by calling the library at 619-469-2151.



Emily St. John Mandel

News from our Friends

Is 2015 the year you join the Friends of La Mesa Library? The Friends purchase special book and movie collections for La Mesa Library and contribute to furnishings for the building. The Friends also fund enrichment activities such as preschool yoga, drawing classes for adults, and Coffee and Books. A family membership is \$10, and every member receives 10 percent off purchases at the Friends of La Mesa Library bookstore. If you have enjoyed a special summer reading event, a best-selling novel, or an educational toy in the children's area, you've experienced the Friends at work. Become a member! Membership forms are available in the library lobby and at friendsoflamesalibrary.org/membership.

—Heather Pisani-Kristi is librarian at the La Mesa branch of the San Diego County Library. Call the library at 619-469-2151 or visit 8074 Allison Ave. ■

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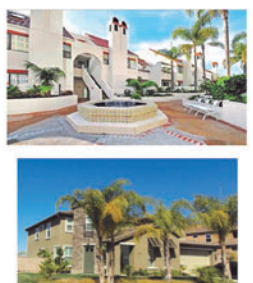
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SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORK






Fred Campbell from Project for Ondrea receives a certificate from Sen. Joel Anderson's representative, Zahara Almosawi. (Courtesy Joel Anderson's office)

La Mesa celebrates community at Christmas in the Village

Gillian Kik

There is one time of the year when La Mesa Boulevard feels like a winter wonderland.

Christmas in the Village is an event organized by the La Mesa Village Merchants Association and takes place every December on La Mesa Boulevard. This year, on Dec. 12 and 13, local organizations and charities gathered to embrace the holiday cheer with friends and families in La Mesa.

John Vigil, executive director of the La Mesa Village Merchants Association, made sure everyone had a joyful and happy time at the parade despite the weather delay. The two-day event continued on Saturday to give an opportunity to those who could not participate on Friday.

Christmas in the Village has become a family tradition for many including Michael Peterson, whose family has been attending Christmas in the Village for nearly 11 years.

"Ever since we started having kids, we would bring them down to [Christmas in the Village] and look around at the shops and watch the parade," Peterson said.

This event also highlights outstanding local volunteer organizations that are working hard in our community. La Mesa's state Sen. Joel Anderson provided Senate certificates of recognition to the volunteers of Project for Ondrea, who participated in the parade this year, for their effort to help Ondrea Hamlett, an 18-year-old who has dealt with serious injuries since she was struck by a car in December 2011. Ondrea is in great need of a wheelchair-accessible van, and

the Project for Ondrea team has dedicated time and energy to share her story with the public to find people who can help.

"The La Mesa Village Merchants Association did a fantastic job with Christmas in the Village," Anderson said. "I am touched by Ondrea's story, and I am happy to be part of this great cause. Volunteers who share their time and talent to help those in need are heroes that make our community a better place and they deserve to be recognized. John Vigil and his team did a great job with organizing this wonderful family-friendly event."

Watching the dancers, bagpipe players, and local Girl Scout groups on the side, the laughter and joyful conversations between friends and families in La Mesa continued on and reminded everyone of what makes La Mesa special.

—Gillian Kik, a student at Grossmont Middle College High School, is a legislative intern for Sen. Joel Anderson. ■

Volunteers who share their time and talent to help those in need are heroes that make our community a better place and they deserve to be recognized.

—Joel Anderson

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Gen-X in La Mesa

A new year's little promises

Genevieve Suzuki



Every year I make a few New Year's resolutions I break by Valentine's Day.

Last year I promised to stop cussing, but bad drivers deprived me of keeping that promise. (Hey, at least I still have yet to swear in front of my 5-year-old.)

I also vowed to eat better, but heeding the seductive calls of donuts and chocolate was far too tempting.

Daily exercise was another promise broken. (Unless you count walking fast to random destinations, which I do all of the time, thanks to another failed resolution to be five minutes early to every destination.)

This year, I have decided to make five vows I can keep — little promises not so easily broken:

No Kardashian news. I vow to ignore the constant influx of a naked Kim Kardashian, pregnant Kourtney Kardashian and newly single Khloe Kardashian. The Jenner clan are included in this boycott. In their stead, I intend to follow real newsmakers, such as the brave, young Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai, whose story deserves far more clicks and likes than the Kardashians and Jenners combined.

No more impulsive grocery store buys. Seriously. Do we really need another Archie comic in the bathroom? OK, bad example, because yes, we always need a new Archie comic in the bathroom.

What I'm talking about are the myriad of random items placed in the shopping cart. Thing like a holiday plate bearing a warning on the bottom of it that it is for decorative purposes only and not to serve food, despite the fact that most people in the developed world use plates to serve food. Or that M&M guy with a fan that only works if you place the fan so close to your face it



Malala Yousafzai (Courtesy Flickr user statsministerenskontor via Creative Commons license)

whacks your nose.

No more asking Siri to sing. If you haven't been bored enough to do this, try it. You will get a mildly irritated Siri to recite a few lyrics to "If I Only Had a Brain." It's a time suck for min-

purchase a special tool to beat it, and I just can't spend \$4.99 on a "free" game. (Not when I could be buying a new Archie comic instead.)

Stop letting my child choose Netflix shows for me at night.

My daughter has a new obsession: Anything gross, creepy or slimy on a nature show. We've watched honey badgers attack beehives, swarms of locusts fly with purpose and the Smithsonian special, "Titanoboa: Monster Snake." Thanks to her selections — she falls asleep after 10 minutes — I've dreamed of nasty pet badgers, plagues of biblical proportions and, of course, the Titanoboa.

No more! From now on, it's puppies, kittens and rainbows before bedtime. (Hopefully, the monster snake will stay away from my cute, cuddly new friends.)

—Genevieve A. Suzuki lives in La Mesa and is an editor emeritus of this newspaper. She practices family law and can be reached through her website, sdlawyer-suzuki.com.

Last year I promised to stop cussing, but bad drivers deprived me of keeping that promise. (Hey, at least I still have yet to swear in front of my 5-year-old.)

utes that may be better used playing Candy Crush, speaking of which...

Uninstall Candy Crush and all related game apps on the smartphone. After countless requests on Facebook from dear friends, I finally gave in toward the end of 2014 and installed Candy Crush on my phone. I have since discovered I hate this game, particularly because I've reached a level that practically requires I

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The bizarre unity of the SANDAG board

Andrew
Keatts
Voice of San Diego



SANDAG plans regional transportation projects in La Mesa and beyond. (Photo by Jeremy Ogul)

After a second court earlier this month ruled SANDAG's long-term transportation plan violated state requirements to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the regional planning agency's board voted overwhelmingly to go for one more appeal.

The board is made up of elected officials from all over the county. When the vote showed Councilman Todd Gloria was among those who favored an appeal, it got a lot of people wondering: Why is the guy who — through force of will — pushed the city of San Diego to pursue an aggressive plan to cut emissions siding with SANDAG after two courts said its plan would actually increase emissions by 2050?

Gloria said he wasn't trying to defend SANDAG, just seeking clarity on state greenhouse gas reduction requirements. A spokeswoman also said he had planned to vote against an appeal when he went into the closed-session meeting, until legal counsel explained the benefits of an appeal.

Nonetheless, it highlights a long-running SANDAG dynamic: The politicians on its board don't pursue policy changes there the way they do at city hall.

Art Madrid, formerly La Mesa's mayor for nearly 25 years and

a longtime SANDAG board member, said there's always been a go-along-to-get-along mentality in the agency.

"If someone speaks out, they're ostracized," he said.

He and other past and current board members offered a handful of explanations for the board's reluctance to use its position to further major policy objectives.

Money

SANDAG has a gigantic budget. At \$1.2 billion — mostly for transportation and large capital projects — it's basically the same size as San Diego's. On one hand, that makes the question all the more pressing. On the other, it could help explain why directors don't want to make noise.

"SANDAG distributes lots of money and makes lots of deci-

sions," said former San Diego City Councilwoman Donna Frye, who served on a SANDAG subcommittee. "The board decides how funds are going to be spent and who is going to get them. I suspect if one were to make too much of a fuss, they would find themselves in a difficult situation."

That's absolutely the perception among board members, Madrid said.

"It's not that blatant, but it's the undercurrent there, quite frankly," he said.

It's not that an entire city could get closed out of SANDAG's funds for making a fuss, Madrid said. It's more subtle.

Cities compete for SANDAG grants. If two projects are equally deserving, there's concern money will go to the city that's been less disruptive.

Ron Morrison, National City mayor and who's on the board and previously served as chair, said there was a time when decisions were made that way, but now all decisions are made based on distinct criteria, so there's less room for political retribution.

He's been plenty vocal at times, he said, sometimes voting against the wishes of other

South Bay cities that expect his support, but has never felt it came at a cost to National City.

"If there is that perception, I think it's one not necessarily based on knowledge, on being perceived," he said.

But Madrid said even the criteria-based approach leaves room for subjective decisions.

"There are standards you have to meet, obviously, but it's like a beauty contest: You have three or four ladies walk by, and each judge evaluates each person on talent or smile or hair length, and those are things that take place no matter what the standards are," Madrid said.

Resources and Attention

Another explanation is that directors don't have the capacity to challenge what SANDAG staff says is the best option, or suggest another course.

The basic case is that SANDAG staff, and especially its executive director, Gary Gallegos, runs SANDAG, not its board of directors.

"Most of them are part-time city (council members) and mayors," said Steve Erie, a professor of political science at UCSD. "It's a staff-driven agency, particularly with Gallegos, who is a master politician."

"Staff has tremendous influence on decisions," Madrid said. "The decisions are technical and controversial, and small cities don't have resources or staff to do research. The bigger cities have staff, but they're often working on city issues. But the rest of us, we rely on our own experience."

To Erie, though, SANDAG and large planning agencies like it just aren't set up to be a place for politicians to pursue a political agenda. He points to SCAG — the Southern California Association of Governments, a similar organization that's even larger, representing over 180 cities from Ventura to Imperial counties — which also has never been used that way.

"It's staff-driven, and really it's a forum for smaller cities to have a voice, and to have an organization to build regional consensus on things like border projects and freeways that require state and federal funding, where it's beneficial to have a collective voice," he said.

Gloria spokesperson Katie Keach said that major SANDAG hearings, like its budget review, usually have only a few public speakers and are decided in a single meeting.

"SANDAG enjoys not being on the radar," she said.

That's beginning to change, she said, as activist organizations increasingly recognize the power it wields. But she said the SANDAG staff briefings Gloria receives on an item are always much more direct and understandable than the supporting materials put to the public ahead of a meeting.

"The reports seem like they're made complicated to deter interest," she said.

The one big exception to the board's historic hesitance to insert itself in SANDAG's operations was former Mayor Bob Filner.

It was remarkable, multiple people said, when Filner showed up for his first meeting. Early on, the board had to approve hiring outside counsel for a legal issue. Filner demanded to know how much the organization paid for additional lawyers, and wanted to know why the board's own lawyers couldn't handle it.

Staff didn't have the answers.

"I heard the gavel more that day than in the rest of the time I've been on the board," said Morrison, who considers Filner a friend after decades working with him. "He spoke over people, he made demands, he was the only one who talked. It was disruptive, but that was Bob's style."

Madrid said it seemed SANDAG didn't know how to react to that sort of pushback.

"The only guy who challenged everything was Filner," Madrid said. "That had never been done before, and my sense is we all could have, but his style is acerbic and confrontational. That's his personality. That pissed off people and it would rally people against him, but he was asking legitimate questions."

Yet, no one could point to a political price paid by the city of San Diego as a result of Filner's confrontations.

—I'm Andrew Keatts, a reporter for Voice of San Diego. Please contact me if you'd like at andrew.keatts@voiceofsandiego.org or 619-325-0529.■

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► Beer, from page 1

they are now serving four different beers, two of which are also available on nitro taps. I recommend the Citra Pale Ale, which is refreshing with a crisp hoppiness, or their Chocolate Stout on nitro for a creamy dark treat.

Co-founder Clint Stromberg says the response for the brewery — La Mesa's first — has been great, with a steady stream of visitors, a private event already under their belt and food options being vetted. When I visited 15 days into their illustrious start, Stromberg noted the many customers patronizing the taco station set up for the evening.

The grounds of Bolt themselves are worth a mention. On one end, beer brews in vats inside a Quonset hut. On the other end, the taps and bar area are built into a converted shipping container. The unique set up is an homage to the industrial roots of the area surrounding the brewery. The landscaped patio between the two landmarks is clean and attractive with a few plants and a natural flow for drinkers to make their way from the serving area to a seat.

At least 50 drinkers made use of the various seating options, all outdoor, on the late Friday evening I visited. The clientele included groups of 30-somethings, families with children and solo beer drinkers who welcomed a taco plate pairing. The long wooden tables encouraged groups to mesh together and the buzz of conversation made it clear that folks were making friends.

As they find their footing, Bolt's owners plan to include a food option six nights a week with a regular rotation of vendors so visitors will know what to expect. The brewery has a strong social media presence, which they started before opening, and their Facebook page (facebook.com/boltbrewery) is updated daily.

While Bolt is the only La Mesa brewery at the moment, they won't be lonely for long. Rumors of several other brewery projects have swirled, and at least one seems to be on its way.

The shopping center at Fletcher Parkway and Dallas Street — which currently includes Souplantation, Michaels, the recently closed Parkway Bar and other businesses — will become home to Depot Springs Beer Company by fall 2015 if everything goes according to the owners' plans. Their website (depotsspringsbeerco.com) shows renderings of a 20,000-square-foot property to include a brewery, restaurant and a courtyard for live entertainment. The restaurant will serve Depot Springs' own brews as well as other local favorites, according to news reports.

Another addition that will tap into the market of beer lovers in La Mesa (and beyond) a bit sooner is Craft Kitchen at 4253 Palm Ave. The beer-centric restaurant is slated to open in mid- to late-January with 30 taps and a food menu to match the brews. Owners Randy and Dena Shamoo also own Palm Springs Liquor just a block away. The store was opened by Randy's family 22 years ago and recently has gained a reputation for its diverse and robust selection of both local and national craft beers.

"[At Craft Kitchen] we will definitely have a strong San Diego presence on our line with beers from our local brewers such as Bolt, El Cajon and Jamul Brewing (and more)," said owner Dena Shamoo, who will also manage the restaurant. "With both my husband and I being born and raised in San Diego, it's important to us that we support our fellow San Diegans both at Palm Springs Liquor and Craft Kitchen."

Dena gave me a tour of what will become a restaurant with walk-up counter for food and seating to accommodate just shy of 50 people. The building was a long-standing 7-Eleven store, but the only clue that remains of that are glass doors that now look into a large walk-in refrigerator. The taps, lines and kitchen appliances are all coming together. Flat screens will soon be mounted above the bar for game watching. "Hopefully in time for a Super Bowl party," Dena said.

The menu in the works will

feature items meant to pair well with beer. A chef has been hired to design the offerings from fresh ingredients with sandwiches, flatbread pizza, tacos and more in the works. Dena said they plan to serve breakfast, lunch and dinner.

With Dena at the helm of the restaurant project, husband Randy



Inside the forthcoming Craft Kitchen (Photo by Jen Van Tieghem)

will split his time between the new spot and the liquor store. Dena says Palm Springs Liquor has been a destination for many who visit San Diego for the beer and want to take home their favorites.

"We have definitely noticed the boom in the last five years, I would say. We have a ton of locals who come in to pick up their favorites and try the new, seasonal items,

and then we have the tourists who come in with a list of beers they've heard of and are looking to find," Dena said. "People will browse the store for 30 minutes to an hour, searching the beers on their smartphones, reading reviews. The craft beer boom has been a neat and interesting thing to be a part of."

Dena says they plan to host special events at the restaurant as well including "meet the brewer" nights and "keep the glass" tastings.

Hoffer's, at 8282 La Mesa Blvd., is another craft beer spot that utilizes themed special events and enjoys business from loyal locals. Bartenders there tapped several Christmas-themed brews on the weekend preceding the holiday. The Lost Abbey's Merry Taj and a bourbon barrel-aged version of Port Brewing's Santa's Little Helper topped the most popular items served, according to bartender Carl Tickner.

Hoffer's manager Ryan Bartman said they schedule special beer events about once a month. In early February they plan to have a night featuring barrel-aged beers, which have been successful in the past. A visit to Hoffer's, which also specializes in cigars, will put one alongside many regular, but the bar gets its fair share of destination

drinkers as well. Through the website hofferscigar.com, thirsty folks can check a frequently updated tap list before making the trek.

While these aforementioned businesses specialize in beer, another trend in La Mesa are local-driven beer lists in typical bars and restaurants. Where standard domestics once reigned, tap lists have grown to include craft beers as a whole and especially San Diego's finest. The newly opened The Hills (8758 La Mesa Blvd.), BO-Beau Kitchen and Garden (8384 La Mesa Blvd.) in the downtown village area, and Riviera Supper Club (7777 University Ave.) are just a few destinations that cater as much to drinkers as they do foodies.

With Craft Kitchen's impending arrival, Bolt Brewery off to a strong start and a laundry list of bars and restaurants tapping local craft brews, it seems La Mesa has caught up to the herd. While brewery tours and tourists have revered North County's and central San Diego's offerings up until now, it's not hard to imagine La Mesa being next on the list for beer-loving travelers.

—Contact Jen Van Tieghem at Jen@sdenn.com.■

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Davin Widgerow



Guy McWhirter

La Mesa Dems welcome Sierra Club executive and new councilmember

Linda
Armacost



La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club — representing members from San Carlos, Del Cerro, Allied Gardens, La Mesa, College area, Mt. Helix and other surrounding communities — will have Davin Widgerow, environmental lawyer and activist, keynote its Jan. 7 meeting.

Though not a longtime San Diego resident, Widgerow nonetheless represents the new wave of nature lovers and conservationists, who expertly blend policy and politics, volunteerism with occupational advocacy. Not long after moving to San Diego to work with a local environmental law firm, Widgerow joined the local chapter of the Sierra Club. He was soon appointed to join the new executive steering committee and was recently elected chair of the club's political committee.

Though a native South African, Widgerow has fallen in love with U.S. national parks and forests. Between his undergraduate years at U.C. Berkeley, law school at the University of Wisconsin - Madison and subsequent years in Southern California, he's traversed the country's most scenic and breathtaking monuments and landmarks. In San Diego, he has explored many of our

county's hiking trails using Jerry Schad's hiking bible, "Afoot and Afield: San Diego County." He will address his commitment to establishing dynamic networks of activists and elected officials to realize our shared visions for a beautiful, sustainable county. Davin has been inspired by the works of John Muir, Edward Abbey, Theodore Roosevelt and David Brower, and he is passionate about devoting his talents, energies and law career to protecting the Earth.

Also attending our January meeting will be newly elected La Mesa City Councilmember Guy McWhirter. A longtime city resident and businessman, Guy will address the club about his personal goals and reflections and is eager to hear our input into the direction the city should be taking. If you are a La Mesa resident, this is your chance to direct some personal recommendations to the newly sworn-in Councilmember McWhirter.

We were fortunate at our December meeting to hear the eloquent and learned professor Marjorie Cohn and her in-depth review of her latest book about the use of unmanned aircraft (drones) in targeted killings and intelligence gathering. Many of us walked away with a new outlook on our country's growing reliance on such clandestine weapons in war and peacetime.

We also had the pleasure of

hearing the wonderful flamenco guitarist Anthony Garcia play during our holiday feast, and he was spectacular as expected. Everyone should have the experience of listening to Garcia's wonderful musical talents.

Over 100 of our members partook in the robust holiday potluck at La Mesa Community Center, with more than enough roast turkey, ham and all the trimmings for an army. Many thanks to all the great board members and club members that helped out and/or brought food to share — and to vice president of membership Jane Inglesse for her spectacular decorations and centerpieces that a few lucky members got to take home.

What made the evening even more special were the boxes and boxes of food and nonperishables that were donated by our membership to our holiday giving partner, the St. Vincent De Paul Society Food Bank at Santa Sophia Catholic Church in Casa de Oro. What a great outpouring of generosity to those less fortunate, especially at this time of the year. Hunger takes no holiday. Please visit LaMesaFoothillsDemocraticClub.com or our Facebook page for more information about future and past events.

—Linda Armacost is president of the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club.■

John Coleman to address Navajo Canyon Republican Women

Judy
McCarty



NCRWF members are eager to start off the new year and are pleased to have John Coleman, meteorologist and co-founder of The Weather Channel, seen

on Fox News and formerly on KUSI, as their featured speaker at their Jan. 13, 2015, meeting at The Brigantine Restaurant in La Mesa. Check-in time begins at 10:30 a.m. for the 11 a.m. meeting; lunch is served at noon with Mr. Coleman following at 12:30 p.m.

Cost is \$20 and reservations are required. RSVP (with luncheon on the subject line) to NCRWF99@gmail.com or call Glenda at 619-284-9958.

Downtown Republican Women, our satellite club, will welcome our newly elected 6th District San Diego City Councilmember Chris Cate and our longtime friend, 7th

District City Councilmember Scott Sherman to share their thoughts on the direction of the new City Council. The Jan. 15, 2015, meeting is at 5:50 p.m. at The Athens Market, located on the corner of First and F streets Downtown. Cost is \$15 for the amazing buffet and no-host bar. Downtown Republican Women



John Coleman

meet on the third Thursday of every other month in a relaxed, after-work setting, and all Republicans are welcome. RSVP to dmcrsd@gmail.com.

For more information, visit navajocanyonrnf.org.

—Judy McCarty is the publicity chairman of the Navajo Canyon Republican Women Federated.■



What's Cooking with Julie

Light winter salad



(Courtesy Ruth Hartnup / Flickr via Creative Commons)

Julie Ann White

After all of the rich food over the past month, dig into this refreshing, light salad for a change. Don't be afraid of the fennel. This sweet and crunchy herb is worth a try..

Ingredients:

4-5 cups washed and torn bibb or romaine lettuce
1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced (cut off fronds, root and outer leaves)
1/2 red onion, sliced very thin
1 orange, peeled and segmented
1/2 cup pomegranate seeds*
4 tablespoon of olive oil
1 tablespoon of honey Dijon mustard
2 tablespoon balsamic vin-

egar (red wine vinegar can be substituted)

Pinch of salt and pinch of pepper

* Pomegranate seeds are conveniently sold in small cartons at most grocery stores. You can also cut a fresh whole pomegranate in half and tap the uncut side with a wooden spoon over a bowl to catch the little garnet jewels of seeds.

Directions:

Toss the vegetables and fruit in a salad bowl. Whisk the oil, vinegar, mustard and spices in a small bowl and drizzle over the salad. Serve immediately.■

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PUZZLES | ANSWERS ON PAGE 17

CROSSWORD

Odds On

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60						61					62		

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Facial feature
5 Rail
9 Mother or son leader
13 Airline
14 Scrap
15 Perry's creator
16 Manager's philosophy
19 Turf
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21 Racketman Rod
22 Reverse knit
23 Boring tools
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28 An Osmond
29 Pierre's friend
30 Leveret's coat
31 Half a drum?
34 "... humble, there's
38 Crooked letter
39 Delivered
40 ISU site
41 Evert
42 Provides provender
44 Igneous rocks
47 Too
48 Ad ____ *per aspera*
49 Algerian port

- 50 Sault ____ Marie
53 Circus billing
57 Leander's love
58 Kefauver, of note
59 Animal shelter
60 Seabirds
61 Trotsky or Uris
62 Portal

DOWN

- 1 Word
2 Potpourri
3 Bar material?
4 Golfer Ernie
5 Boat with a crew
6 Heraldic band
7 Early auto
8 Classified items
9 PBS thoroughfare
10 Treasure's companion
11 Gantry
12 Jury makeup?
14 Fashionable
17 Singular of opera
18 Lily Maid of Astolat
22 Rind
23 Type of transit
24 Composer Satie
25 Country way

- 27 Tout's output
28 Blokes
30 Denim garments
31 Volume
32 Hebrew measure
33 McGee's closet, e.g.
35 Building stone
36 Tumbrel
37 Headwear
41 Shiploads
42 Elegance
43 Family member
44 Scrub in the tub
45 Son of Jacob
46 Opposite of stem
47 Clean feathers
49 Bismarck
50 Go away!
51 Oz canine
52 Pitcher
54 Lamprey
55 Enzyme suffix
56 Advanced deg.

SUDOKU

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block. Use logic and process elimination to solve the puzzle.

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Ann
Eliopulos

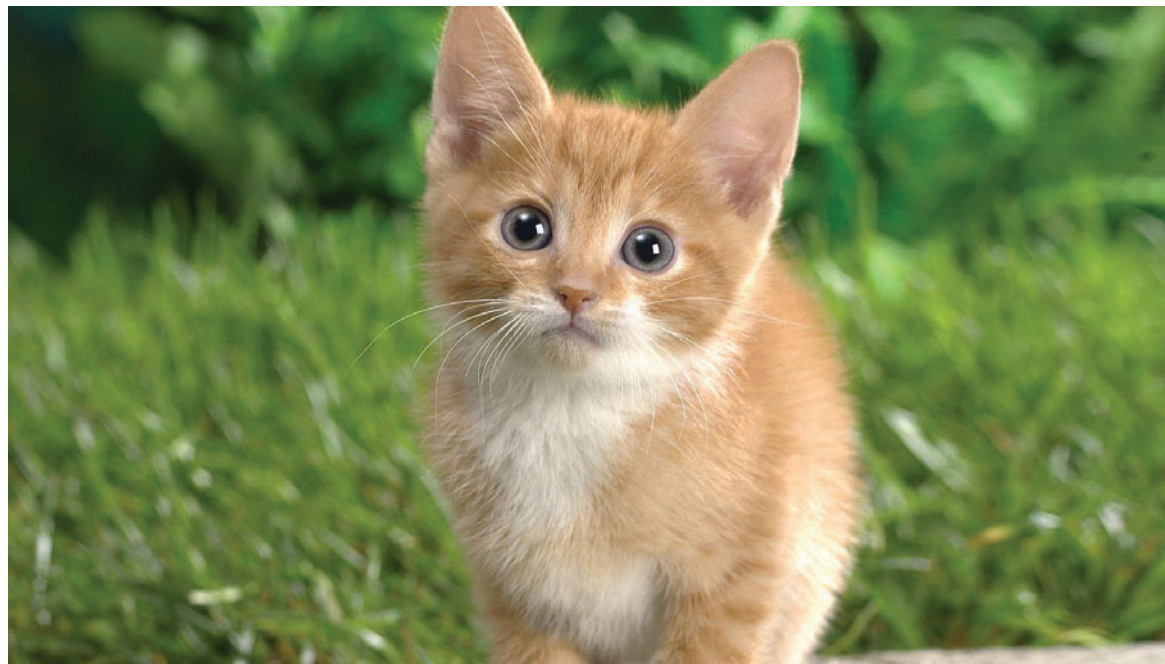


Americans love their pets. In 2013, we spent \$56 billion on them — more than we spent on carbonated soft drinks, but still less than we spent on beer. Of that \$56 billion, almost \$15 billion was spent on veterinary care, which means food, clothes, toys, bedding, training, grooming, boarding and live animal purchases made up the remaining amount.

Even if your dog or cat is not getting designer bedding, human-grade food and rhinestone-studded apparel, you can plan on spending at least \$600 a year for each pet, and that is with only with the most basic veterinary care being provided. Once you factor in dental work, illness or emergencies, the cost can increase into the thousands.

While our economy is improving, unexpected veterinary expenses can prove challenging at all levels. It is the rare dog or cat that will not need yearly dental cleanings consistently after the age of 3 or 4, and they will likely have an illness or two along the way, too. Like us, as they age, they will probably need more veterinary care to maintain a good quality of life.

Many people do not consider the possibility of genetic problems, trauma, cancer, allergies, heart conditions or other diseases, and



(ThinkStock Photos)

are faced with difficult and sometimes painful decisions when they occur. No one — including your veterinarian — ever wants to be in the position of not being able to help a sick animal because of money.

So what's a pet owner to do when their companion gets sick and the estimate is more than you can afford? Well, once you are in that situation, the options are limited unless you have someone who can help, or a credit rating that will get you approved for one of the medical credit card options. The caveat is that you must have good credit or you will be denied, which can seem like a Catch-22 if

finances are already a problem. And, if you can't pay it back within the interest-free time period, the interest alone is staggering.

The pet insurance industry has taken off in response to our love for our pets and desire to keep them healthy and here for as long as possible. In California alone, it is projected that the amount spent on pet insurance will reach \$750 million by 2015. Is it worth it? Do you get your money's worth? Well, it depends on what company you choose and what you are hoping to get out of it.

Many people opt for plans that focus on wellness issues, such as vaccines, yearly exams and dental

cleanings. While it is true that a thorough dental cleaning and evaluation is typically at least \$500 – 600, I personally don't think that this is a great reason to get pet insurance. Instead, I recommend factoring that into yearly expenses and budgeting for it. Plans that focus on the unexpected and pay out well when those occur are often worth the yearly cost because one accident or serious illness can break the bank, even for those who set money aside.

Pet insurance can be a scary proposition because it has been a largely unregulated industry, with misleading and confusing policies that result in unexpected veterinary expenses, denied claims and policy cancellations after payout. It's no wonder that many pet owners have misgivings about whether or not to purchase pet insurance. I have been skeptical myself until the past few years, when I have seen good reimbursements and animals getting care that may not have been able to otherwise. Still, just as with our own health insurance, not all companies have great policies.

We are lucky to live in California, the first state to pass

pet insurance disclosure legislation, AB 2056. The law will go into effect July 2015. This legislation requires insurers to clearly explain their policies to pet owners. Annual coverage limits and disqualifying pre-existing conditions must be delineated. Limitations involving coinsurance, waiting periods, deductibles and annual or lifetime policy limits must also be made clear. All companies will be required to provide a 30-day trial period to try out their insurance.

Anticipating this legislation, some companies have already begun providing 30-day trial periods. At our hospital, we strongly encourage people to try this. Often there is no charge from the companies offering this and no penalty for opting out after 30 days.

I recently talked a friend of mine into trying the policy we offer here, and within a few months, her new puppy got into some medication and became limp and almost unresponsive. Finances were a huge concern for her, but because she had insurance, she felt the freedom to approve everything

that was recommended because she knew she could afford it under her policy. The puppy recovered, and she let me know that the policy paid for itself in one visit.

Imagine going to the veterinarian and not worrying about cost because there is a copay or percentage

that will be covered. As a veterinarian and animal lover, I want to help every animal that crosses my path. Though I was more than a naysayer on the topic of pet insurance, I now believe that the companies who walk the walk will pave the way for every pet to get the care they deserve. And while I won't put it in print, I'd be happy to tell you the company I stand behind if you shoot me an email.

—Ann Eliopulos is a veterinarian at Bodhi Animal Hospital. Contact her at aeliopulos@bodhisd.com.

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► MTRP, from page 7

land and seascapes. Join us 9 – 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 20, at the boat docks at 5540 Kiowa Drive, La Mesa.

Star Party Marvels is your invitation for solar exploration with MTRP Resident Star Gazer George Varga. George tells us under a near-first quarter and waxy moon, he'll scan the skies for Pleiades (Seven Sisters), Double Cluster in Perseus, Andromeda galaxy (M31) and her companion (M32), and the Orion Nebula. We observe from 5 – 8 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 24. (Rain/cloud cover cancel.) Meet us at the far end of the Kumeyaay Campground Day Use Parking Lot.

Family Discovery Walk, our essential "family time" experience, connects your little ones to nature. This interactive outing for parents and their children focuses on childhood enrichment and fun along the trail! Meet inside the Visitor Center on Sunday, Jan. 25, 3 – 4:30 p.m.

Birding Basics, the 90-minute class conducted by Mission Trails Bird Guide Winona Sollock, teaches five simple techniques to identify birds "at a glance!" You'll also pick up tips on bird field guide use (bringing one is optional). Class meets on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 1 – 2:30 p.m. inside the Visitor Center.

Meanwhile, come on out and enjoy the park!

Visit mtrp.org for more information and our events calendar, or call 619-668-3281. Special walks can be arranged for any club, group, business or school by contacting Ranger Chris Axtmann at 619-668-2746 or at caxtmann@mtrp.org.

—Audrey F. Baker is a trail guide at Mission Trails Regional Park.■

► Green, from page 1

can sign up today and you wouldn't make your first payment until your December 2015 property taxes," he said. "It allows people who thought they couldn't afford to go solar before to do it without paying anything out of pocket up front. They'll also receive an additional 30 percent federal tax credit, which in most cases, is enough to offset their first year payment."

For example, if a homeowner installs a \$30,000 system, they would receive a \$9,000 federal tax credit during year one, he said.

Another key savings component relates to no longer needing to pay monthly energy costs, especially considering the average homeowner pays between \$250 and \$300 a month to their utility provider.

When a solar energy system is installed that monthly expense can be eliminated. This can translate into a savings of \$3,000 to \$3,600 each year. Savarese said PACE/HERO participants may also be eligible for additional tax breaks and advises homeowners to go over those eligibility requirements with their accountant.

"The exact amount of what they can write off is all based on their income tax bracket," he said, "but the interest is tax deductible regardless as to what tax bracket they fall into."

Lenders further note that since the cost of the solar system is linked to the property taxes, if the homeowner decides to move, the investment will stay with the property.



(Courtesy Sullivan Solar Power)

Renovate America, a company that specializes in HERO financing, said this is because HERO is not your typical loan.

"In a traditional sense, when someone takes out a loan the lender will underwrite that loan against the borrower's credit score," said Renovate America Vice President of Community Development Blair McNeill. "With HERO, we don't underwrite against the credit score. We underwrite against the equity in the property."

In most cases, property owners may be eligible to participate in PACE/HERO if their mortgage debt does not exceed 90 percent of the value of the property, if they are current on their payments and property taxes and if they don't have any outstanding or involuntary liens or active bankruptcies.

Savarese said that while Sullivan just recently started to focus on marketing efforts to help make the public aware that PACE/HERO is now available in La Mesa, they've already started to see an uptick in both order activity and inquiries.

"It's just starting to gain momentum, but it's one of the most unique financing options I've ever seen for solar," Savarese said. "The great thing is that this opens up the market to a different demographic of people who thought they could never do it because it was too expensive, and considering that utility rates keep going up, a five-to seven-year payback on a system that will provide free electricity for the next 25 to 30 years can give homeowners a really great return on investment."

McNeal said that anyone who considers taking advantage of the program should start off by educating themselves.

"This could involve someone doing research online or speaking directly with a HERO registered contractor, who can help put together a quote and walk them through the process," he said. "The reality is that this type of financing is a completely new product, and that can be scary for some folks, but when they start to see the savings on a monthly basis and realize they have the ability to pay through their property taxes as an assessment — and have the payments transferred with the property should they choose to sell their home — it can start to make a lot of sense to a lot of people."

While solar panels are a popular choice, the PACE/HERO financing program can also be used to pay for dozens of other home energy efficiency upgrades, including solar water heating systems, graywater treatment systems, artificial turf, water-saving fixtures, whole house fans and fuel cell generation systems.

For more information about financing options and registered contractors, visit heroprogram.com/lamesa.

—Margie M. Palmer is a San Diego-based freelance writer who has been racking up bylines in a myriad of news publications for the past 10 years. You can write to her at margiep@alummi.pitt.edu.■

Sudoku & Crossword puzzle answers from page 15

2	9	7	4	6	3	1	5	8
3	8	5	7	9	1	4	6	2
1	6	4	8	5	2	7	9	3
8	7	9	3	4	5	2	1	6
5	1	3	2	8	6	9	4	7
6	4	2	1	7	9	8	3	5
7	5	6	9	2	4	3	8	1
4	2	1	6	3	8	5	7	9
9	3	8	5	1	7	6	2	4

N	O	S	E	S	O	R	A	S	T	E	P
E	L	A	L	S	H	R	E	D	E	R	L
W	I	N	S	O	M	E	L	O	S	E	S
S	O	D	P	A	L	E	L	A	V	E	R
S	P	U	R	L	R	E	A	M	E	R	S
L	A	T	E	S	T	M	A	R	I	E	
A	M	I	E	L	A	P	I	N	T	O	M
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American Cuisine	Happy Hour	Thai Cuisine	Furniture Store
Bakery	Health Food Store	Vegetarian/Vegan	Gym/Health Club
Barbeque	Hot Wings	Wine Bar	Hair Salon
Beer	Indian Cuisine	Business & Retail	Hospital
Billiards	Irish Pub	Accountant	Hotel
Breakfast	Italian Cuisine	Acupuncture	Insurance Broker
Brunch	Japanese Cuisine	Antiques	Jeweler
Burger	Jazz Bar	Art Gallery	Massage
Burrito	Late Night Dining	Auto Dealer	Men's Apparel
Business Lunch	Live Music Venue	Auto Repair Shop	New Business
Casino	Lunch	Bank	Optometrist
Casino Buffet	Margarita	Barber	Pawn Shop
Casual Dining	Martini	Bicycle Shop	Personal Trainer
Chinese Cuisine	Mexican Cuisine	Bookstore	Pet Boarding
Cocktail	Micro Brewery	Boutique	Pet Grooming
Coffee Shop	Museum	Bridal Shop	Plumber
Comedy Club	New Restaurant	Car Wash	Property Management Company
Comfort Food	Nightclub	Chiropractor	Real Estate Agent
Dance Club	Outdoor Dining	College/University	Real Estate Office
Deli	Pet Friendly Dining	Consignment/Resale	Retirement Living
Dessert	Pizza	Cosmetic Surgeon	Tanning Salon
Dinner	Romantic Dining	Credit Union	Tattoo/Piercing
Donut Shop	Rooftop Lounge	Day Spa	Tuxedo Shop
Family Restaurant	Salad	Dentist	Veterinarian
Farmers Market	Sandwich	Discount Store	Wedding Venue
Fast Food	SD County Winery	Doctor	Women's Apparel
Fine Dining	Seafood	Dry Cleaners	Yoga Studio
French Cuisine	Sports Bar	Financial Planner	
	Steakhouse		

Christmas tree recycling Friday, Dec. 26 – Saturday, Jan. 10

La Mesans living in single-family residences can leave Christmas trees curbside or place segments in green waste containers for collection on their regular trash day between these dates. To prepare the tree for recycling, simply remove ornaments, tinsel and the tree stand. If taller than four feet, cut tree in half. Bundles of branches (wrapped with twine) can also be collected but should not exceed four feet by 18 inches in size. Garlands, wreaths and wood can also be placed in green waste containers. Christmas trees only can be dropped off at the EDCO Station at 8184 Commercial St. and do not need to be cut down in size. For more information on tree recycling and EDCO's holiday recycling tips visit edcodisposal.com/la-mesa-city.

New Year's Eve Party Wednesday, Dec. 31

The La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center (8450 La Mesa Blvd.) is hosting a New Year's Eve celebration from 8 p.m. – midnight. Tickets will include sandwiches, salads, snacks, non-alcoholic beverages and dessert. Party favors and noisemakers will be provided. The event will feature live dance music by Blue Zone. \$25 per person. Call 619-667-1322 for more information and tickets.

EDCO New Year's Day observance

Thursday, Jan. 1

No collection services will be performed by EDCO on New Year's Day. All public disposal sites, buyback centers and customer service offices will be closed. All regularly scheduled collection services will experience a one-day delay in service for the remainder of the week. For more information visit edcodisposal.com/la-mesa-city.

Childbirth preparation weekend class

Saturday, Jan. 3 and
Sunday, Jan. 4

The first weekend of each month, Sharp Grossmont Hospital (5555 Grossmont Center Dr.) hosts this childbirth

preparation class with a hospital tour during the first class. Topics covered during the class include: how the body prepares for birth and delivery, hospital procedures, medication choices, cesarean delivery, relaxation techniques, postpartum, infant feeding and newborn characteristics and procedures. The classes are held in the Women's Center Conference Rooms 1 and 2 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fee: \$75. Visit sharp.com or call 1-800-82-SHARP to register.

Breastfeeding class Saturdays, Jan. 8 and 27

This class at Sharp Grossmont Hospital (5555 Grossmont Center Dr.) teaches basic skills for successful breastfeeding. Topics covered include: advantages of breastfeeding, positioning, proper latch-on, breast pumps and nursing bras. There will be time for questions and answers. The classes are held in the Women's Center Conference Rooms 1 and 2 from 9 – 9:30 p.m. Fee: \$30. Visit sharp.com or call 1-800-82-SHARP to register.

Heart and Vascular Risk Factors Education Class

Fridays, Jan. 9 and 23

Sharp Grossmont Hospital offers this class at the Brier Patch Campus in building F, rooms 13 and 14 (9000 Wakarusa St.) twice each month for patients who were in the hospital within the last six months with a heart attack, stent, angioplasty, angina, open heart surgery, congestive heart failure or peripheral artery disease. A cardiac rehabilitation professional leads the class covering risk factors for heart and vascular disease. Patients may bring one family member to the class and there is no charge. Visit sharp.com to register.

La Mesa Village Farmers Market

Fridays, Jan. 9, 16, 23 and 30

After being closed for the holidays, the La Mesa Village Farmers Market will resume in January. Winter hours for the market are 1 – 5 p.m. The market takes place at the La Mesa Civic Center near Allison and Date avenues. Vendors each week sell fresh local fruits, vegetables, and herbs, packaged foods, flowers, and hot food prepared on site. Follow @LMMarket on Twitter and visit cityoflamesa.com for updates.

Municipal pool re-opens Tuesday, Jan. 20

The La Mesa Municipal Pool (5100 Memorial Drive in MacArthur Park) will reopen for regular activities after its annual closure for maintenance. Spring schedules for youth swimming lessons will be released Feb. 1. For more information visit cityoflamesa.com.

Nature Adventures!

Tuesday, Jan. 20 and
Wednesday, Jan. 21

Linda Hawley leads these classes for children ages 4 and up at Mission Trails Regional Park (1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos). Each month the class is held on a designated Tuesday and Wednesday. Hawley presents factual information about San Diego's wild animals using songs, puppets, real pelts, replicated skulls, scat, tracks and taxidermy specimens. After the lesson, the children are led on an easy trail walk which is followed by a related take-home craft project back in the classroom. Children attend one class per month and must be accompanied by an adult. The 90-minute program's theme this month will be "Kumeyaay Life Before 1979." Visit mtrp.org for more information and future dates and themes.■

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ISSUE 9
SEPTEMBER 2014
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La Mesa COURIER

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Submissions can be sent by e-mail to jeremy@sdcdn.com.
Thank you for your interest in the La Mesa Courier.

MUSIC NOTES

Jazz

Fridays: Charlie Arbelaez Trio at The Rook. Free. 9 p.m. 7745 University Ave., La Mesa. TheRookBar.com.

Saturdays: Jazz with George and Alan at Bistro Sixty. Free. 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. 5987 El Cajon Blvd., College Area. BistroSixtySD.com.

Sundays: samdiego Jazz Trio at San Pasqual Winery Tasting Room. Free. 2 - 5 p.m. 8364 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa. SanPasqualWinery.com.

Pop

Wednesdays: Westside Inflection at Riviera Supper Club. Free. 8 p.m. 7777 University Ave., La Mesa. RivieraSupperClub.com.

Dec. 29: Josh Damigo and the Freeloaders, The Lyrical Groove, Talk Like June and B Willing at Casbah. \$6. 9 p.m. 2501 Kettner Blvd., Little Italy. CasbahMusic.com.

Jan. 18: Santee Community Chorus at Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center Auditorium. Free. 3 – 4 p.m. 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos. MTRP.org.

Jan. 24: Sock Monkeys at San Pasqual Winery. Free. 7 - 10 p.m. 8364 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa. SanPasqualWinery.com.

Classical

Jan. 1: New Year's Concert 2015: Salute to Vienna at Copley Symphony Hall. \$25+. 2:30 p.m. 750 B St., Downtown. SanDiegoSymphony.org.

Jan. 9 – 11: Sir Neville Marriner conducts Elgar at Copley Symphony Hall. \$20+. Friday at 8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. 750 B St., Downtown San Diego. SanDiegoSymphony.org.

Jan. 16: Tango Buenos Aires at Copley Symphony Hall (San Diego Symphony does not appear). \$20+. 8 p.m. 750 B St., Downtown San Diego. SanDiegoSymphony.org.

Alternative/Rock

Dec. 31: Safety Orange at Hooley's. Free. 4 p.m. 5500 Grossmont Center Dr., La Mesa. hooleys.com.

Jan. 10: The Sleepwalkers at Riviera Supper Club. Free. 9 p.m. 7777 University Ave., La Mesa. RivieraSupperClub.com.

Jan. 17: Takillya at Chico Club. Free. 8:30 p.m. 7366 El Cajon Blvd., La Mesa. ChicoClub1940.com.

Other

Jan. 3: Little Kings at Riviera Supper Club. Free. 8 p.m. 7777 University Ave., La Mesa. RivieraSupperClub.com.

Jan. 4: James Earp at Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center Auditorium. Free. 3 – 4 p.m. 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos. MTRP.org.

Jan. 8: James Lee Stanley: The Art of the Protest Song at Vision Center for Spiritual Living. \$10. 7 p.m. 6154 Mission Gorge Road, Suite 100, Grantville. FolkeyMonkey.com.

Bands, venues, and music-lovers: please submit listings for this calendar by emailing Jen@sdcdn.com. ■

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