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La Mesa COURIER

**Cal
EITC**
4 me
New state tax credit
Page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

LOCAL NEWS

A hole in one kick



Sun Valley opens its greens to footgolf.
Page 4

BOOKS

Foodies for thought



La Mesa Library hosts local celebrity
chefs at upcoming event. Page 12

MUSIC

A star of many hats



Terri Clark brings her country stories in
song to Sycuan Casino. Page 14

THEATER

Bet your bottom dollar



Peter Pan Theatre takes on rags to riches
tale of 'Annie.' Page 18

ALSO INSIDE

Opinion	6
Politics	8
Education	10
Cooking with Julie	15
Puzzles	15
Arts Calendar	16
Community Calendar	16

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Editorial / Letters
(619) 961-1969
jeff@sdcnn.com

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Jeremy Saylor's hand-stenciled Honda CRV helps him deal with his post-war emotions. (Photo by Angela Vasquez)

Patterns for PTSD

Former Marine's Honda gets lots of ink

Alex Owens

Jeremy Saylor is one Sharpie dude, and his Honda CRV is the beneficiary.

For the past two years, Saylor has been slowly decorating the car with various patterns using only a Sharpie pen.

"I've always been artistic and I love creating things with my hands, and I have a passion for cars," is how the 36-year-old La Mesa resident explains his desire to slowly ink up his car.

It isn't just about aesthetics for Saylor, who works as a civilian at Camp Pendleton. He says the artwork is good for the PTSD he suffered while deployed in Iraq during a five-year stint in the Marines.

"It helps me get my emotions out," said Saylor, who worked his way up to a Marine Supply Sergeant. "I'm showing emotions in form. Some days,

See **HONDA** page 17

La Mesa is looking ahead

City Council, local civics group ponder city's future

Jeff Clemetson
Editor

The future is on the minds of La Mesa's residents. At two town hall meetings held by the City Council and one event held by a local civics group, officials and citizens looked ahead to how future and current development will affect the city and their neighborhoods.

A downtown conversation

On Jan. 27, La Mesa Conversations, a group that promotes discussion on local issues,



The Park Station development plan was opposed by many residents for its excessive size. (Courtesy of stop-park-station-la-mesa.com)

held a forum on "The Future of Downtown."

Over 100 people showed up to the Masonic Lodge to hear a panel talk about potential growth in housing and business around the downtown area of the city.

The panelists for the evening included La Mesa City Manager David Witt; local developer Christopher D'Avignon, CEO of Land & Design; and Mary

See **FUTURE** page 7

Local heroes honored at gala event

Margie M. Palmer

At its eighth annual "Salute to Local Heroes Gala," La Mesa Chamber of Commerce honored seven local residents for their service to the community.

The Mardi Gras-themed event was held Feb. 24 at the Town and Country Resort & Convention Center in Mission Valley.

Although the Chamber of Commerce organizes the event, deciding who the awardees are is up to the departments where they work.

"I think we take it for granted that when we call 911, someone will be there," Chamber of Commerce President Mary England said. "So it's nice to give a face to that service."

Although the chamber hosts the event, it does not pick the recipients of the honor. Each year a letter goes to the Police Chief, the Fire Chief and American Medical Response (AMR). La Mesa Police Department nominates two officers or people from that organization along with two Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol folks; the Fire Chief selects one person from the fire organization and AMR provides the names of two others from their organization.

During the evening, the Police Chief, the Fire Chief and a representative from AMR took the stage with their respective heroes to talk about why they were selected to receive this award.

"The will do anything to make La Mesa a safer place to live, work and play," Police Chief Walt Vasquez said of the seven heroes honored at the event.

This year's honorees included: (from AMR) paramedics Jon Alva and Robert Ivery; (from La Mesa Fire Department) Capt. Dave Hardenburger; (from La Mesa Police Department) Det. Bucky Wright and Master Officer Lillie Chase; and (from RSVP) volunteers Ray Rendina

See **HEROES** page 13

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DISCOVER

Tax relief for working families

New state program gives extra cash to most vulnerable

Jeff Clemetson
Editor

“Good news” and “tax season” are phrases that are rarely seen together, but a new statewide program really is good news for low-income workers this tax season.

The California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) initiative is a cash-back tax credit that is new this year. The program was designed to complement the impact of the federal EITC by giving an additional check to the most vulnerable low-income workers.

“Adding the new California EITC is a tremendous opportunity for hard-working Californians to keep more of the money that they earn and help them to take care of their families,” said state Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins in a press release. Atkins was instrumental in getting the CalEITC added to the 2015–16 budget.

To qualify for CalEITC funds, you must be an individual with zero dependents who earned less than \$6,850 last year; or a household with one dependent who earned less than \$9,880; or a household with two or more dependents who earned less than \$13,870.

Also, all filers must be over the age of 25 to qualify, unless they have dependents. The maximum refund a family can receive is \$2,653 but the average refund will be around \$900.

Families that are eligible for CalEITC are also eligible for federal EITC benefits, which have a higher income threshold to qualify. Individuals with zero dependents that earned less than \$14,820 and households with three or more children that earned less than \$53,267 qualify for federal EITC money.

Many of California’s working families are eligible for both state and federal EITC benefits. However, being eligible doesn’t mean a person will automatically receive a check. Workers must file their tax returns to collect – and that doesn’t always happen.

According to studies by the Tax Policy Center and IRS, eligible workers with no children are less likely to file for EITC money than those with children.

“This could reflect the fact that these workers are eligible for relatively small credits,” said Alissa Anderson, senior policy analyst at the California Budget & Policy Center. “Participation rates are also thought to be lower among workers who are eligible for smaller credits just in general, regardless of how many qualifying dependents they have; which again suggests that some people may not think it’s worth it to file taxes and claim the credit if they are eligible for only a small credit.”

Studies also show that people with incomes so low that they aren’t required to file a tax return also do not participate in EITC programs.

“It could be that non-filers are not aware that they can receive a refund even if they don’t owe personal income taxes or they may not think it’s worth the time and effort to file, particularly if they are eligible for only a small credit,” Anderson said.

Historically, California is ranked among the lowest in filing for the federal EITC, leaving \$1.8 billion on the table that otherwise would have been available to those who need it the most. Now with nearly \$400 million available through the CalEITC, an estimated \$2.3 billion is available for Californians between both the state and federal programs.

A joint public and private information campaign called CalEITC4Me is underway “to keep these much-needed dollars with the people who earned them,” according to a statement released by the campaign. CalEITC4Me estimates that between the federal and state EITC refunds, it is possible for some households to receive up to \$6,000 this year. To estimate your potential earned credit, use the CalEITC4Me calculator at caleitc4me.com/get-it/.

“This tax season, nearly \$600 million is available between the state and federal EITCs for San Diego’s working families,” said Assemblymember Shirley Weber in a press release. “That’s an estimated 50,000 filers who are eligible



Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins was instrumental in getting funding for CalEITC. (Courtesy of CalEITC4Me Campaign)

for CalEITC in San Diego County, benefiting up to 120,000 people.”

The majority of those who are eligible are “part-time, working single mothers,” said Holly Martinez, a spokesperson for CalEITC4Me campaign.

The campaign also researched other demographics of potential candidates for CalEITC help. Of households with incomes under \$15,000 in targeted zip codes, 39 percent are Latino; 17 percent are African-American; and 11 percent are Asian. Only 16 percent of households are married and 48 percent are single without children; 35 percent have at least one child. Fifty-eight percent of people who make less than \$15,000 are women. Ninety-one percent worked less than full-time. One in six moved in the last year and more than three-quarters are renters.

In La Mesa, approximately 800 to 1,000 tax filers are estimated to be eligible for the CalEITC, according to research by the CalEITC Campaign. For the federal EITC, an estimated 4,600 filers are eligible, or roughly 15 percent of La Mesa’s population. For a more detailed examination of where potential EITC filers live, visit the CalEITC Campaign’s heat map at caleitc4me.org/caleitc-heatmap/.

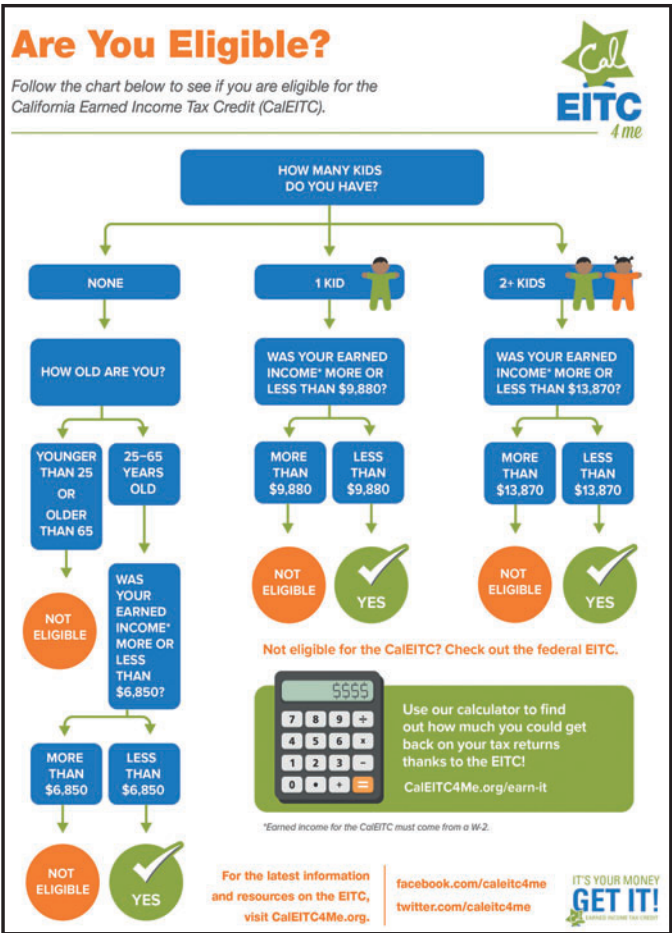
For low- to moderate-income individuals or families who cannot prepare their own tax returns, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help from qualified tax professionals.

“Sixty percent of Californians who were eligible for free tax assistance ended up paying to file their taxes at an average of cost of \$200,” Martinez said. “That’s money families could have for food, transportation and other every day needs.”

According to the IRS, VITA generally helps people who make less than \$53,000 annually, people with disabilities, the elderly, and people with limited English. All volunteers are IRS-certified and provide basic income tax preparation and help with electronic filing.

For a complete list of VITA requirements and information on what to bring to your appointment, visit San Diego 211 at bit.ly/1QCjvIF. For a list of VITA locations in San Diego County, use the Tax Prep Finder Tool at caleitc4me.org/get-it/.

—Write to Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdCNN.com. ■



How to Sell Your San Diego 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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La Mesa golf course" to "Sun Valley Golf Course

Tori Hahn

SDCNN Intern

A "chip shot" has taken on a new meaning at Sun Valley Golf Course in La Mesa. Golf has made way for its newest spinoff sport, footgolf, in which players use their feet to launch a soccer ball from tee to fairway to green.

The latest two-in-one sport combines the footwork of soccer with the precision of golf. Normal golf holes share the green with 21-inch footgolf holes, just as traditional golfers share the course with footgolfers.

"You'll see a lot of dads playing golf and kids playing footgolf with them because the dads are old-school golfers and the kids are soccer players, so it's a great way for families to play together," said Ariel Fajerman, founder of FootGolf San Diego.

FootGolf San Diego is an organization that works with golf course operators and local companies to grow the sport in the San Diego region.

Sun Valley is currently the only golf course in East County to welcome footgolf. The course held its first-ever footgolf tournament on Saturday, Feb. 6, in which players of all ages and skill level showed up to take a shot at the new sport. The result: a lot of missed shots and laughter.

"We tried to set it up so anyone can come out here and play ... to make it family-oriented and for all ages," said Patrick Shannon,



Ian Cook prepares to pull the flag for a putt. (Photo by Tori Hahn)

co-owner of Sun Valley Golf Course.

Fourteen-year-old John Cook comes down to Sun Valley often to play footgolf with his friends. Cook has played soccer for seven years and said the added practice of the sport helps improve his accuracy.

Cook played alongside his older brother, Ian Cook, who earned the title of national footgolf champion in October 2015. Ian Cook, a lifelong soccer player and member of FootGolf San Diego, competed in a two-day tournament and defeated 25 of the top footgolfers across the nation to win the trophy. Ian Cook said he fell in love with the easy-to-learn sport right away

and encourages everyone to try it.

"It's good for all ages. That's the really important part," Ian Cook said. "It's great for communities because it brings people together and takes them outside."

Footgolf works similarly to a normal game of golf, except feet act as clubs, soccer balls replace golf balls and the holes are almost five times the size. Scores are counted with birdie, par and bogey, and players are still entitled to play the ball where it lies.

Like traditional golf, footgolfers are encouraged to abide by a particular dress code outlined by the United States FootGolf

Association, though it may not always be enforced for casual play. The code includes a flat cap, collared shirt, golf pants or shorts, knee-length argyle socks and indoor soccer shoes. No cleats – or, surprisingly, soccer jerseys – are typically allowed on the course.

Footgolf serves as a cost-effective alternative to golf for both the players and course owners.

It provides a chance for lower-income individuals to get out on a golf course when they otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity, according to Fajerman. At Sun Valley, footgolfers can play one round of nine holes for \$6 and two rounds for \$10.

Meanwhile, in the wake of California's devastating drought, small golf course owners were

forced to figure out a way to save water and keep their courses afloat; and smaller and more relaxed courses like Sun Valley are perfect places to add footgolf, according to Fajerman.

Shannon made the decision to bring footgolf to the La Mesa course because of the decreasing popularity of golf at the youth level.

"The golf industry as a whole is suffering ... We had to think of a way to bring in more revenue," Shannon said. "At first I laughed hysterically at the idea [of adding footgolf] and thought it was preposterous, but then I eventually liked the idea."

After seeing a dramatic increase in traffic to the course from the addition of frisbee golf almost eight years ago, eventually footgolf didn't seem so crazy to Shannon.

Footgolf began popping up 10 years ago across Europe, and made its way to America five years ago, according to Fajerman. Today, there are more than 400 footgolf courses nationwide and six courses in San Diego County.

Although the "Tiger Woods era" of golf might be over, noted by Mary Jane Gonzales, wife of Sun Valley co-owner Johnny Gonzales, a new, light-hearted era of golf is emerging.

—Tori Hahn is an editorial intern for SDCNN, the parent company of the La Mesa Courier. Reach her at torihahn@cox.net ■



Aly Bright 'tees' off at Sun Valley Golf Course. (Photo by Tori Hahn)

Gen-X in a millennial world

Genevieve Suzuki



Although there's a generational divide between my mom and I when it comes to parenting, I wish I was half as brave as she was when I was a baby.

My mom just turned 82, twice the age she was when she had me at 41. Coincidentally, I turn 41 this year and have a baby of my own. But things have changed a bit since I was an infant in my mom's arms. For one thing, I don't have to struggle with cloth diapers or shoddy disposables. Babies 'R' Us, which we conveniently have here in La Mesa, sells all kinds of diapers, wipes and what-nots right down the street.

"You're lucky," my mom will say as she watches me struggle to diaper my 8-month-old, who has learned to turn his naked torso an unnatural 180 degrees on the changing table. "We didn't have all of those fancy things available to us."

And while it's true that she didn't have access to a warehouse full of baby necessities, she also had the kind of confidence only a person who helped raise three younger siblings and two other daughters would have.

For instance, there is a photo of me as a child, sitting beneath an apple tree in Tacoma, Washington. If either of my kids sat under an apple tree, I would



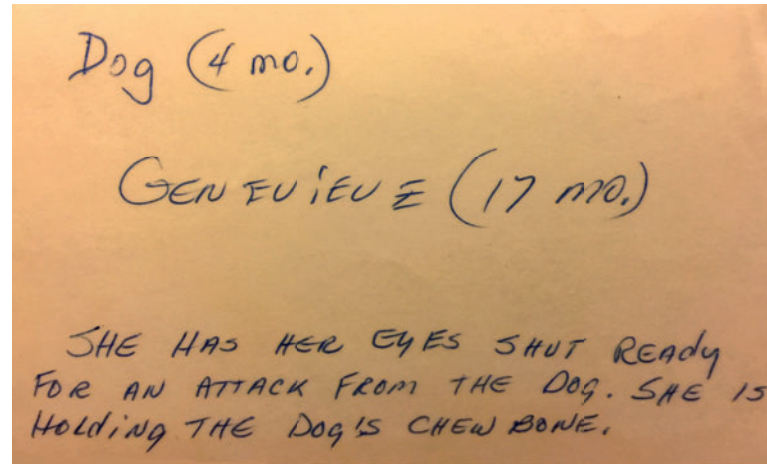
be madly obsessed with making sure they weren't going to be stung by a bee or bopped on the head by fallen fruit. My mom? She only has good memories of me enjoying the apples.

On the other hand, there are times where I wonder how I survived my childhood.

My son, Deacon, is starting to teethe. As such, we've purchased a hundred different teething toys designed to calm, soothe and trick him into chilling out.

"Oh, well, you should try what we used," my mom said, peering at one of my brightly colored plastic tools before it was flung across the room by a fat, tiny, furious fist.

"What's that, Mom?" I asked, feeling frustrated that she didn't just volunteer the information



without the usual prompt.

"Jerky."

"Wait — you gave me jerky ... as a baby? To teethe?!"

"You loved it. Your grandpa-

ther couldn't believe how much you loved it. And it worked!" she said before smugly adding, "We also gave you chicken bones."

We sat there for a minute,

staring at each other as I tried to figure out the joke.

"You didn't give me chicken bones," I said.

"Yes, we did. You loved that, too!" she grinned, lost in what seemed to be among her favorite memories: me as a baby gnawing on beef jerky and chicken bones.

In an attempt to follow this up a few days later, my mom showed me a photo of me as a toddler.

"Awwwww," I said. "Is this me and our dog, Schatzi?"

"Yep," she said. "Read the back."

The back of it said, "Dog (4 mo.) Genevieve (17 mo.) She has her eyes shut ready for an attack from the dog. She is holding the dog's chew bone."

"Isn't that funny?" she laughed, watching my face.

"Mom, this is awful! Was I really scared?"

"We wouldn't have let anything happen to you! You were fine!" she said, cackling harder.

I don't know about fine, but I can now safely say that I am a survivor.

So maybe I take some of my mom's bravery and temper it with some of my healthy caution. Leave the chicken bones, but keep the apples. And for goodness' sake — keep the kids away from dogs if they're holding their chew toys.

—Genevieve A. Suzuki is a La Mesa resident who practices family law. Find out more on her website, sdlawyersuzuki.com. ■

Companionship makes aging enjoyable at La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center

Aaron Landau

Editor's note: This is the first in a three-part series on continuing education opportunities for seniors in and around La Mesa. This article previously appeared in the La Mesa Historical Society newsletter.

The La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center (AEC) is located at the corner of La Mesa Boulevard and University Avenue. It opened in 1965 as the Adult Recreation Center. A few years later the name changed to the Senior Adult Center.

What's in a name? Obviously a great deal, as the label of "senior" over the years made people feel old. So in 2003, the La Mesa City Council changed the name to the Adult Enrichment Center. Makes you feel younger, doesn't it? It's a much more appealing name as "60 is now the new 40."

On average, 200 to 300 people per day utilize the AEC for a wide variety of activities. Kathy Tinsley is the recreation supervisor for this gem of a community asset. For 26 years she has been managing the AEC. Tinsley is also a longtime La Mesa Historical Society board member

Valuable partnerships

The AEC has numerous partnerships which are key to its success. One partnership is with the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD) Adult Education Department. Another is with the Sharp-Grossmont Hospital Senior Resources Center. The center is located at the Briarcrest facility of the hospital across from Briarcrest Park on Wakarusa Street. This collaboration yields nurses performing monthly blood pressure screenings and giving flu shots.

There is a partnership with the Senior Communities program, part of San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). They serve lunch at the AEC. Lunches are ordered in



The La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center provides education opportunities for local seniors. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

advance and there is no income requirement, although donations are accepted and appreciated. HHSA also has a home delivery service in La Mesa, Lemon Grove, and Spring Valley.

Education for seniors

The AEC sponsors conferences and holds classes to educate seniors on topics important to their health and safety needs. The AEC is involved with the East County Health Fair, which is overseen by East County Senior Service Providers. There is also a monthly AARP safe driving course at the AEC. It definitely works as evidenced by the fact that no one has yet driven into the building.

There are also numerous classes of interest at the AEC. Eighty percent of the classes are through the GUHSD Adult Education Department. The Health Occupations Center also offers classes run by volunteers. There are classes in folk dance, bridge, Hawaiian dance, pinocle and music. The fee for classes ranges from \$1 per week to \$76 per session.

There are also various workshops sponsored by SDG&E and Helix Water on energy saving and water conservation. It pays to save on energy and water.

An attorney comes to the center once a month and offers

legal assistance with legal information and a referral. The referral is to Senior Citizens Legal Services which is funded by the county.

Every Friday, a veterans advocate visits the AEC clubhouse to help file claims on behalf of veterans.

Funding

The city of La Mesa budgets \$300,000 per year for the AEC. This allows for expenditures for programs, maintenance, and energy costs. It also pays the salaries of two staff persons — Kathy Tinsley and a full-time custodian. Your city's tax dollars at work.

In addition, there are numerous revenue streams which add up to a revenue river. The GUHSD classes generate revenue for use of the space. There are also fee-generated trips sponsored by the AEC, as well as membership possibilities which are not mandatory. Finally, fees for classes are an important part of the mix.

The AEC facility is rented out at times for various seminars on financial planning, long-term care, and living trusts. The facility is also available for weddings and birthday parties. Alanon and Alcoholics Anonymous receive a 30 percent discount on the rental rate for their meetings. Church groups can also rent the facility, which can accommodate up to 150 people.

Transportation

The AEC is command central for Rides4Neighbors. This program pairs volunteer drivers with those individuals who need transportation assistance for doctor appointments, shopping, and other personal needs.

There are about 1,000 riders in the program. Most are "frequent flyers." The program is available for most East County residents. There are about 40 volunteer drivers who are compensated for mileage.

The program is totally funded by the federal government and a state grant for SANDAG, our regional governmental body. The staff for this program is housed at the AEC business office. The staff consists of a full-time transportation specialist and a half-time clerical assistant.

—Aaron Landau is the former president of the La Mesa Historical Society. Reach him at bernieaaron@gmail.com. ■

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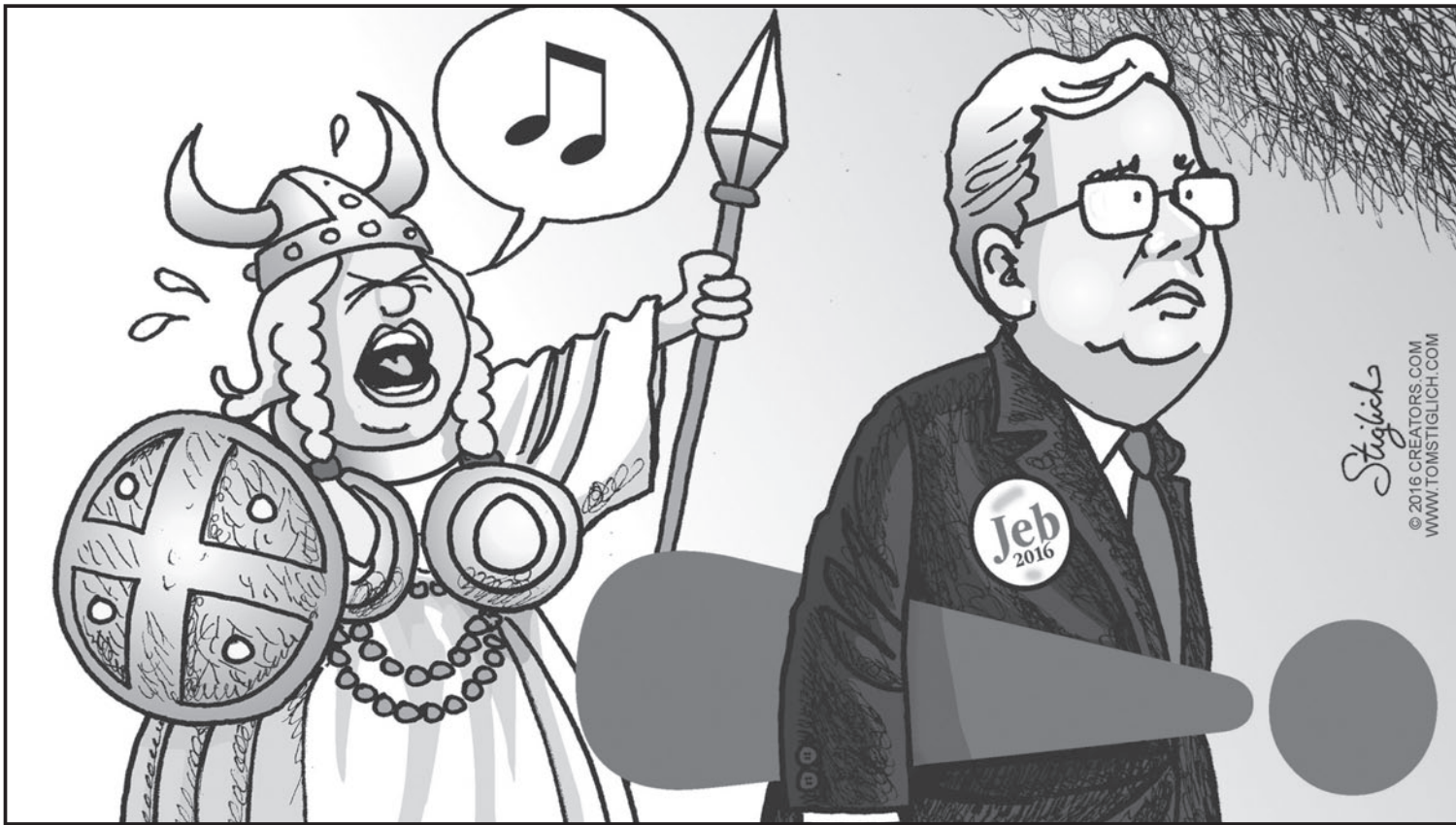
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GUEST EDITORIAL

Domestic violence victims have protection

Molly Kirkland

Generally speaking, your lease with a landlord is a binding agreement that cannot be easily modified, but California has recently adopted laws that provide special protection and rights to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or elder abuse.

The laws recognize that everyone should be able to feel safe and secure in their home. If a tenant becomes the target of a predator, both the tenant and the landlord should be able to make reasonable changes to keep the tenant safe and comfortable.

The law now allows a domestic violence victim to break their lease early without any penalty or fee, as long as they provide the landlord with at least 14 days' written notice to vacate along with a copy of a temporary restraining order, an emergency protective order or a police report issued within the last

60 days. In lieu of a police report or restraining order, the tenant may also provide a report written by a qualified third party, such as a domestic violence counselor, or a report written by a health practitioner such as a doctor, psychiatrist or a licensed marriage counselor.

In some situations, a domestic violence victim may not want to move or may not have the resources to move. Another option is to ask the landlord to change the exterior locks on the unit. If the tenant provides the landlord with a copy of a police report or court order, the landlord must change the locks within 24 hours. Most landlords will have no problem changing the locks, but if it takes longer than 24 hours for the landlord to respond, the tenant themselves may change the locks. If the tenant takes this route, the tenant must use locks of similar or better quality than those provided by the landlord, and the locks must be changed in a "workmanlike," or professionally acceptable, manner. The tenant must

also notify the landlord within 24 hours that the locks have been changed, and provide the landlord with a copy of the new key.

The fact that you are a victim of domestic violence or a similar crime should not be a reason for a landlord to end your lease or refuse to renew it. However, there are three circumstances in which the landlord may end a lease: first, if the perpetrator of the crime is a tenant of the unit along with the victim; second, if the victim allows the perpetrator to visit the property after an act of abuse has been reported; or third, if the landlord has reason to believe that the perpetrator's presence on the property is a threat to other people on the property.

Everyone deserves to have safe, stable housing. If you've suffered domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or elder abuse, discuss these options with your landlord to find a solution that works for both of you.

—Molly Kirkland is director of public affairs for the San Diego County Apartment Association. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Response to letters about fire chief

[Volume 6, Issue 1 or bit.ly/1QU6f43]

The response by a writer to a farewell for a retiring fire captain turns quickly to denigrating the risk [to] firefighters. Comparisons of death rates of other occupations per 100,000 seems an innocuous exercise until we look at the context.

True, there many dangerous jobs. But when a roofer falls off a building through accident or carelessness it is not the same as a firefighter falling through the roof of a burning building trying to save your property or your life. And we are fortunate that there are not more fatalities. But there are many less than fatal injuries suffered by police officers and firefighters whose job it is to protect us. The one thing where there is agreement with the previous writer is that, yes, perspective is important.

The second letter, same date, dovetails neatly with the first in a tag team attack on public safety employees by tossing out generalities and misinformation on their pensions. True, it doesn't make sense for a firefighter to work past 30 years on the job, but for physical reasons mainly. The demands of the job and injuries and operations take their toll.

Disability retirement is not a slam dunk, but a process involving reviews and multiple medical examinations and hearings. Easier said than done.

The last statement, "Yes most public safety workers in California are literally set for life — without putting a dime aside for retirement on their own," is false. Public safety workers, like other public employees, match the employer's contribution for pension. Further, 60 to 70 percent of pension payments come from interest earned on contributions.

As Oscar Wilde said: "Truth is rarely pure and never simple."

—Joe Flynn (not a firefighter or policeman), San Diego

Praise for La Mesa antique shops

[Volume 6, Issue 1 or bit.ly/1o3wWYk]

La Mesa Antique Mall is great. It's where I go to relive my childhood and buy comics and toys from the '80s and '90s.

—Brett Bretterson, via Facebook

Love Park Estates!

—Wilma Ross Cadice, via Facebook

Whenever I visit my mom in San Diego, she insists that we go to her favorite shop. Nice to see La Mesa Antique Mall on the cover. Great shop, friendly staff. La Mesa Village has some very good restaurants, too. Sorry to see several other antique shops on the main street are now gone.

—James Earley, via Facebook

Potholes over stadium

The notion that tax-supported events are inevitably profitable is ill-conceived. There are enough savvy capitalists to seize upon a good deal if there is one; why have none stepped forward with the Chargers? Remember, it was the politicians of the 1990s that got us into this one-sided "deal" with the Chargers.

Instead of spending everyone's tax dollars on subjective entertainment, our politicians should be fixing pot holes and preparing for another round of El Nino, which affects us all. If we have extra money solely for entertainment, why does the city need additional sales tax to provide actual government services? It would be cheaper to erect statues for these self-promoting politicians than building a new stadium. Let's quit wasting valuable time and money on entertainment not enjoyed by all.

—Carlos Miller, La Mesa ■

La Mesa COURIER

123 Camino de la Reina, Suite 202 East
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 519-7775
lamesacourier.com
Twitter: @LaMesaCourier

EDITOR

Jeff Clemetson
(619) 961-1969
Jeff@sd cnn.com

SALES & MARKETING
DIRECTOR

Mike Rosensteel
(619) 961-1958
mike@sd cnn.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Morgan M. Hurley, x110
Ken Williams x102

ADVERTISING
CONSULTANTS

True Flores
(619) 454-0115
true@sd cnn.com

COPY EDITOR

Dustin Lothspeich

WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA

Jen Van Tieghem, x118
jen@sd cnn.com

Lisa Hamel, x107
Andrew Bagley, x106
Sloan Gomez, x104

CONTRIBUTORS

J.S. Anderson
Linda Armacost
Connie Baer
Lynn Baer
Jeff Benesch
Dianne Jacobs
Molly Kirkland
Anne Krueger
Aaron Landau
Judy McCarty
Jennifer Osborn
Alex Owens
Margie M. Palmer
Heather Pisani-Kristl
Kriti Raju
Julie White

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Todd Kammer
(619) 961-1965
graphics2@sd cnn.com

PRODUCTION ARTISTS

April Martinez, x111

ACCOUNTING

Priscilla Umel-Martinez
(619) 961-1962
accounting@sd cnn.com

WEB DESIGNER

Kim Espinoza
kim@kespinoza.com

PUBLISHER EMERITUS

Jim Madaffer

PUBLISHER

David Mannis
(619) 961-1951
david@sd cnn.com



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For breaking news and investigative story ideas contact the editor by phone or email.

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► **Future**, from page 1

England, president of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce. Real estate developer Shon Finch was scheduled to speak but was not able to attend. CEO of Grossmont Healthcare District and former La Mesa City Council member Barry Jantz moderated the discussion.

Witt said people are passionate about downtowns, citing the reverence Disneyland's Main Street is given as "part of the American culture."

"We are very, very lucky to have a piece of that here," he said.

Despite the nostalgia associated with downtowns, Witt said they are always modernizing and La Mesa's is no exception.

"It isn't static. It's not Disneyland," he said. "The paradox is that the downtown has always been about what's new, what's happening ... about showing off that this is the place to be and that means it's all about development."

Witt said it is a challenge to new development to balance what the community wants to preserve while still keeping downtown La Mesa "vibrant and active." The biggest challenge, however, is funding new projects after the state's redevelopment program was ended by Gov. Brown, he said.

Witt summarized his vision of La Mesa's downtown as a place that is walkable; is connected to the trolley and bus systems; and has activity day and night.

"I think it has a lot of potential for that," he said.

D'Avignon, whose company built The Quarry Apartments on Palm Avenue, highlighted the process developers face when starting new projects — the cost; the design considerations involved; overcoming lawsuits; and getting approval from city governments. He also stressed why it is important to get started on new developments.

"La Mesa is going to need something like 8,000 units over the next 20 years just to match population growth, and that's a lot," he said.

For downtown La Mesa's future, D'Avignon sees potential smart growth in ideal locations.

"You got a lot of great spaces here by the trolley that make a lot of sense for transit-oriented development," he said.

England praised business owners, like Pierre's Jewelers, who invest in the purchasing and rehabbing of retail space downtown.

"When we see a building and a business that is sold, there is a lot of investment from that businessman," she said.

Although La Mesa has "a good mix" of businesses downtown, the city and the chamber have little influence on what kinds of businesses end up there.

"I hear all the time 'we want more this, we want more that,'" England said. "Sometimes, as much as we'd like to change what we see downtown, the owners of the buildings really make that determination."

The panel also discussed the proposed high-rise Park Station development project that faced fierce opposition by residents and was eventually shelved by the property owners.

Witt said La Mesa is accepting of some types of large-scale development, citing La Mesa Village Plaza as an example.



An artist rendering of the future Depot Springs brewery on Fletcher Parkway (Courtesy of Depot Springs Beer Co. Facebook page)

"This town built a mixed-use project with multi-story residential on top of retail with structured parking, incorporating a light-rail station in 1989," he said.

What the community won't accept is a project that is "just an idea" and Park Station developers did not offer enough details.

"[The community] wants to know what it's going to look like, how big it's going to be and is it actually going to get built," he said.

D'Avignon said Park Station's proposed 18 stories and its density were outside the city zoning by "quite a bit" and as such, was "destined for disaster."

D'Avignon also said an ideal density for housing developments in La Mesa is 40 units per acre because it is a manageable number to match with available parking. He said the city should encourage building the maximum units to help downtown La Mesa's vibrancy by having more people to shop and dine there.

"In La Mesa, it's all about fit," added Witt. "That's what I think we've done a good job of — making sure that what does come in the future is a good fit for the community."

Town halls offer feedback on future

The La Mesa City Council held two town hall-style meetings — Feb. 16 at Parkway Middle School and Feb. 18 at Maryland Avenue Elementary — to get input from residents about issues they feel the city needs to address.

The agendas described the events as "an opportunity for the public to speak in an open forum to the City Council on issues and concerns pertaining to La Mesa and its future."

At the Parkway Middle School meeting, several local residents voiced concern over the future Depot Springs brewery that is currently under construction at 9176 Fletcher Parkway.

"I love rock and roll ... and I love beer ... but I am concerned about the noise in our neighborhood because this outdoor amphitheater overlooks my neighbors' backyards. It's very close," said Doug Tower.

When completed, the Depot Springs Beer Company facility will house a brewery, distillery, restaurant, full bar and an outdoor space for live music. The project was not appealed when it went before the city planning department, so it was approved without requiring a vote by City Council. However, council leaders will still have a say on whether the brewery is allowed to continue operating with permits for live music, Mayor Arapostathis said.



(l to r) Barry Jantz, David Witt and Christopher D'Avignon at La Mesa Conversations on Jan. 27 (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

"There is a process that if they don't meet the terms, that it can come before the City Council and it can be revoked," he said.

Other residents concerned about Depot Springs wanted changes to the city's process of notifying neighbors of future building projects. Currently, the city notifies residents within 300 feet of a proposed construction project. One resident who spoke suggested the boundary be stretched to 500 feet to include more people's input.

Depot Springs wasn't the only development project discussed at the town hall.

"[When are we going to know] about the Civic Center Master Plan and potential opportunities to improve our library?" said La Mesa Friends of the Library president John Schmitz.

The La Mesa Library is currently in an interim location after the city tore down the old library to make space for the new police station. If the city doesn't build a new library, it will have to pay for the county land the police station was built on. Schmitz and other residents that spoke at the town hall are hoping the awaited master plan for the civic center will include plans to build a larger library.

City Manager David Witt said La Mesa is "in the process of developing a feasibility plan" for the civic center that will look at a variety of possibilities for the old post office site, old chamber of commerce building, old police station site, among others.

The city will be discussing the plan with property owners and the City Council at an all-day workshop March 24 to examine different ideas. No decisions will be made at the workshop, Witt said.

"Keep in mind, that's a first glance at some ideas that are very, very preliminary and [we're] really talking about what are the possibilities, what could fit there and what those types of things cost," he said.

The civic center and library issue came up again at the Feb. 18 town

hall and Witt revealed a few more details about the city's plan for the site, which may include affordable housing in a mixed-use format.

"I think that in any case it will be a wonderful addition to the civic center concept," he said.

Witt also shared how the city is partnering with La Mesa/Spring Valley School District to build a Boys & Girls Club at the "partially utilized" property attached to La Mesa Middle School. The city will develop the sidewalks and areas around the new building as part of the project and construction will begin in the next two years, Witt said.

Pete Cecherini told the council that excessive fees were keeping investors away from redeveloping the city's "old housing stock" and suggested the process be streamlined. He said La Mesa's high cost for fees associated with remodeling are keeping owners from doing needed repairs and that is keeping home prices lower than they should be and attracting unwanted elements to neighborhoods. City Attorney Glenn Sabine said La Mesa hires a consultant to do a fee study every two years and the fees are in line with comparable cities.

Kathleen Brand wondered about the plans for the Little Flower Haven building at 8585 La Mesa Blvd., which is up for sale. Brand wants the historic façade of the building to remain intact and urged the city to order any potential buyers to keep the building's iconic look.

"I don't want to see things that are unique to be taken away or torn down because it's just not efficient anymore," she said.

Brand also voiced her concern that any plans for the civic center include an aesthetically pleasing design.

"I want to make sure La Mesa stays the 'Jewel of the Hills' and not the rhinestone or the polished rock," she said.

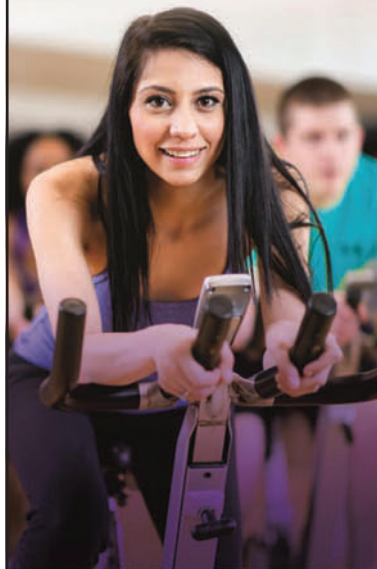
—Write to Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdcnn.com ■



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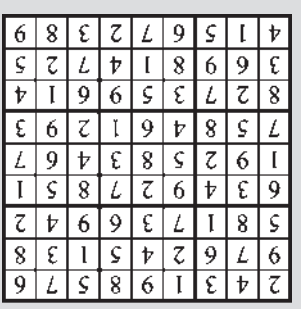

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Sudoku & Crossword puzzle answers from page 15



International conflicts focus of next NCRWF meeting



Judy
McCarty

Navajo Canyon Republican Women and guests who attend the March 8 meeting will learn more about the international scene — Syrian refugees, the Iran deal and the current Middle East conflict — from Barry Nussbaum, San Diego businessman and frequent news commentator on foreign policy and international affairs.

Once again, our luncheon meeting will take place at Brigantine Restaurant in La Mesa. Check-in time for the 11 a.m. meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$20. Lunch is served at noon, followed by the speaker. Due to

space limitations, reservations are required. RSVP to Marjie at NCRWF99@gmail.com or call her at 619-990-2791.

After delivering an Action Track Chair to a severely wounded veteran last year, NCRWF members have decided to support “Shelter to Soldier,” a non-profit organization that rescues dogs from an otherwise uncertain future in local shelters and trains them to become psychiatric service companions for combat veterans with PTSD. The need is great: Every 63 minutes a U.S. veteran commits suicide; every 11 seconds an animal is euthanized. NCRWF has committed to raise \$10,000 to sponsor a dog for the 12- to 18-month training period, helping to save both the life of a dog in a shelter and the life of a veteran. This is something we can do.

The election primaries are full of twists and turns, but eventually both national parties will choose their presidential candidates, and NCRWF members will begin their grassroots activities in favor of their Republican nominee. Until then, members will be supporting their own favorite candidates, registering voters and focusing on local races.

On April 22, NCRWF will host a free public forum to give the community and Republican candidates running in local elections



Barry Nussbaum
(Courtesy of Sutton Porter)

an opportunity to exchange ideas and get acquainted. Be sure to save the date!

Another date to save is June 14. Not only is it Flag Day, it's also the date for our annual fashion show, “Stars and Stripes Forever.”

Our membership drive for the new year is ongoing; dues are \$30 through March.

For more information on all our activities, visit us at navajocanyonrnf.org and also check us out on Facebook.

—Judy McCarty is publicity chairman of the Navajo Canyon Republican Women Federated. Reach her at jhmccarty@cox.net. ■

News and notes from your County Supervisor

DIANNE'S CORNER

Dianne
Jacob

Honoring our veterans: The Alpine Wall of Honor — one of the most special places in East County — is about to become even more special. At my recommendation, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors recently voted to contribute funds to assist with the extension of the wall.

Thank you to the Alpine Kiwanis and Dan Foster for their outstanding leadership on a project that celebrates our men and women in uniform.

Public safety: My fellow supervisors recently joined me in stepping the fight on two critical public-safety issues.

The board backed recommendations aimed at enlisting motel and hotel operators, more school districts and others in our battle against human trafficking across

the county. This is a tough issue to talk about, but we MUST face it head on.

The board also agreed to ramp up efforts to address homelessness, emergency psychiatric outreach and other mental health-related issues. In recent months, the Sheriff's Department, El Cajon police and others have accelerated their efforts to tackle homelessness and improve neighborhood safety in East County.

Working with the community: Thank you to all the seniors and caregivers who joined me at my recent stop scams event in the College Area.

These “Don't Get Hooked” forums are designed to educate older residents on ways to avoid financial abuse. Scammers see seniors as easy prey and often approach them over the phone or online.

These free events include top enforcement experts and scam victims. The next one will be



held in Poway in May. Details to come.

For more District 2 news, go to diannejacob.com or follow me on Facebook and Twitter. If I can assist with a county issue, please call my office at 619-531-5522 or email dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov

Have a great East County day!

—Dianne Jacob is County Supervisor for District 2. Reach her at dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov. ■

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Our “Best of La Mesa” issue will be out March 25!

Sanders-Clinton race takes center stage

Panel of supporters to debate for endorsement; mayor's contest, D1 and D3 also on docket



Linda **Armacost** and
Jeff **Benesch**

Trying to duplicate the scintillating series of candidate forums of the past couple of months, the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club will tackle the presidential race at our March 2 meeting. Fervent supporters of Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton will battle for the club's endorsement in an exchange that will highlight each candidate's strengths and weaknesses. There will be no trumping this exciting and emotional tiff between two great presidential candidates. Look for our talented celebrity panel of speakers and moderators in what should be the highlight of our pre-primary exhibitions.

And that's not the end of the evening's outstanding agenda. We'll also hear and vote on endorsements for Democratic candidates in San Diego city races in the key District 1 and District 3 contests. We've invited Chris Ward and Anthony Bernal to appear for District 3 and Barbara Bry in District 1.

Ward is Sen. Marty Block's chief of staff and is committed to constituent services; facilitating public participation in policy-making; and organizing state and local resources to improving neighborhoods. Previously, he was an environmental planner at the firm EDAW, working with



Bernie Sanders

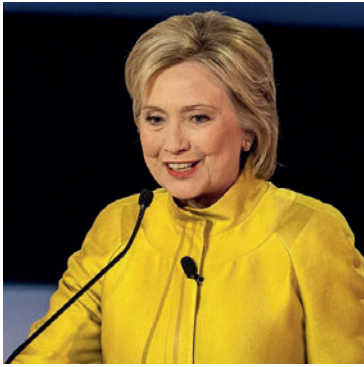
local government to develop land-use plans and conduct environmental review to help create inclusive, community-based solutions to neighborhood challenges and organize strategies to achieve long-term goals.

Bernal is the director of business and community projects for San Diego Councilmember Todd Gloria. He also served as a member of the Human Rights Campaign's San Diego Steering Committee. Currently, he's a founding member of the Cortez Hill Active Residents Group, Pure Water San Diego Working Group, and president of the San Diego Sigma Chi Alumni Chapter.

Bry is a high-tech entrepreneur and community leader. She was on the founding team of several local high-tech companies, including ProFlowers.com. She taught entrepreneurship at UCSD and founded an organization that supports the advancement of women in the tech sector. Bry was honored as Small Business Journalist of the Year for San Diego and Imperial Counties by the Small Business Administration. She served as president of the board of the Children's Museum of San Diego and as vice chair of the San Diego Jewish Community Foundation.

We'll follow each of the forums with an endorsement vote.

We are also excited to have Lori Saldana, now running as an independent for mayor of San Diego. The former Democratic Assemblymember and long-time local politico has headlined our meetings on a couple of occasions, and always speaks truth



Hillary Clinton

to power, and will tell us why she's the best candidate to replace Kevin Faulconer as mayor. As a friend of a host of progressive issues, Saldana finds agreement with most of the ideals and aspirations of our diverse membership.

Among many bills authored by Saldana was the landmark global warming legislation. She served in the Environmental Caucus and earned a 100 percent Sierra Club voting record during her six years in the Assembly.

For her work on behalf of veterans, Lori was named the 2006 Legislator of the Year by the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

The La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club meets the first Wednesday of every month at La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Drive, just north of University Avenue.

We begin with a social half-hour at 6:30 p.m. with a variety of snacks, desserts and beverages provided by the club membership. Our meetings begin at 7 p.m. and we encourage all area progressives to join us for our interesting, stimulating and thought provoking programs. Visit our webpage at lamesafoothillsdemocraticclub.com for a calendar, photos, and highlights of our community activities. Be sure to like us on Facebook.

—Linda Armacost is president and Jeff Benesch is vice president of programming for the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club. Reach them at jeffbenesch@gmail.com ■

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You will eat what they sow

Kriti **Raju**

Trish Watlington's commitment to purity of process nourishes her work at the Red Door Family Garden in the back of her home in La Mesa. Watlington, with the help of Scott Medina-Brzezinski, has produced 6,000 to 7,000 pounds of vegetables per year in the Red Door Family Garden.

The Red Door Family Garden only grows food that "has no chemical fertilizers or pesticides," Watlington said. "It is harvested within 24 hours of serving and that allows it to retain its highest possible nutritional value."

Chef Miguel Valdez gets many of the vegetables from the garden and uses them in his dishes at The Red Door, his restaurant in San Diego that shares a kitchen with the Wellington Steak and Martini Lounge.

Watlington and Valdez's efforts caught the eye of State Senator Joel Anderson, who was so impressed by their passion, purpose and process that he felt that their effort to grow and use



The Red Door Family Garden (Courtesy of PlainClarity Communications)

locally-sourced food deserved to be recognized.

"It is exciting to have this incredible farm in our La Mesa neighborhood," Anderson said upon awarding them with Senate Certificates of Recognition. "I am grateful for Trish, Scott, and Chef Miguel's efforts to raise awareness about local agriculture and the benefits for our environment and economy."

When asked about the vision of the farm, and her goals for the future, Watlington emphasized the importance of cultivating "unique ecological relationships [that are] manifested through

food" and the value of developing a food community that is sustainable both ecologically and economically.

The planter boxes bursting with the greenest of greens and the freshest of fruit scream of passion and being tended to individually. The green corridors and vine-run wooden gates invoke a state of calm and peace—an almost meditative state. The backyard farm is the embodiment of whimsy rooted in literal earth.

—Kriti Raju is a legislative intern for Senator Joel Anderson and a recent graduate of UC Davis. ■



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Grossmont High School's globetrotting choir



The 2015-16 Red Robe Choir after its performance at St. Peter's Basilica. (Courtesy of GHS Museum)



Foothiller Footsteps

Connie and Lynn Baer

When Grossmont High School's vocal music department began in 1929, the first vocal music group was a girls' chorus. In 1935, the school added an a cappella choir, which wore red robes with white collars. In 1940, the choir was first given the name Red Robed Choir, a name that continues today as the Red Robe Choir.

Amazingly, in the past 87 years, there have been only four vocal music teachers at Grossmont: legendary director Merle Donahue, 1929-1962; Don Hubler, 1962-1972; Bob Boucher, 1972-1986; and since 1986, current director Dr. Ed Basilio. All of these directors are renowned and beloved for the discipline, dedication, and skill they demand of their students. Highlights of every school year were festivals, concerts, and competitions where the choirs distinguished themselves.

Today, in his 30th year at Grossmont, Basilio teaches Advanced Ensemble, AP Music Theory, Women's Ensemble, Red Robe Choir, and Piano to a total of 185 students. In 1989, he took students on a Concert Choir Tour of what was then the U.S.S.R., and since then, the Choir has toured internationally every year. Some of the other countries they have visited include France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Ireland, Russia, Finland, and Sweden.

Among Basilio's numerous memorable moments is when the choir was singing in Leningrad at the school that the Czar's children attended.

"After singing in the school chapel, a Russian woman came up to us in tears saying how she had not heard music in that chapel since the time of the Revolution," he said. "Another memory was when the students of the schools in Russia ran after our train throwing flowers at the train cars in which GHS Choir students were riding. There was not a dry eye around. It was after midnight when we departed, but the teachers and students came out in full force to see us off."

Recently, several former students shared with Basilio the impact of these yearly trips on their lives. Meghan Waters, Class of 1999, toured Italy and England/Ireland.

"She said travel got into her blood — she married a man from Ireland and now has in-laws living in that country," Basilio said. Waters also told her former teacher that she still sings the songs she learned on that trip — "Welsh Lullaby", "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" — to her new baby daughter.

"Another student, Jennifer Lindsay, class of 1996 member of the Red Robe Choir, is currently completing her Ph.D. in Rome," Basilio said. "She shared that being in Italy 20 years ago created a lasting memory and one that causes her to feel her life has come full circle — finding her back in Rome."

Forty-eight talented and disciplined members of the choir recently returned from a January 2016 trip to Italy, where they performed extremely difficult choral literature. They performed at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice; an acoustical marvel, The Baptistery in Pisa; High Mass at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican; and a final concert with the choirs at Sapienza University in Rome. Four students on this trip have parents who toured Italy 20 years ago with Basilio when they were students in the Red Robe Choir. According to junior Chloe Mietzel, the performance at St. Peter's was the highlight of the trip. Mietzel, whose aunt toured various countries as part of the Red Robe Choir and whose grandparents were chaperones for a decade, said the Basilica was "beautiful and that performing at Mass was an honor and an amazing experience I will never forget."

Students and chaperones were particularly touched when the priest who was performing Mass took a break from the traditional Latin to address the students in English directly from the pulpit.

If you would like to witness for yourself these talented singers, join them at The Spring Concert/Dessert Show Tuesday, May 24 at 7 p.m. in the Old Gym on campus. Please contact Basilio at ebasilio@guhsd.net to reserve your seat.

Museum hours: noon-4 p.m. March 2 or by appointment. Contacts: phone: 619-668-6140; email: ghsmuseum@guhsd.net; website: foothillermuseum.com.

—Connie and Lynn Baer
write on behalf of the GHS
Museum. Reach them at ghs-museum@guhsd.edu. ■

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Alumni all-stars of Helix High



(l to r) Helix alumni and former NFL players Bruce Walton, Donnie Van Hook, Jim Arnaiz and Leon White. (Courtesy of Helix Charter High School)



Helix Highlights

Jennifer Osborn

Helix alumni find ways of making us proud in so many different areas. This past month was no exception.

NFL alumni

In celebration of Super Bowl 50, the NFL awarded golden footballs to high schools and their coaches that have had players appear in Super Bowls. Helix was fortunate to receive four golden footballs, honoring Bruce Walton, Leon White, Alex Smith and Reggie Bush. In a ceremony at the school, Walton and White spoke to students about their time at Helix and in the NFL, while Smith and Bush sent video messages.

The footballs are prominently displayed in the trophy case in the gym lobby, which has been beautifully renovated by the Helix Alumni Association, under the direction of Candy Greene.

Defying stereotypes

Alumnus Nate Howard was named to NBC's "NBCBLK28" list. The list honors 28 of the nation's most talented black innovators and game changers — all aged 28 years and younger. According to the NBCBLK28 website, they were selected "because they are all industry and community leaders who are constantly striving to break barriers and defy stereotypes, redefining what it means to be Black in America today."

Howard hosted an event at Space Bar in La Mesa featuring members of "Movement BE"

A gold football for Helix Alumni Reggie Bush. (Courtesy of Helix Charter High School)

reading their poetry. "The Today Show" was there to cover the event as part of the NBCBLK28 celebration.

Recognized for service

Alumnus Nitya Timalsina, UC San Diego graduate and president and founder of One Step Projects, a nonprofit dedicated to improving living conditions locally and worldwide, was recognized as The San Diego Foundation's 25 and Under! Future of Service award. Timalsina did tremendous work in Nepal helping earthquake victims last year and recently was featured on "KUSI News" as part of the award.

Alumni softball game

The Helix Softball team will host an Alumni Game on Friday, March 4. The Varsity team will take on alumni players. The game will start at 6 p.m.; players are to arrive at 5 p.m. For more information, contact 1128@helixcharter.net (this event is in fulfillment of Helix's Senior Project requirement).

Thank you donors

Helix has been the beneficiary of very generous donors through the website donorschoose.org. In the 2015-16 school year, donors have contributed more than \$86,000 toward 132 various projects proposed by teachers. Projects funded include a field trip for the entire freshman class, Chromebook computers, graphing calculators, equipment for dissections, a trip to Disneyland for students with moderate to severe physical and/or intellectual disabilities, and much, much more. To support other Helix projects, visit the Donors Choose website, and search "Helix Charter High School".

— Jennifer Osborn is principal of Helix Charter High School. Reach her at josborn@helixcharter.net.

NEWS BRIEFS

'MasterChef' holding open calls in March

Can lightning strike twice for another La Mesa home cook?

Last year, La Mesa's own Claudia Sandoval was crowned the winner of the television cooking competition "MasterChef." And on March 5, home cooks from around the San Diego region will again have their own opportunity to compete for the top honor.

The open casting call will be held from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. at an unreleased location in San Diego. Applicants must bring one prepared dish to be served to the judges. Each cook will be given three minutes to plate their dish

at the casting call location, but there will not be a kitchen to cook or warm the dish. Also, no dishes or utensils will be provided.

Interested applicants are encouraged to pre-register, although if you do not pre-register, you can just show up with your signature dish.

For more information on pre-registration and to download the application form, visit masterchefcasting.com/open-call.

Scholarship for conservation

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See **BRIEFS** page 19 →

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Library to cook up some 'Food for Thought'



Heather Pisani-Kristl

The La Mesa Library is proud to announce that the second annual "Food for Thought" festival, taking place at the library on Saturday, March 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., will feature nationally- and locally-renowned chefs and brewmasters. You'll be able to hear firsthand experiences from the culinary industry, nibble a sample or two, purchase some cookbooks from the Friends of the Library book sale, and grab a photo with TV personality chef Claudia Sandoval. All events are free and open to the public.

At 1 p.m., Sandoval, 2015's winner of Fox Network's "MasterChef" challenge, will discuss her favorite recipes and cooking techniques, as well as the cookbook she is releasing in May 2016. Fans of the show will enjoy a photo opportunity with Sandoval after her talk. Since the conclusion of "MasterChef" season six, Sandoval has developed a successful private dining business, appeared on local television, and written her upcoming cookbook, "Claudia's Cocina: A Taste of Mexico." She was born and raised in San Diego, and now lives with her 10-year-old daughter in La Mesa.



Local celebrity chef Claudia Sandoval will speak at the library Food for Thought event on March 12. (Courtesy of chefclaudiascocina.com)

The festival will also include a presentation about raw food and health from San Diego expert Mimi Kirk. At 11 a.m., Kirk will demonstrate raw-food preparation techniques and will share samples of raw cuisine with the audience. As the best-selling author of "Live Raw," "Live Raw Around the World" and "The Ultimate Book of Modern Juicing," Kirk has appeared in person and on television, including "Dr. Oz," "The Steve Harvey Show," "The Doctors" and count-

less others. She has been interviewed in hundreds of newspapers and blogs and can be seen in three movies soon to be released. Her message is about how to live a long, healthy, ageless life.

Bolt Brewery, La Mesa's first microbrewery, will open "Food for Thought" at 10 a.m. with a discussion of their experience establishing a brewery in San Diego's booming beer scene. Bolt's Brewery's main brew house and beer garden is a 10-barrel bohemian brew

system, built in the mid-'90s in Budapest, Hungary. At this La Mesa location, master brewer Clint Stromberg will produce roughly 2,000 barrels of beer annually along with brewer Chris Angel. Their second location, a satellite tasting room and restaurant, has opened in San Diego's Little Italy. Bolt Brewery is owned by Tony Calafato, Molly Rust and Clint Stromberg.

For youth ages 11-17, there will be a hands-on craft to make candy sushi; this will



Author Mimi Kirk will share examples of her raw cuisine at Food for Thought. (Courtesy of youngonrawfood.com)

take place at noon in the Teen Room and all ingredients will be provided. During the festival, the Friends of La Mesa Library will be holding a special sale of cookbooks in the lobby. Proceeds from the book sale will help fund summer activities at the library. Whether you love to cook, eat, or both, there will be something for you at this free and fun event. Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 12 and contact library staff at 619-469-2151 if you have any questions.

—Heather Pisani-Kristl is branch manager of the La Mesa Library. Write to her at heather.pisani-kristl@sdcounty.ca.gov. ■

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► **Heroes**, from page 1



The Local Heroes: (l to r) Police Master Officer Lillie Chase, police Det. Bucky Wright, police volunteer Nonie Beach, fire Capt. Dave Hardenburger, police volunteer Ray Redina, paramedic Robert Ivery and paramedic Jon Alva (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

RSVP) volunteers Ray Rendina and Nonie Beach.

Paramedic Jon Alva has been serving the citizens of East County and La Mesa for more than three years. Last year he and his partner responded to a dispatch call reporting a critically injured motorcyclist. Alva's communication and clinical skills kept the motorcyclist alive.

Paramedic Robert Ivery has been serving patients in La Mesa and East County since the early 1980s. Throughout his tenure he has inspired many caregivers and students throughout East County and he treats each student and patient with kindness and respect. Ivery is well-respected by the community of La Mesa and by his peers at AMR.

Fire Capt. Dave Hardenburger is a 20-plus-year veteran of the fire service who has been with the LMFD since 1998. He was honored for his "instinctual awareness" that led to him saving a child who was choking on a grape, Fire Chief Rick Sitta said.

"When you get the child call, that really get's your gears going," Sitta said.

Det. Bucky Wright has been with the LMPD for seven and a half years. Wright made 63 arrests involving sales and possession of narcotics, wanted fugitives, robbery, burglary, assaults and identity theft suspects in the past year alone. He also represents the LMPD by working with the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Apprehensive Team.

Master Officer Lillie Chase has been with the LMPD for nine years. In Oct. 2015, Chase and her partner were dispatched to a report of a suicidal female who was attempting to jump off a bridge. Using the element of surprise, Chase reached through the concrete bars of the guardrail and grabbed the female around her chest. She, her partner and a citizen were eventually able to pull the female to safety.

RSVP Ray Rendina has been with the agency since Feb. 1998 and since that time he has volunteered more than 5,100 hours. Because he is so dependable and always has a "can do" attitude, Ray is one of the favorite volunteers among the dispatchers.

RSVP Nonie Beach also joined the agency in February 1988 and she's volunteered over 4,000 hours of her time. In addition to being part of the RSVP Color Guard, she's always been diligent in performing her duties. Her 18 years of service have made her a valuable team member within the LMPD.

—Margie 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@alumni.pitt.edu. ■



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Hats off to Terri Clark

Canadian country star to perform at Sycuan Casino

J.S. Anderson

Eight-time Canadian Country Music Association winner Terri Clark is coming to Sycuan Casino on March 3 at 8 p.m.

Country fans will recognize her hits “Poor, Poor, Pitiful Me,” “Girls Lie, Too,” “Better Things to Do,” “You’re Easy on the Eyes” and “I Just Wanna Be Made” as well as the 2013 and 2014 Canadian Country Top 40 hits “I’m Movin’ On” and “Some Songs.” According to Clark’s website, her favorite song to perform is the U.S. Country Top 40 hit “No Fear.”

Clark stands out on stage, wearing her signature cowboy hat while belting out traditional country music with a distinctive honky tonk quality to it. Her iconic cowboy hat even lends its name to her fan club — the Hat Brats. When asked how many hats she has owned over the years, Clark could not begin to guess, finally offering it is in the thousands. She gives many away, she said, “because sometimes you just have to purge things,” adding that she signs



Country music star Terri Clark will be performing at Sycuan Casino on March 3. (Courtesy of Sycuan Casino)

and donates some for silent auctions to benefit various charities.

Clark was raised in Medicine Hat, Alberta. She got the love for country music from her grandparents, Ray and Betty Gauthier, who had their own music careers and had even appeared on bills with the likes of George Jones and Johnny Cash.

The Sycuan show will be Clark’s first performance in the San Diego region in almost four years, although she really likes performing here.

“What’s not to love, especially this time of year,” Clark said, adding that she has taken up golf since her last visit, and looks forward to playing some of the area’s courses.

As Clark described it, she is “a little off the cuff with the audience” during her performances. She likes to walk around the cities and towns where she performs and eat at local restaurants. This enables her to talk to the audience about where they live.

Clark described her music as coming “from a place of empowerment, rather than being a victim.” She observed that people, particularly women, seem to gravitate to this theme. Being “somewhat a voice for them,” her songs tell them “it’s OK to dream to dream big and go after what you want in life,” she said.

“[I’m a] big believer of pulling yourself up and going for it ... whether it is in the fields or as

a nurse in an emergency room. Country music depicts that life-style,” she said.

To Clark, great country songs are authentic, real, and honest and “tell a story that weaves into your psyche.”

She said songs like “Good Ole Boys Like Me” by Don Williams, “Everything that Glitters Is Not Gold” by Dan Seals, and “Whiskey Lullaby” by Brad Paisley and Alison Krauss are examples of the kind of story songs that represent the best of good country music. This type of song is coming back because country is a wide format.

“You can have the Judds in one corner, Dwight Yoakam in another, and Mary Chapin Carpenter in another,” she said.

Late last year, Clark performed at the bedsides of 35 veterans in the Nashville VA Hospital as part of the Musicians on Call initiative.

“I got more out of it than they did,” she said.

Some of the vets could not talk and were confined to their beds. As she performed, Clark said she saw one vet slowly smile and break out into a big grin, then open his eyes.

“Music is a universal language that speaks to the heart,” she said.

Clark recalled a performance some months prior, in a pouring rain that left an audience dwindled to about 50 people. When she later performed at the Nashville VA hospital, she encountered a veteran who was one of those who remained in the rain to hear her perform.

In addition to Musicians On Call, Clark has also supported the Lisa Ross Parker Foundation, a charity located in Nashville dedicated to assisting and caring for patients with leukemia, lymphoma and other blood-related cancers, and their families. Clark, along with her fans, also helped establish a well in Uganda as part of The Water Project.

Terri Clark plays the Sycuan Casino March 3 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$49 and \$59 and can be purchased at Sycuan.com/entertainment/.

—J.S. Anderson is a freelance writer, a former Marine and a retired college administrator. Reach him at o6rider@gmail.com. ■



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What's Cooking

with Julie

ZESTY CORNBREAD

Julie White

This recipe comes courtesy of my friend Belinda Benson. Cornbread is one of those recipes that everyone likes. The ingredients aren't exactly low-calorie or healthy, but delicious enough to have once or twice a year. It is great with chili or soups!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup melted butter
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 4 eggs beaten
- 1/2 cup or 1 4-ounce can diced green chilies
- 1 can cream style corn
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt



Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees
Combine butter and sugar until well blended. Add remaining ingredients in order and stir until blended. Grease a 9-by-9-inch baking pan and pour into pan. Bake for one hour. Serve plain or with butter and honey! ■

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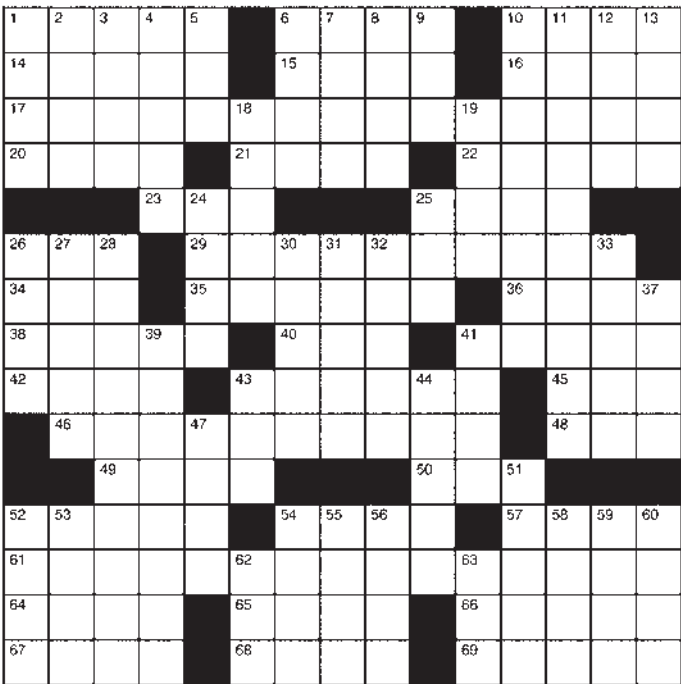
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PUZZLES | ANSWERS ON PAGE 8

Culinary Contributors



CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Boutonniere location
- 6 Author of *Les Miserables*
- 10 Prepare for an exam
- 14 Become hardened to
- 15 Novelist Bagnold
- 16 Honolulu site
- 17 Frank Gerber
- 20 Discerns
- 21 Plant of the lily family
- 22 Compilations
- 23 Ingest
- 25 Tibetan snowman
- 26 Not in operation
- 29 Henry Heinz
- 34 Standard
- 35 Varnish ingredients
- 36 Ski lift
- 38 Wear
- 40 Lair
- 41 Blackbird
- 42 German fascist
- 43 Paternally related
- 45 Prayer
- 46 William Underwood
- 48 A Beatty
- 49 Musical symbol
- 50 Tier

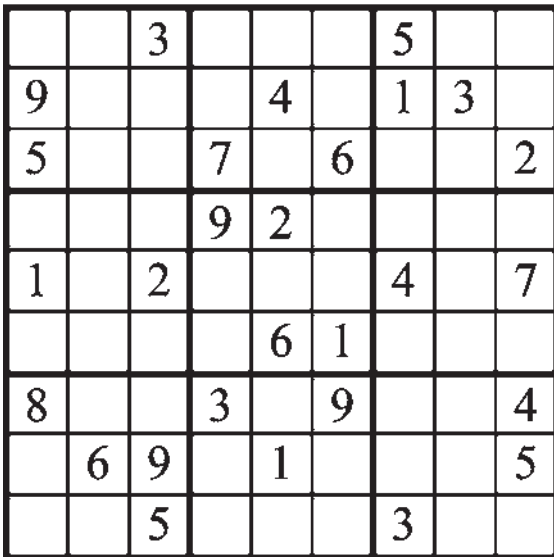
- 52 Holy; prefix
- 54 Mount, in Jordan
- 57 Verdi opera
- 61 Milton Hershey
- 64 Dashed
- 65 Cupid
- 66 Work assignment
- 67 Ago; Scots
- 68 Took off
- 69 Former Washington hostess

DOWN

- 1 Fewer
- 2 Cost
- 3 Unadulterated
- 4 Expunge
- 5 16 Across
- 6 Command to Fido
- 7 Take apart
- 8 Make a donation
- 9 Poetic form
- 10 Mull over
- 11 Charles Post
- 12 Egyptian month
- 13 Disarrange
- 18 Birth-related
- 19 Merriment
- 24 Bonnet contents?
- 25 Annual sch. publications
- 26 Frank
- 27 Electrical unit
- 28 Clarence Birdseye
- 30 Small anchor
- 31 Correct
- 32 Song hit of the 1930s
- 33 Soothing ointment
- 37 Wind instrument
- 39 *The Gay* ____; 1934 film
- 41 Reminder
- 43 Ginger follower
- 44 Old card game
- 47 Langston Hughes title
- 51 Squander
- 52 BSA membs.
- 53 Nautical call
- 54 Appellation
- 55 British school
- 56 Wheeler or Lahr
- 58 Wife of Osiris
- 59 Fender nick
- 60 Hollywood pooch
- 62 Statute
- 63 Doctrine

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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ARTS CALENDAR

MUSIC NOTES

Cuyamaca College’s 2016 ‘Spring Concert Series’

Various dates

This concert series is underway with several more performances scheduled through May. A few installments just around the corner include: “Paving the Way,” on Friday, Feb. 26 at 7:30 p.m. — a celebration of black history with musical performances, theater, dance, politics and more; Kembang Sunda on Tuesday, March 1 at 7:30 p.m. — an Indonesian Gamelan ensemble; and a student performance on Wednesday, March 16 at 7:30 p.m. — featuring students of standard and contemporary choral ensemble works. Admission to these performances is \$8, or \$5 for students and seniors. Cuyamaca College’s Performing Arts Theatre, located at 900 Rancho San Diego Parkway, Rancho San Diego. Visit gcccd.edu.

Point Loma Singers concert

Sunday, Feb. 28

A free concert under the direction of Dr. Keith Pedersen. The ensemble of 22 singers will present sacred choral music and the vocal jazz group will present secular and sacred jazz with instruments. The concert will start at 4 p.m. at Ascension Lutheran, located at 5106 Zion Ave. in Allied Gardens.

Terri Clark

Thursday, March 3

Canadian country artist Terri Clark will bring her traditional country style and signature cowboy hat to Sycuan’s Live & Up Close venue. The show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$49 – \$59 and room and ticket packages are available. Sycuan is located at 5485 Casino Way in El Cajon. Visit sycuan.com for tickets.

Many Strings concert

Sunday, March 6

The duo Many Strings will perform on their hammered dulcimer and guitar for this public concert. The performance is scheduled for 3 p.m. in the Visitor Center at Mission Trails Park, located at 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail. The concert is free but donations are appreciated. Visit mtrp.com.

Homesick Hitchers

Friday, March 18

Kick start your weekend with this rousing show at the Riviera Supper Club. Homesick Hitchers are an all-acoustic group that plays traditional bluegrass music sprinkled with touches of other genres, from folk to funk and everything in between. Shows at the Riv are always free and this one starts at 9 p.m. The restaurant and music venue is located at 7777 University Ave. in La Mesa. Visit rivierasupperclub.com and homesickhitchers.com.

STAGE CUES

‘Lucky Stiff’

Thursday, March 10 – Saturday March 12; and Thursday, March 17 – Saturday, March 19

Written by Tony Award winner Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, “Lucky Stiff” tells the story of an unassuming salesman who must take the embalmed body of his recently murdered uncle on a vacation to Monte Carlo if he hopes to inherit \$6 million. There will be a performance at 7:30 p.m. on each of the dates listed above, plus a matinee at 2 p.m. on March 12 and 19. Tickets start at \$10. The Stagehouse Theater at at Grossmont College, located at 8800 Grossmont College Drive in El Cajon, bordering La Mesa. Visit grossmont.edu.

‘Mack and Mabel’

Friday, March 11 – Friday, April 1

This will be Lamplighters Community Theatre’s first musical production since its grand reopening in 2014. “Mack and Mabel” follows the complex relationship between a legendary film director — who is also a temperamental workaholic — and an adorable waitress who becomes one of his biggest stars. Tickets are \$23 in advance and \$20 for seniors, students and military. Lamplighters is located at 5915 Severin Drive in La Mesa. Visit lamplighterslamesa.com.

‘Annie’

Wednesday, March 16 – Saturday March, 19

Peter Pan Junior Theater will perform this classic musical at The Performing Arts Center at The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center. Tickets for March 16, 17, 18 and 19 performances at 7 p.m. and for the Saturday, March 19 matinee performance at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$15. The Kroc Center is located at 6845 University Ave. in the Rolando area. Visit ppjt.org.

ON FILM

‘The Good Dinosaur’

Saturday, March 26

The newest Pixar movie follows the story of a dinosaur named Arlo and his pet human Spot. Screening begins at 2 p.m. at the La Mesa Library, located at 8074 Allison Ave. in La Mesa. Visit sdcl.org/locations_LM.html.

GALLERY VIEW

‘Old Masters’

Through Wednesday, March 2

The Foothills Art Association is hosting its annual “Old Masters” show at the Foothills Gallery at Porter Hall located at 4910 Memorial Drive in La Mesa. Local artists are showing their reproductions of great works of the “old masters” (painters whose works are at least 100 years old). Visitors to the show can vote to have their favorite reproduction win the “People’s Choice Award.” The gallery is free and open to the public Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Visit artid.com/foothills.

‘Contemporary Crafts’

Through Thursday, March 3

This art exhibit features work by Kathy Nida and James E. Watts. Nida creates artistic story-telling quilts. Watts is a sculpture artist who puts together items of found tin for various flat and 3-D pieces. “Contemporary Crafts” is at Grossmont College’s Hyde Art Gallery located at 8800 Grossmont College Drive in El Cajon, bordering La Mesa. The gallery is open 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday – Thursday (closed Friday – Sunday and holidays). Visit grossmont.edu/artgallery.

‘Back Row Group’

Through Saturday, March 12

Local artist and teacher, Drew Bandish, and five of his students are exhibiting 24 paintings for this show at the Herrick Community Health Care Library. The pieces featured are watercolor paintings done in a variety of styles. The library is located at 9001 Wakarusa St. in La Mesa. Visit herricklibrary.org.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Free blood pressure screenings

Tuesday, March 1; Tuesday, March 15 and Friday, March 18

No appointment necessary for these free screenings on March 1 from 9:30 – 11 a.m. at the Sharp Grossmont Senior Resource Center (9000 Wakarusa St., La Mesa); on March 15 from from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at College Avenue Senior Center (6299 Capri Drive, College Area); and on March 18 from 9:30 – 11 a.m. at the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center (8450 La Mesa Blvd.); Call 619-740-4214 for more information. Open to the public.

Lenten Speaker Series

Friday, March 4; Friday, March 11; and Friday, March 18

St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church (7710 El Cajon Blvd., La Mesa) is hosting this series each Friday for Lent. Each event will start at 5 p.m. with a fish taco dinner (\$7 and \$4 plates), followed by a guest speaker in Barry Hall. After the presentations, attendees are invited to pray the Stations of the Cross in the church at 7 p.m. On March 4, guest speaker Dr. Jamie Gates’ topic is, “Who is Buying and Selling your Children?” Dr. Gates, Director of the Justice and Reconciliation Center at Point Loma Nazarene University is the co-author of the most extensive study on sex trafficking in San Diego County. On March 11, Director Tresha Souza will give a talk on the “So Others May Eat” program that operates in three locations in San Diego and delivers food and offers services to San Diego’s hungry and people in need. A Taize Prayer Service will be the conclusion to the Lenten experience on March 18. All are invited to experience the peace of contemplative worship that incorporates music, song and silence. A simple meal will be served before the service begins. For more information, visit stmartinoftoursparish.org or call 619-466-3241.

La Mesa Beautiful annual meeting

Sunday, March 6

La Mesa Beautiful’s annual meeting will be held at the Nan Coutts Cottage (5045 Memorial Drive, La Mesa) starting at 4 p.m. Guest speaker Meredith French will cover topics including healthy soils, beneficial insects, “must have” plants and more. French is an award-winning photographer, frequent contributor to California Garden Magazine and other publications, and her own garden won “Best Habitat Garden in California – 2010” – an annual award issued by California Garden Clubs, Inc. Refreshments will be served at this event. RSVP to Sharon Fitzpatrick at 619-303-8300 and get more information on the organization at lamesabeautiful.org.

‘Tomatomania!’

Saturday, March 13 and Sunday, March 14

California’s biggest heirloom tomato seedling sale will be held from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. each day this weekend at the Water Conservation Garden (12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, Rancho San Diego). The sale features rare, classic, brand new heirloom and hybrid tomato varieties. These seedlings will become a variety of tomato types in every size, shape, color and taste profile from “Amish” to “Zapotec.” Gardeners will learn how drought-resistant tomatoes can be successful and find supplies needed to grow them. Admission and parking for this event are free. There is a nominal fee (\$5 for Garden members; \$10 for non-members) for two tomato-growing presentations at 11 a.m. each day. Visit thegarden.org for more information.

‘Spring Into Healthy Living’

Wednesday, March 16

This annual health and wellness fair will be held at McGrath Family YMCA (12006 Campo Road, Spring Valley) from 9 a.m. – noon. There will be a free healthy breakfast provided by La Vida Real, along with health screenings, demonstrations, lectures and more. Exhibitor tables will showcase local health providers and resources; tips on nutrition and exercise; and volunteer opportunities. There will be drawings for prizes throughout the event. “Spring Into Healthy Living” is a free event but reservations are requested. Call 877-926-8300 and follow the prompts to reserve a spot.

[Editor’s note: The La Mesa Courier is expanding its calendar section to provide local arts listings alongside local community events. If you have an arts event — music concert, theater production, film screening or gallery showing — that you think should be included in our calendar, please email Jen Van Tieghem at jen@sdcnm.com.]

► **Honda**, from page 1

Sergeant. "I'm showing emotions in form. Some days, I get the inspiration to draw triangles, others I draw circles."

The former Marine-tuned-car-artist is proud that much of the work is done freehand without stencils, though he does use some rollers.

Saylor spends up to 40 hours a week putting Sharpie to his Honda, and he figures he's only 50 percent done with the exterior.

"Every time I sit down I have no plans. I just look at what I've done," he said. "It's like a puzzle. I think of what would look best. You can sit there and look at it and see dinosaurs, fish, hearts and stars."

When he's done with the outside, Saylor plans to fiberglass the interior, paint it white and start again.

Saylor figures he's gone through only 75 Sharpies since he started.

"Sharpies last forever," he laughed.

Saylor chose to ink up the Honda CRV because he loves the car's body style.

"I love the edges," he said. "I like to make the ink blend with the car. The handles tend to stick out, but I inked it in a way that they blended better."

The license plate on Saylor's car reads "NOKSHRP." The NOK is for Nokturnal Car Club, which Saylor has been a member of for seven years and the SHRP is for Sharpie.

"It's a very strict club that focuses on the appearance of the cars," he said. "I'm the only member who has used Sharpie, but everyone is required to have some sort of modification to the paint before they can be considered a full member."

The artwork has received different reactions from people.

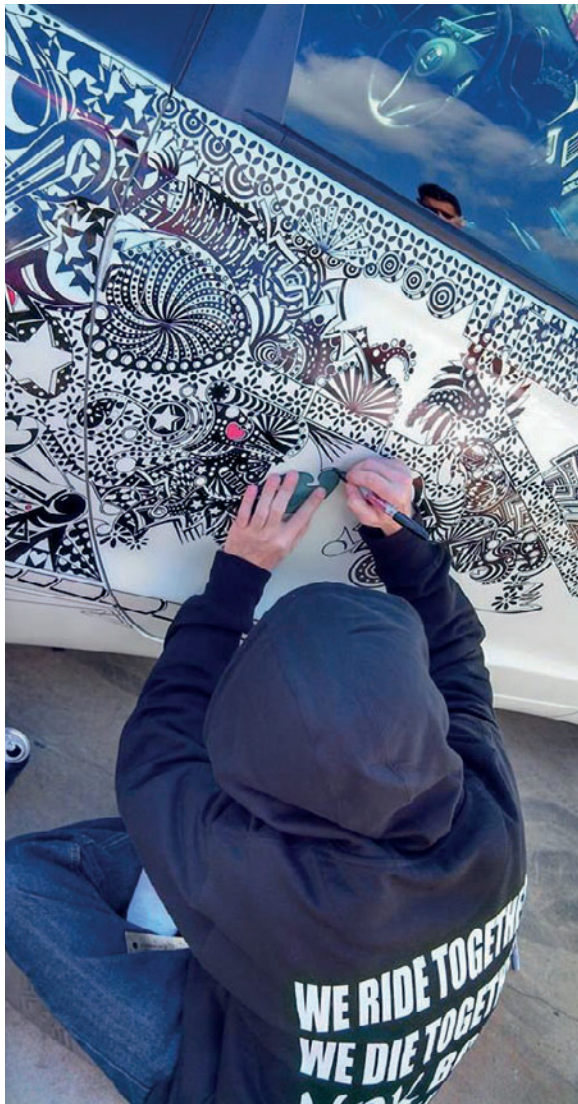
"Some people call me a genius and others want to know why I ruined the car," he laughed.

As much as Saylor loves the car, he admits he would be open to selling the finished car to an automotive museum or Ripley's Believe It Or Not!

He also has his eyes on a new car.

"I love the new Tesla," he said. "I would love to do a silver and black one."

That would get lots of ink for sure.



Former Marine Jeremy Saylor stencils patterns on his car. (Courtesy of Jeremy Saylor)

You can check out Saylor's work and track the progress on his car at [instagram.com/jeremy_noknok_saylor](https://www.instagram.com/jeremy_noknok_saylor).

—Alex Owens is a freelance writer from La Mesa. Reach him at alexowenssd@gmail.com. ■

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The sun will come out for Peter Pan's 'Annie'



Orphans in "Annie" rehearse "Hard Knock Life." (Photo by Alex Owens)

Alex Owens

Yes, the sun is going to come out tomorrow, but you can bet your bottom dollar it will really shine in La Mesa March 16-19.

That's when Peter Pan Junior Theatre will be presenting a production of the hit Broadway musical "Annie" at the Joan B. Kroc Theatre at The Salvation Army Kroc Center.

This marks the third time the company has presented "Annie," according to the show's director, Dr. Mark Arapostathis, a teacher at La Mesa Arts Academy (LMAAC) and the Mayor of La Mesa.

Ninety students have been rehearsing songs and choreography since November, but the show isn't just about singing and dancing, Arapostathis said.

"We're not working just on the production, but we're striving for cultural literacy," he said. "We're teaching the students about the Great Depression. We explain that there was no Annie or Daddy Warbucks, but we explain about the New Deal and FDR."

Long before Arapostathis became the PPJT director, he was one of many performers in the show. He said the cultural literacy is something new and adds to the show's value.

"When I was growing up, we didn't do that as much," he said. "But kids have greater access to finding out information about that era than we did."

The show features a few cast members as Rockettes, and a couple of them got a little bit of extra help when they went on a class trip to New York in October and met one of the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall.

Alexandra Moyer, a seventh grader at LMAAC, said the Rockette gave her some useful performance advice.

"She said, 'Practice! Practice! Practice!'" Moyer said.

Attendees will see a slightly different show than the production on Broadway or the one that toured through San Diego a few months back.

"Normally, 'Annie' has a cast of 22, but we have 90 performers — we've expanded the cast times four," Arapostathis said. "Every child has a role and a name. They're not just the chorus."

Although many students have gone on to other productions after being aged out of the PPJT program, Arapostathis emphasizes the program's goal is to build character, not stars.

"Talent is relative," he said. "I want kids with good attitudes who want to work. I consider it a big compliment when people say, 'Oh, you found such tal-



Dr. Mark Arapostathis gives direction to Eleni Arapostathis as cast members look on. (Photo by Alex Owens)

ented kids.' In truth, the rehearsals can look like claymation — I have to go line by line to help them make the stage moves look natural."

This marks the 23rd production that Arapostathis has directed and he has changed his approach in recent years.

"Lots of children are involved in sports and other things so we're trying to tailor the program to that," he said. "We've reduced rehearsals from six days to four. It's forced greater clarity in my thinking because there isn't as much time."

There will be five shows — four evening productions and a Saturday matinee — but the students will also perform free shows for students in the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District as well.

"PPJT is not subsidized by the district," he said. "We pay to rent the theater, we pay the musicians and pay for the school buses so that 2,000 students can see the play for free during the week of the show. We also pay for a substitute teacher at LMAAC for me the week of the show."

Although the students will be as prepared as much as possible, Arapostathis said sometimes they learn to adapt to the unexpected.

"Last season, when we did 'Once Upon A Mattress,' a child couldn't make it so I put on a crown and read her lines," Arapostathis said.

Peter Pan Junior Theatre's production of "Annie" will be presented March 16-19 at the Joan B. Kroc Theatre at The Salvation Army Kroc Center, 6845 University Ave., San Diego, CA 92115. Tickets are \$15. Performances begin at 7 p.m. for evening shows, 1 p.m. for the Saturday matinee.

For information, check out ppjt.org.

—Alex Owens is a freelance writer from La Mesa. Reach him at alexowenssd@gmail.com. ■

Upcoming productions for Grossmont College's Stagehouse Theatre

Anne Krueger

Neil Simon's classic "The Odd Couple" and the musical farce "Lucky Stiff" are among the spring and summer productions set for Grossmont College's Stagehouse Theatre.

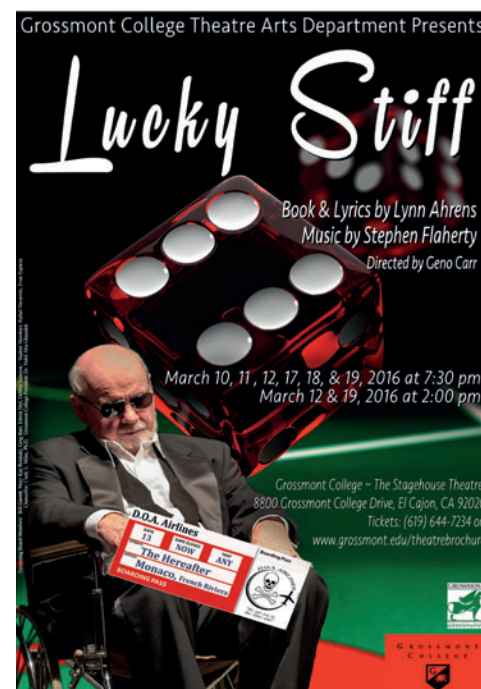
Directed by Geno Carr, "Lucky Stiff" details the story of unassuming English shoe salesman Harry Witherspoon, who is forced to take the embalmed body of his recently-murdered uncle on a vacation to Monte Carlo — and pass off the deceased as being alive — if he hopes to inherit \$6 million. If he is unable to pass off his uncle as alive, all of the money goes to the Universal Dog Home of Brooklyn.

Written by Tony Award-winners Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty ("Rocky," "Seussical," "Ragtime"), "Lucky Stiff" is a zany, offbeat, hilarious murder mystery with a tuneful score and a well-oiled plot. "Lucky Stiff" will be performed March 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19 at 7:30 p.m. Matinee performances at 2 p.m. are set for March 12 and 19.

On April 1 and 2, Grossmont College Theatre Arts Department faculty, staff and special guest will hold a special fundraising performance, "Loves Me... Loves Me Not," a comedic stage reading that looks at love from all its complicated angles. (Because this show includes some adult themes, it is not appropriate for those under the age of 18.) Performances will be held in Room 220 at Grossmont College, and the \$20 admission charge (\$10 for Grossmont College students) will be committed to the Summer Conservatory Program.

Winner of the Tony Award for Best Play, as well as being a successful movie and television series, "The Odd Couple" finds neurotic neat freak Felix Unger being thrown out by his wife and moving in with his divorced friend, slovenly sportswriter Oscar Madison. Hilarity ensues when Oscar's untidy, yet happy life of excessive gambling, smoking, and drinking collides with Felix's need to obsessively clean and criticize others.

Directed by Jeannette Thomas, "The Odd Couple" will be performed May 5,



(Courtesy of Grossmont-Cuyamaca College)

6, 7, 12, 13 and 14 at 7:30 p.m. Matinee performances at 2 p.m. are set for May 7 and 14.

The season concludes in July with the 3rd Annual Summer Theatre Arts Conservatory program production of "Around the World in 80 Days," a musical version of the timeless tale of amazing adventure as Phileas Fogg attempts to circumnavigate the globe in less than 80 days in order to win a sizeable wager.

The Summer Theatre Arts Conservatory brings high school and college students together to perform at the Stagehouse Theatre. Student performers and technicians learn what it is like to work in a professional theatre by committing to daytime classes that teach specialized skills, as well as evening rehearsals and two weeks of performances.

Tickets, including a mini-season ticket plan (which does not include the summer show), can be purchased by phone, online, or at the box office. For online tickets and information about performances, visit grossmont.edu/theatrebrochure; by phone, call 619-644-7234. The box office is at Grossmont College, Bld. 22A/Room 200A1 (back of Parking Lot 1). The box office opens one hour prior to each production.

—Anne Krueger is the communications and public information director for Grossmont-Cuyamaca College District. ■

Celebrating a century



(Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

On Sunday, Feb. 21, long-time La Mesa resident Wilberta Angell celebrated her 100th birthday at the Arbor Hills Nursing Center.

Angell was joined by family, friends and members of the Lighthouse Baptist Church where she was a Sunday school teacher for many years.

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Angell moved to La Mesa in 1940. She was married to Ted Angell who worked as professional magician and who, in his later years, would perform his magic act for hospitals, children's homes and churches. He passed away in 1983.

In addition to teaching Sunday school, Angell also ran a day care out of her home in La Mesa. Giving back to her community has always been and is still important to the 100 year old, even though age has slowed her down a bit.

"I just wish I could do more — stand and walk like I used to. Maybe someday I will again," she told the group gathered for her party. "Oh well, I guess I'll just be satisfied the way I am now."

► **Briefs**, from page 11

apply for one of five \$1,000 college scholarships offered by the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (RCD). The RCD Conservation Scholarship Program encourages students who are interested in conservation, agriculture, environmental science, natural resources or biology to attend college and pursue careers in resource conservation or agriculture.

Applicants must be high school seniors who are planning to attend college in the fall of 2016. The complete application packet can be found on the RCD website at rcdsandiego.org. Submissions must be received by April 11.

"These scholarships are ideal for students who have a real passion about resource conservation or agriculture," said Sheryl Landrum, RCD district manager, in a press release. "They are not strictly academic scholarships, but also take into account the applicant's original essay, relevant experience, and letters of recommendation."

For more information about RCD and its programs, contact Sheryl Landrum at 619-562-0096 or sheryl.landrum@rcdsandiego.org. Or visit rcdsandiego.org.

La Mesa church completes solar conversion project

Journey Community Church in La Mesa reports it has completed one of East County's largest solar conversions. The church said Precision Electric Solar of

Lakeside recently completed a \$512,000 contract to install a 207 kW system featuring 658 solar panels measuring 39-by-66 inches. The system is expected to save about \$100,000 annually in utility costs and reduce carbon emissions by about 80 million pounds per year, according to church officials.

"We looked at the possibility of solar a year ago and the benefits to us and the community were clear," said lead pastor at Journey Ed Noble in a statement. "We want to do what we can to connect to our community, serve the region and be good neighbors."

"It is awesome to see what God gives us freely on a daily basis with the sun and be able to harvest it and create electricity," said Greg Abell, president of Precision Electric Solar. "We are proud to work with a church that supports the community like Journey does. In less than five years they will have their return on investment."

In 2015, the church launched a campaign and churchgoers pledged more than \$3 million to install the system and make other needed capital improvements to the buildings.

The church at 8363 Center Drive in La Mesa owns a 7-acre campus of buildings, including offices, meeting rooms, classrooms, a thrift store, and a food bank, as well as commercial businesses that rent space. About 2,500 people attend three services each week.

20th annual bird festival

Bird lovers of all ages will celebrate 20 years of birds and local bird habitats at the "Sea, Sage,

and Sand" Bird Festival from March 3-6 at locations throughout San Diego County.

San Diego Audubon invites the public to spend four days celebrating the region's abundant collection of bird species — one of the most diverse in the country — and to foster an appreciation of San Diego's extraordinary bird population.

The festival comes packed with a variety of dynamic activities, including more than 40 field trips around San Diego County to spot hundreds of bird species; bird photography and art workshops; an optics fair to test top-tier bird-watching equipment; and rare opportunities to bird watch in untraditional locations, such as on a sport-fishing boat, a bike or on horseback.

On the final day of the festival, Audubon presents an expanded Family Day with bird-friendly fun for all ages. Parents and children will learn about San Diego's bird populations with hands-on activities that include building birdhouses, exploring guided nature walks and more.

In addition to a full lineup of interactive activities, the festival also includes educational seminars with expert presenters, including keynote speaker, environmental author and president of the American Birding Association, Jeffrey Gordon.

For a full schedule of activities and to register, visit bit.ly/1ONzXVP. Registration is available for individual tours, workshops and single activities. For more information on the San Diego Audubon Society, visit sandiegoaudubon.org. ■

A pearl at the Riviera



(Courtesy of Jason Rammelsberg)

On Feb. 19, the patrons of the Riviera Supper Club and Turquoise Room on University Avenue were treated to an impromptu performance by Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Vedder (left), who joined The Amazons to sing two songs, including a cover of Anthrax's "Got the Time."

Joining Vedder and the band was also '80s rocker Joe Jackson, best known for his hit "Is She Really Going Out with Him?"

"Sixteen-year-old Jason is so high-fiving 41-year-old Jason right now," Riviera general manager Jason Rammelsberg (pictured, right) posted to his Facebook page, along with a clip of the surprise performance, which can be seen at facebook.com/lamesacourier.

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Wood Damage Repair Contractor



Jeff Mudd

"How does El Niño effect wood rot on your house?"

Paint the exterior wood trim; Examine your caulking compound; Check the balcony and deck slopes; Make sure water flows away from the walls and into the drainage system...

This all sound advice during normal home maintenance, but let's look closer as we are in the middle of El Niño. Please view our article at lamesacourier.com/expertadvice.

Monte Vista Village

Tracy Walter
22 Years in the Senior Living Industry



Tracy Walter

What does buying a car and choosing a senior community have in common? More than you think. #1 Get past the obvious. The senior community design is as important as the resident mix and assisted living is not always appropriate for those who need memory support. Above all else, do not succumb to high pressure sales tactics you encounter when buying a car. For more on what to look for please view our article at lamesacourier.com/expertadvice.

Cultivating Salon Excellence in La Mesa

HairLoveDesign is excited to introduce a new and enriched salon experience to La Mesa with the opening of Cultivate. Cultivate, a HairLoveDesign Salon will offer an enhanced customer experience through the art of active listening and effective client consultation. We are Cultivating lasting relationships, education, trust, and the best hair styling experience with professionals who care.



HairLoveDesign.com

Please view our article at lamesacourier.com/expertadvice.

For more info: lamesacourier.com/expert-advice

Call Me. Let's get your property SOLD!

Sprawling Mid-Century Home | 5Br, 7 Ba, Office, Den, Formal Dining, Music Room, Pool & Cabana on Private .8 Acre



4923 Cline Road, Mt. Helix | \$900K - \$950K

JUST LISTED/OPEN HOUSE Sunday, March 6th, 2 - 4 pm.

Gorgeous, Artsy & Welcoming! Single story 4Br, 2 Ba, Approx 2900 s.f., swimming pool, fireplace, expansive decks, spectacular sunrise to sunset views!



10593 Queen Ave., Mt. Helix | \$875k - \$925k

Laura's 2016 SOLD properties so far...



Windandsea La Jolla



Windsor Hills



La Mesa Village



La Mesa Village



Rancho San Diego



Mission Valley



Rancho San Diego



La Mesa



La Mesa Highlands



La Mesa Village

Thank you La Mesa homeowners for your continued trust! Most homes sold in La Mesa for the last 13 years!*

Laura Lothian
Realtor
Pacific Sotheby's
International Realty
619.540.7744
Laura@LauraLothian
RealEstate.com
CalBRE # 01362585

