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La Mesa COURIER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FEATURE

Bringing the art back



Nainsook Framing + Art aims to revitalize La Mesa's artistic heritage. **Page 2**

FEATURE

Eat fresh



La Mesan cofounds food delivery service with a healthy twist. **Page 3**

THEATER

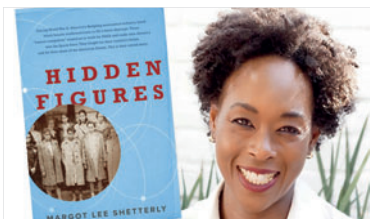
Raunchy romp



Lamplighters' 'What the Butler Saw' delights with British humor. **Page 12**

BOOKS

Books for Black History Month



Read about African-American accomplishments in science and more. **Page 18**

ALSO INSIDE

Opinion	5
Politics	6
Community	12
Theater	13
Puzzles	15
Calendar	19

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An OASIS at Grossmont Mall

San Diego Oasis President and CEO Simona Valanciute at the new OASIS Wellness Center in Grossmont Mall
(Photo by Brandon Harding)

Adult learning center moves from Mission Valley to La Mesa

Sara Appel-Lennon

For 35 years, San Diego OASIS operated on Macy's third floor in the Westfield shopping mall in Mission Valley at 1702 Camino Del Rio North.

However, because the Mission Valley Macy's is being shuttered as part of a 68-store downsizing, OASIS Learning Center is relocating to a new home in La Mesa's Grossmont Shopping Center at 5500 Grossmont Center.

The new location will consist of two centers — a Wellness Center and a Lifelong Learning Center.

The Wellness Center, which opened on Jan. 9, is

located opposite of Restoration Hardware Outlet (formerly Sports Authority) at 5500 Grossmont Center Drive, Suite 228 in La Mesa. The Wellness Center hosts exercise, dance and mind-body classes there.

The Lifelong Learning Center will be in the retail space formerly occupied by Anna's Linens, across from Barnes and Noble.

See **OASIS** page 5

A neighborly neighborhood revitalized

Casa de Oro group works to clean up Campo Road



Volunteers from the Casa de Oro Alliance at a community cleanup effort held in June of last year (Courtesy of CDO Alliance)

Jay Steiger

A source of civic pride for the residents of La Mesa is the small town feel of that community. While it is true that La Mesa is modest in size and enjoys a positive reputation within San Diego County, La Mesa is not alone and has many bordering neighborhoods with similar appeal. Fletcher Hills to the north, Rolando and the College area are to the west, Lemon Grove to the south, and Mt. Helix to the east. These are all notable, but there is

another community to the east, one along a major transportation corridor and with a rich history — the gateway community of Casa de Oro.

Casa de Oro, which translates to "house of gold," is centered on Campo Road, which runs from the border of Lemon Grove all the way to the mountain hamlet of Campo. The Casa de Oro section lies between Mt. Helix to the north and Dictionary Hill to the south.

When Casa de Oro was first settled, cattle were driven along a dirt road and the

hillsides were dotted with citrus, avocado, and olive orchards. Today, the Casa de Oro corridor is mostly suburban residential with businesses along Campo Road. In the 1960s through the 1980s, the neighborhood was vibrant with shops and restaurants.

Recently, those businesses have struggled because residents surrounding Casa de Oro have been increasingly pulled to shop and dine in nearby La Mesa or Rancho San Diego. This, combined with the costs

See **VOLUNTEERS** page 4

Lake Murray Park ballfields sustain vandalism, thefts

Jeff Clemetson
Editor

Back in early December, maintenance workers at the Lake Murray Park baseball fields discovered something odd. Someone had started sawing down several trees that were planted near the Rookie and Caps fields that butt up against neighbors' yards.

President of San Carlos Little League (SCLL) Gracie Gagliano called the city to find out why the trees were cut down. The city didn't know anything about it.

In early January, more trees were discovered cut down and it became apparent that the baseball fields had been vandalized.

"Those trees provide shade for our families during the season and we were all shocked that they were cut," Gagliano said.

So far, the police investigation has turned up no witnesses and no leads.

"It's kind of a dead end at this point," said San Diego Police Department Community Relations Officer John Steffen, adding that the estimated damage to the vandalized trees was valued at around \$5,000.

Steffen urges any witnesses or anyone with any information about the vandalized trees to contact him by phone at 858-495-7971 or by email at JMSteffen@sandiego.gov.

Part of a larger problem

The vandalism at Lake Murray Park is just the latest in a string of problems that local sports fields have experienced over the last several years. And it wasn't the first time trees were the target.

President of Patriots Baseball Nancy Hemmings said its ballpark, Shira Field, had an incident in which someone also cut a tree down for firewood in early December.

"Our outfield butts up against the Mission Trails

See **VANDALISM** page 7

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Couple aim to revive La Mesa’s artistic heritage

Kit-Bacon Gressitt

Things are happening in La Mesa Village. Stroll the boulevard, and you can people-watch in the renovated storefront windows, grab breakfast or a nice dinner, share a beer or a craft-caffeine fix with a friend. And now, since Nov. 1, you can enjoy the works of local artists, have some fine-art framing done — even take a painting class while sipping wine — at Nainsook Framing + Art.

Nainsook is one of the newest additions to a trend that — if all goes as the owners hope — will transform La Mesa Boulevard into a wining, dining and arts destination, similar to San Diego’s popular commercial districts.

“We love the small village feel of it,” said co-owner Roz Oserin. She and her husband Dan opened Nainsook with a lot of planning and enthusiasm. “It’s a very central location,” she continued, “easy on and off the freeways. It has the charm of the old craftsman homes and the walkability, which makes it a good location.”

After owning a La Mesa salon and spa for 18 years, the Oserins were ready for a new challenge, and one fell into their laps. Roz had been painting for about nine years, and her framer was ready to retire. They did some research and learned that the median age in La Mesa was decreasing while income was rising — encouraging data for a business owner.

“What it says,” Roz Oserin explained, “is that La Mesa is



Roz and Dan Oserin opened Nainsook Framing + Art in early November of last year in the La Mesa Village. (Photos by Sandy Small Photography)

re-gentrifying, it’s becoming the next South Park or North Park.”

While some La Mesans might prefer the community fade into relative obscurity, art as a focal point is a proven draw and it is not a new pursuit for La Mesa.

Jim Newland, president of the La Mesa Historical Society, recounted some of the past efforts to highlight La Mesa’s arts community, as far back as the late 1800s.

“James Tank Porter, who was a sculptor, his parents came here in the early part of the 1890s. He was really well known as a sculptor — and he was a planning commissioner. And the Grossmont area, when it was started in the early 19-teens, it was going to be an artist colony,” he said. “They went after musicians and artists and authors. It didn’t become what they planned, but there have always

been artists here. The Foothills Art Association, which came out of the La Mesa Women’s Club, goes back to 1942. We’ve had a long-standing theater group. ... The arts have always been important to the community.”

That sense of importance will be vital to the Oserins’ venture, and they are using their accumulated experience and knowledge of the community to make Nainsook successful.

“I feel like I have ridden through the test of time,” Roz Oserin said, “and I have a good feel for business here. Marketing is everything — and customer service. We want to be the go-to spot for artists and anyone who’s looking to enhance and protect their art. We want to take in special projects and educate everyone about how important the conservation of art



Art classes, complete with wine tasting, are held regularly at Nainsook.



Local artist Mary Russo made these “Nesting Boxes” found at Nainsook.

is — and that we can provide that service.”

Dan Oserin works with another framer, Liz Chapman, to create custom framing for both artists and arts patrons.

According to Roz Oserin, Nainsook’s framing “will be moderately-priced, exceptional framing with design ideas in mind.”

They have someone on board with a background in interior design, who will consult in the home or in the office on art purchasing and display.

In addition to art sales, framing and design, the Oserins are eager to introduce the community to fun arts opportunities, while supporting local artists. They conduct

Nainsook Framing + Art

8130 La Mesa Blvd.,
La Mesa
619-303-8060
nainsookframing.com

monthly Wine + Paint classes for adult beginners; they plan to offer “advanced education” for artists; and they’ve even created a custom class for a family visiting the area from Florida.

“It was my vision to have an art gallery so we could showcase local artist’s work and teach art classes — introductory classes — and it’s been successful already. We’re excited.”

La Mesa might never be considered an artist colony, but the Village is certainly developing a new aesthetic that will draw consumers to its sidewalks.

And if you’re wondering about the name, Nainsook is adapted from the Sanskrit for “eye pleasure.”

—Kit-Bacon Gressitt writes commentary and essays for *Excuse Me, I’m Writing*, is a founding editor of *WritersResist.com*, and has been published by *Missing Slate*, *Ms. Magazine* blog and *Trivia: Voices of Feminism*, among others. She formerly wrote for the *North County Times*. She also hosts *Fallbrook Library’s monthly Writers Read authors series* and open mic, and can be reached at kbgres-sitt@gmail.com. ■

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Farmer's Fix: Healthy eating made easy

Margie M. Palmer

Farmer's Fix is not your average meal-delivery service. The concept, which was hatched by Tawei David Lin and Doug Murphy, stemmed from their joint desire to have fresh, healthy food options available for on-demand meals.

"We met playing on a beach volleyball league and we talked about our past, working office jobs," said Murphy, who lives in La Mesa. "When you're in an office all day and you're busy, lunch isn't something you have time for. I would always go for the fastest and easiest thing and I ate terrible food as a result."

Not only does this lead to weight gain, it also contributes to the uncomfortable afternoon lull.

That, Murphy said, is why he jumped at the idea to co-found Farmer's Fix.

"We realized there wasn't anything out there like this so we decided we'd do it ourselves," he said. "We make food that tastes really good and it's really healthy and we deliver it in a way that the end user, a person like us who is squeezing in a 60-hour work week and has 12 minutes to have lunch. It's something that you can just grab and eat without interrupting your day."

Lin, who worked in the banking and finance industry in New York City before moving to Hillcrest, agrees the company fills an important void when it comes to meal delivery options.

"[When I was working in New York] I didn't plan ahead, and for a while, I was working many hours and gaining weight. I'm 5-foot-8 and at one point, I was up to 180 pounds," he said. "I trained for the New York Marathon and I lost the weight, but I realized it's not just the exercise part. I asked myself how I could make myself eat better but it just took too much time to make something and eat it."

When the pair met, he pitched the idea of an auto-subscription food delivery service that specialized in fresh, delicious meals.

"People are much more likely to reach for a healthier food choice if it's always available," he said.

Sourced locally, delivered fresh

All their ingredients are sourced locally, Murphy said, adding that all salads are made, and delivered, the same day Farmer's Fresh gets their ingredients.

"We pick up [our produce] at 8 a.m. on Sunday and all of our customers get their deliveries between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday. We definitely built it so people would get their food on Sunday so they'd be ready for the work week."

As for who came up with the salad concepts, Lin said they worked on those together.

"We did a lot of testing and what we really focus on is delivering salads that people can't get anywhere else. One of our customer favorites is Kaleifornia Dreamin' which blends and balances our Smoky Pomegranate



Farmer's Fix cofounders are Tawei David Lin of Hillcrest and Doug Murphy of La Mesa. (Courtesy of Farmer's Fix)



Apple cranberry salad



Provincial salad



California kale salad (Salad images courtesy of Farmer's Fix)



Thai rice salad



Olive carrot corn salad

salad dressing and baby kale, which you can't order anywhere else," he said. "We also use a lot of ingredients that you don't see in grocery stores, which we're particularly proud of."

Their Pearl Couscous salad, which boasts spinach, couscous, cherry tomato, slivered almonds, red bell peppers, feta, scallion and mint is also a top seller.

Murphy said that salad is paired with their balsamic dressing, which customers rave about.

"I don't know how people can't get the texture we get; it coats and sticks to everything and it makes every bite delicious."

The company doesn't currently offer an animal protein option, Lin said, but they expect to change that by the end of

January due to customer demand. But even without that, customers are giving the company high marks.

"When we go and see the positive things people say about us on Yelp, or when people write us notes, we really appreciate that," he said. "That is the fundamental feeling as to why we started this business. The most important thing to me is that we are feeding hundreds of people and making their lives easier. Our dream was to be the easiest way to eat healthy."

For more information on Farmer's Fix, visit myfarmers-fix.com.

—Margie M. Palmer can be reached at margiep@alumni.pitt.edu. ■

11 Critical Home Inspection Traps to be Aware of Weeks Before Listing Your Home for Sale

La Mesa - According to industry experts, there are over 33 physical problems that will come under scrutiny during a home inspection when your home is for sale. A new report has been prepared which identifies the eleven most common of these problems, and what you should know about them before you list your home for sale.

Whether you own an old home or a brand new one, there are a number of things that can fall short of requirements during a home inspection. If not identified and dealt with, any of these 11 items could cost you dearly in terms of repair. That's why it's critical that you read this report before you list your home. If you wait until the building inspector flags these issues for you, you will almost certainly experience costly delays in the close of your home sale or, worse, turn prospective buyers away altogether. In most cases, you can make a reasonable pre-inspection yourself if you know what you're looking for, and knowing what you're looking for can help you prevent little problems from growing into costly and unmanageable ones.

To help homesellers deal with this issue before their homes are listed, a free report entitled "11 Things You Need to Know to Pass Your Home Inspection" has been compiled which explains the issues involved.

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your FREE copy of this report call toll-free 1-800-270-1494 and enter 1003. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Sudoku & Crossword puzzle answers from page 15

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► **Volunteers**, from page 1

of real estate and leasing, and the economic disruption of the Great Recession led to a gradual decline in the number of retail and restaurant businesses. The slowdown in local commerce was paired with a seeming disinterest by property owners in maintaining the upkeep of their storefronts and lots. The region began to look worn, littered, and faded. People were still very interested in living in the surrounding neighborhoods, but were increasingly disinterested in shopping or dining in Casa de Oro. To compound these issues, illegal marijuana dispensaries were beginning to cluster in this region which already had a higher than average density of alcohol-based businesses.

Many residents were deeply concerned by these changes, and wanted to see a focus on improvement and renewal of the business district. In 2015, a group of community members began to meet to discuss ways of drawing needed attention to the area. This group included long-time and newly arrived residents, parents, retirees, and people with diverse backgrounds in government, arts, business management, and faith-based organizations. All were volunteers and all had the same goal — take action to better Casa de Oro.

Supported and advised by the nonprofit advocacy organization, The Institute for Public Strategies, the group ultimately decided to call themselves the Casa de Oro Community



The Casa de Oro Fall Festival held in November of last year was a huge success. (Courtesy of CDO Alliance)

Alliance (CDOCA), and former Grossmont Healthcare District boardmember Bob Yarris was named chairperson. Outreach was made to the County of San Diego and the Sheriff's Department. It was confirmed that, as with La Mesa, all marijuana dispensaries were operating illegally. The violations are civic code rather than criminal, so the shutdown process can take time, but the residents now had a way of taking a step forward. Numerous dispensaries have been forced to move and word is spreading that Casa de Oro is no longer an easy area for this kind of operation.

In addition, greater attention is being given to preventing alcohol sales to underage youth. With both a high school and middle school nearby, residents and school officials want to make sure that there is no sense of complacency regarding these teens and the number of

businesses which sell alcohol. The Sheriff's Department has an advisory role in liquor sales applications and has indicated that they are aware of the number of existing licenses and the need to use great care in granting any new licenses.

The CDOCA also sends a group of representatives to meet regularly with County Supervisor Dianne Jacob.

"I appreciate the good work being done by the Casa de Oro Community Alliance and share its concerns about illegal business activities and the need to further revitalize the area," Jacob said. "My expectation is that the Sheriff's Department and county staff will continue to crack down on any shady operations when they pop up. We need to also keep a close watch on the number of liquor establishments and make sure our voice is heard on any new state liquor licenses."

Jacob has also encouraged the alliance to continue to

refine their goals and objectives to better assist them in applying for additional county program and grant assistance. A major next step for the CDOCA will be to develop a proposal for a special zoning area in Casa de Oro to help ensure regulatory compliance for businesses selling alcohol, tobacco, or other adult-oriented products.

Beyond partnering with law enforcement and the county, the CDOCA also wanted to organize positive grassroots events to boost civic pride and demonstrate the value of the group. A highly successful community cleanup was held in June, with nearly 100 volunteers picking up trash and pulling weeds along Campo Road in the center of Casa de Oro. A fall festival took place in November which included food vendors, entertainment, crafts, and booths for additional civic booster organizations. Hundreds of people attended the festival and gave positive and enthusiastic approval to the event.

"A lot has been accomplished in the past year by our committed community volunteers, all of whom are highly motivated to restore Casa de Oro to a shining house of gold," Yarris said.

While many challenges remain, the region is improving. There are now several well-regarded anchor businesses, such as Albertsons, Starbucks, Ranas Restaurant, Big 5 Sporting Goods and the Young Actors Theater (YAT). The Casa de Oro Library is a vibrant institution, and holds

regular story-time and other neighborhood events. Recently, Butlers Coffee and a CVS Pharmacy opened and there are plans for an Italian bakery as well. Additional community groups and organizations, such as the Valle de Oro Planning Commission, Grossmont/Mt Helix Improvement Association (GMIA), and the Casa de Oro Business Association have become involved, as have many area churches.

Like Casa de Oro, La Mesa also wrestles with some of the same issues of challenged neighborhoods — most noticeable along University Avenue. La Mesa Mayor Mark Arapostathis, who used to teach at Murdock Elementary, which is close to Casa de Oro, has voiced enthusiasm for the revitalization efforts.

"I know this area well and it is a great community with many families and children," he said. "It borders La Mesa and deserves our support."

The Casa de Oro Community Alliance celebrates the completion of La Mesa's downtown improvement project and invites their neighbors in La Mesa to visit some of the businesses in Casa de Oro (Butlers makes a great cup of coffee) and see the progress being made and the great potential for continued renewal in this neighborhood.

—Jay Steiger is a school district and community volunteer, parent, and co-chairs the Media and Community Outreach Committee for the Casa de Oro Community Alliance. Reach him at steigerjl@yahoo.com. ■

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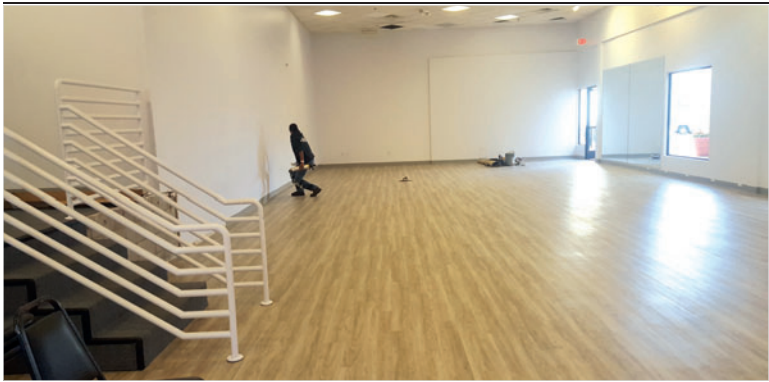
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► **OASIS**, from page 1



Workers put the finishing touches on the interior of the new OASIS Wellness Center in Grossmont Mall. (Photo by Brandon Harding)

This is the first time OASIS will have a space specifically for exercise, dance, yoga, tai chi, and meditation. Floor-to-ceiling mirrors and ballet bars were also installed for a new class that will be offered called Beginning Ballet for Seniors.

The Wellness Center will also double as an art studio and be “a place to be messy,” said Simona Valanciute, San Diego OASIS President and CEO. “Our artists are beyond excited.”

Educational classes at the Lifelong Learning Center will still be held in Mission Valley until sometime in the spring when OASIS bids their final adieu to the Macy’s location that has served as its home since 1982.

A grand-opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony will take place to celebrate the new location in the springtime as well.

“We’re really thrilled for the first time to put our name on the door,” Valanciute said of the move to the Grossmont locations. “The biggest benefit is visibility. Everybody who walks by can see us since they will be on street level instead of upstairs.”

Other benefits include expanded hours, plenty of free parking places with 24-hour surveillance, and accessibility by bus and trolley from Interstate 8 and state Route 125.

“We’re ecstatic we’re preserving public transportation access to our program,” Valanciute said “Next, we’ll focus on finding a location in North County, then South County.”

What’s next for Macy’s

While the future of San Diego OASIS is secured with the move to La Mesa and even looking to expand locations, the future of the old location is less certain.

After Macy’s announced its downsizing last year, some of the store locations went up for sale. Westfield Corporation bought the 363,000-square-foot Macy’s and 5,500-square foot Broken Yolk buildings for 16.5 million dollars in March and, so far, has not announced

what it wants to do with the building. Attempts for comment from Westfield went unanswered.

The Mission Valley Macy’s was built in 1960 by the same architect who built the Mormon temple in La Jolla, Torrey Pines High School, and the San Diego Convention Center. The building is considered a contemporary for its time and has been designated a historic landmark which means it cannot be demolished.

In March, the Union Tribune reported that Westfield had filed a petition to change the building’s historic monument status so it can tear it down.

The Macy’s Company has had a long-standing philanthropic relationship with OASIS. In 1982, Marylen Mann – a colleague of Macy’s founder David May – retired and was appalled to find that bingo was the only group activity available to older adults. She convinced May’s grandson, Morton May, to offer space in his May Company stores, rent-free nationally, to create OASIS Learning Centers for adults age 50-plus to keep them active and healthy.

For 25 years, Macy’s offered 27 OASIS Centers rent-free space and financing for expenses. OASIS San Diego was offered rent-free space for 35 years.

Macy’s Mission Valley was the largest Oasis Center in the country and drew 5,000 participants weekly. OASIS San Diego as a whole draws more than 42,000 people to all its sites regionally.

According to SANDAG, the 55-plus population is expected to double within the next 20 years in San Diego County. San Diego OASIS will be ready to continue its mission to provide meaningful activities for the growing population.

“OASIS is a family, a community,” Valanciute said. “We’re not just a place for a class. We exist to solve social isolation.”

—Sara Appel-Lennon is a freelance writer and former professional clown. Visit her at sara-appel-lennon.upweb.com. ■

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The benefits can be wonderful, so it is critical to truly discover what is “urban myth” and what is fact. So, we did the research for you and have found 10 Reverse Mortgage Myths

that persist, along with a few other critical things you need to know if you are considering a reverse mortgage loan now or in the future.

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La Mesa -

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GUEST EDITORIAL

A cause worth getting off the couch for



If you had told me two years ago I would have been on a flight to Washington D.C. on Jan. 19, 2017 to participate in a civil rights march, I would have thought you had the wrong person.

I am the stereotypical Generation X'er. I generally prefer to watch things develop from the comfort of my couch.

And although I am an attorney who is active in community organizations, I have become rather complacent. None of my involvements required true activism: I sit on the board for La Mesa Park and Recreation Foundation and serve as a commissioner for the City of La Mesa's Community Services Commission. I am also a member of the Japanese American Citizens League, but have participated in activities that were more cultural than contentious. Parks and cultural awareness do not exactly inspire ire.

On Nov. 8, 2016, however, I was shocked into action after my country elected a president who demeaned women in his speech. A president whose campaign aimed to divide rather than unite.

I'm not going to lie. I was shattered. As a woman who was raised to believe we were equal to men and that we deserved our fair share of respect, the fact a candidate could get elected after saying such awful things blew my mind. Worse, my daughter just witnessed an election in favor of a man

who dismissed his inappropriate words as "locker room talk."

It wasn't okay.

So when I saw a brief blurb about marching in Washington D.C. the day after the inauguration I immediately discussed it with my husband. Could he handle our 18-month-old son for a few days? Would it be all right for me to leave for three nights so I could march against that mistreatment of women?

My husband, who, like me, has never been vocal about controversial issues, made me proud: "You have to go, Gen. Go for us."

That's how I found myself on the way to what would be my first march for civil rights. And boy, was it a doozy.

It started on my flight to Washington. I met fellow San Diegan Ellen Montanari during my layover in Chicago. We sat and talked about how we couldn't miss this march.

"I had to go to D.C.," she said. "I had to be there."

Ellen, who wore a Women's March shirt beneath her coat, also shared with me websites and ways I could continue to be involved.

After getting off the plane, we took photos with fellow passengers who were also headed to the march. Another marcher happily gave me a pink hat, knitted by a friend who had to do something — anything — even if it was to knit several hats for other participants.

March organizers initially expected around 250,000 of us, but they got more than half a million. Getting on the Metro that morning, I was nervous. I had been warned off by a few friends and family, who were concerned for my safety.

They needn't have worried. This march was a salve for my soul. There were so many of us we broke the march. But as we were turned away from the planned route, we began marching down adjacent streets. Fittingly, we marched up Constitution Avenue, chanting, "This is what democracy looks like!" as we passed the Newseum, which features the First Amendment on its facade, reminding us of our rights to free speech and peaceably assemble.

Perhaps the most interesting quality about this march was the warmth, support and encouragement among the marchers. When parents tried to navigate through the crowd with their young children, people would call out, "stroller," and we would all create a pathway. We admired each other's signs and exchanged personal information so we could stay in contact. We were activated; awakened to a new political climate that demands vigilance and personal involvement.

Now I find myself on a new path, ready to take stands and make my voice heard. For that, I am actually grateful to President Donald J. Trump. In this way, he has unified us against an administration who would rather lie about inaugural attendance than respond to reporters' questions.

And while it was easier to watch from the sidelines, it's time to get off the couch so our children know that dignity, esteem and compassion belong to us all, regardless of our gender and backgrounds.

—Genevieve A. Suzuki
is a La Mesa resident who practices family law. Visit her website at sdlawyersuzuki.com. ■

Letters

Power plant numbers need clarification

Re: "Sharp Hospital goes off the grid" [Volume 6, Issue 12 or bit.ly/2i64xC1]

I read your article on the new power plant at Grossmont Hospital. It doesn't make sense to me but I don't have the figures.

The hospital pays \$180,000 monthly to SDG&E (\$43,000,000 over 20 years). The facility cost \$47,000,000.

Interest on tax exempt bonds should be somewhat over 2 percent about \$960,000 each year. The interest will drop as the principal is paid off. Let's guess \$13,000,000.

Perhaps the power plant does not run unattended. One person at \$100,000 annually with fringe benefits times five people (needed to keep one staff member on duty at all times) \$500,000 annually or \$10,000,000 for 20 years.

The natural gas needed to power the plant isn't free. What do you think? Perhaps \$400,000 each year or \$8,000,000 for the period we discussed.

How about insurance? What about \$50,000 or \$1,000,000 for 20 years?

Let's talk about service contracts. Solar charged \$18,000,000. Perhaps \$80,000 annually. You got it \$1,600,000.

Your article explained a byproduct is free heating and chilling. Isn't that a part of the current SDG&E bill?

No problems if SDG&E goes down. Everything breaks at some point. The hospital will need to maintain their current generators. Not mentioned in the article.

Also, the plant reduces pollutants by 90 percent. While that is probably true I am not aware of any generating plants in East County. Therefore, am I correct the 10 percent pollutants released by the plant will be expelled in East County and somewhere else will get the benefits of reduced pollution — not you or me?

Now I know I am guessing at the numbers, but I'll bet I'm pretty close. I probably forgot some expenses too. Can we get the actual numbers?

My guess, we taxpayers and patients get stuck with \$32,600,000 over 20 years.

It's our money folks!

—Jim Elliott, La Mesa ■

Interesting article about Sharp Hospital in the La Mesa Courier. How misleading can an article be?

Free power forever? "Zero" as you stated in a well-worded statement.

Ninety percent reduction in greenhouse gas. Were you fed this info, or did you just make it up yourself?

The gas company is giving them free natural gas? Extra employee or two to run the plant for free? Et cetera.

The hot exhaust has no greenhouse gas? Are you kidding me. This little power plant runs 10 times as efficient as a SDG&E power plant?

Answers please. What is the net cost saving per month? My guess, with all maintenance and depreciation? Negative 20 percent.

When I see such a misleading article, I am compelled to speak out.

—Jerry Kay, La Mesa ■

Northmont ballfields get an upgrade

Jeff Clemetson
Editor

When the Fletcher Hills Little League (FHLL) opens its season on Feb. 25, it will be doing so on newly-renovated fields at Northmont Elementary School.

The fields recently received maintenance funds in the form of a \$46,000 grant from the county to improve and rehabilitate parks and sports fields. In addition to the grant, local businesses also donated toward the rehab effort.

“We were very fortunate to get in-kind donation from Dixieline lumber. They are donating all the lumber and paint,” FHLL President Eric Weichelt said. “We also got a donation from Paul Keller Paint. His guys are going to paint everything — no charge.”

The grant money and the materials and labor donations will repair worn out bleachers; repair and add padding to backstops; replace netting on the batting cages; spruce up the weathered scoreboards; fix the scoring booths; install shade screens for the dug-outs; and add two aluminum bleachers.

Despite some delays due to the recent heavy rains, Weichelt said the work will be done in plenty of time for the Feb. 25 Opening Day, which will celebrate the people who helped make the field rehabilitation possible.

“We’re going to have Supervisor [Dianne] Jacob come out and throw the first pitch,” Weichelt said, adding that although the grant was a decision of all the county supervisors, Jacob was the point person for getting the money for Northmont. “She’s an advocate of youth sports.”

While some other area ballfields, like Lake Murray Park, have experienced damage from vandalism, Northmont’s wear and tear is mostly from weather and time, although Weichelt said over the years there have been instances of people driving on the fields, littering and late night drinking.

“I wouldn’t necessarily say it’s vandals, more teenagers being teenagers,” he said. “We’ve not had any fires or graffiti or anything like that.”

FHLL is obligated to take care of the four Northmont ballfields as part of the field use agreement.

“They’re great fields and they are taken care of by a lot of volunteers,” Weichelt said. “A lot of work has gone into this and we’re just happy that we can get the hardcore stuff done by [this] grant provided by the county, so we’re lucky.”

—Reach Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdcdn.com. ■

► Vandalism, from page 1

Golf Course and so there’s a little corner back in there where someone came in and they cut a tree down,” she said. “They had left it there over night, they cut it up into small pieces and when I came back the next day it was gone.”

Trees aren’t the only things being stolen from the Patriots.

In mid-summer of last year, a storage container was robbed of a cart used to drag the infield, the drag itself was also stolen, as well as a pitching machine.

“They initially broke into the snack bar trying to see if there was anything there they could take,” Hemmings said. “The only thing they got out of there was an old laptop computer, but they did take our slushie machine and we found it later in the day stored in the bushes.”

“The storage container door was damaged during the robbery and insurance won’t cover that,” Hemmings said. “Our season is starting here in another month or two and without the equipment, it just really puts us in bad shape.”

Other issues the Patriots have experienced at the ball field include damage from skateboarding on the metal grandstands; graffiti on fencing; drug deals in the parking lot; people committing sex acts in the dug-outs and stands after hours; and cars that spin donuts in the dirt parking lot.

“The biggest problem we have is we just invested a large amount of money from a county grant to upgrade the playing field,” Hemming said. “We did an all new sprinkler system and an all new infield that we laser leveled and everything. We posted signs asking people to please stay off the field and they did good — until about a month ago.”

“Now, all of a sudden, they’re getting on the field again and they’re tearing everything up. We feel that the field is not being respected as it should be by the community,” she said.

SCLL is also victim to people disrespecting their parks. Gagliano said that the Minor League field’s scoreboard is constantly being broken into so much that it is now almost never locked.

“There’s lots of drug paraphernalia found there, lots of condoms,” she said. “It’s just horrible because we’ve got our kids going through there and we’re always asking the parent volunteers to watch what’s in there and remove what they can.”

Other sports organizations have been victims of theft as well.

“As I watch the news, this has happened all over San Diego; a lot of it seems to be in South Bay this year,” said Terry Cords, president of Crusader Soccer and also chair of the San Carlos/Lake Murray and Allied Gardens recreation councils.

“It’s happened to us over the years,” he said. “Probably five or six years ago, Crusaders had a bunch of our goals taken. They stole them for the scrap aluminum and it probably cost us about \$1,000 to replace them.”

The Navajo Girls Fastpitch Softball league, which also uses fields in Lake Murray Park, experienced a recent theft when a small John Deere cart vehicle was stolen. It was later found in

La Mesa after it ran out of gas and was returned by police.

“The only reason why they were able to get it back to Navajo was because Navajo had their sticker that said ‘Navajo Fast Pitch’ on the cart, so the police contacted the city,” Gagliano said.

What can be done

Preventing theft and vandalism at sports fields is easier said than done because youth sports leagues have little money to afford security patrols and merely locking up the equipment doesn’t seem to be working.

“I’d say there’s always a risk [of theft],” Cords said. “Most of the sports leagues have storage containers — they’re the old at-sea storage containers, 20-foot and 40-foot containers, and they’re locked with pad locks. I’ve learned that pad locks keep honest people out; they don’t keep dishonest people out.”

Gagliano has another idea to keep dishonest people out.

“I wish we could have lights there because it is super dark,” she said, while admitting that it would be an uphill battle to get them. “None of the neighbors like the idea of lights.”

Hemmings said there has been a degree of carelessness with keys to snack bars and storage containers, leaving them in plain site during weekend tournaments that have hundreds of out of the area visitors to the field who might have nefarious intentions while visiting.

“We, as a league, have to do something a little bit better, I

See VANDALISM page 16 —————>



Shade trees at the Lake Murray Park ball fields were recently vandalized, the latest in a string of problems at the sports fields. (Photo by David Cooksy)



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Environmental heroes headline February Dem club meeting



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

On Wednesday, Feb. 1, just 10 days into the President Trump era, local Democrats will hear an all-star forum discuss the steps we need to take to resist the attack on our climate goals, our clean air and water, and our ongoing transformation to renewable energy sources. Who best to create opportunities and action plans than the executive director of the Climate Action Campaign? Or the newly elected San Diego City Councilperson from District 9? Or the executive director of San Diego Coastkeeper? Representatives of SD350.org and the Sierra Club will also join our panel.

Why our urgency to sound the alarm and expose and resist what is likely to be in store for the next four years in the environmental community?

Trump's nominee to head the Environmental Protection Agency is noted climate change denier Scott Pruitt. And Trump is expected to name Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers to head the Interior Department. She is noteworthy for claiming that Al Gore "deserves an 'F' in science." And let's not forget that Trump's choice for Secretary of State is none other than the head of the largest oil company in the world, Rex Tillerson. It's plain to see that our new president has little regard for ending our dependency on oil, coal, tar sands, and other fossil fuel sources.

Our February meeting is the second in our series we are calling “Write, Advocate and Resist: 48 months of learning to cope and overcome the already dire Trump administration.” Trump’s inauguration coincided with the lowest approval ratings of any modern incoming president. His appointments to executive positions on his staff and his cabinet are a group of unqualified, inexperienced and self-serving individuals who have little in common with the people or departments they are intending to lead, a veritable who’s who of reactionary and far-right thinkers beholden to the fossil fuel industry and climate change deniers.

On the other hand, our environmental heroes are long-time advocates and scholars, the best and brightest in their fields.

Nicole Capretz is an environmental attorney with 20 years of as an energy and climate policy advisor for local governments and the nonprofit sector. Nicole was the primary author of the city of San Diego's groundbreaking, legally binding 100 percent clean energy Climate Action Plan adopted in late 2015. She now serves on the San Diego's Climate Action Plan Implementation Working Group, as well as the city of Solana Beach's Climate Action Commission.



(clockwise from top left) San Diego City Councilmember Georgette Gomez, sanDiego350.org founder Masada Diesenhouse, san Diego Coastkeeper executive director Matt O'Malley and environmental attorney Nicole Capretz
(Courtesy of La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club)

District 9 City Councilmember Georgette Gomez has some serious environmental chops herself. She was associate director of Toxic Free Neighborhoods for the Environmental Health Coalition, and is well-known as a community organizer who has fought for many environmental issues.

Matt O'Malley is the executive director of San Diego Coastkeeper. He joined Coastkeeper in January of 2014 as legal and policy director, where he leads the advocacy work of the organization and protects the water bodies of San Diego County by utilizing local, state, and national laws and regulations, and through community engagement.

Having represented environmental groups in the federal, state, and local arenas, O'Malley has experience in areas such as: the Clean Water Act and NPDES permits; land use and growth management laws; CEQA; the Endangered Species Act; groundwater, soils, and sediment remediation; and environmental justice, to name a few. He currently chairs the Legal Committee and is a board member of the California Coastkeeper Alliance.

Masada Disenhouse is a repeat visitor to La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club (LMFDC) and founder of SanDiego350.org, a very active climate action advocacy group. 350.org is an international environmental organization encouraging citizens to action with the belief that publicizing the increasing levels of carbon dioxide will pressure world leaders to address climate change and to reduce levels from 400 parts per million to 350 parts per million.

350.org takes its name from the research of Goddard Institute for Space Studies scientist James E. Hansen, who posited in a 2007 paper that 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is a safe

upper limit to avoid a climate tipping point.

Brian Elliott works locally for Congressman Scott Peters but also chairs the Political Committee for the local chapter of the Sierra Club. He worked for the California Democratic Party as the environmental organizer on Congressman Peters' 2014 re-election effort and was an advocate for local clean energy as the campaign organizer for Climate Action Campaign, and is now serving in Peters' district office.

Moderator Davin Widgerow is an environmental lawyer whose work is focused on toxic contamination remediation. Until recently, he headed the Steering Committee for Sierra Club San Diego, which is tasked with coordinating club projects, activities, finances, and administration. He also served as chair of the Political Committee, which engages political candidates and environmental activists to further Sierra Club's conservation efforts.

LMFDC meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Drive, starting at 6:30 p.m.

at 8:30 p.m.

LMFDC is now holding our 2017 membership drive. For \$30 per year, members enjoy 12 general meetings featuring outstanding speakers and programs, our monthly newsletter, weekly updates of news you can use, special events and camaraderie with fellow progressives. Join us now to learn more about the current threats to our democracy and the future of our planet. Be sure to visit our website at lamesafoothillsdemocraticclub.com or friend us on our Facebook page.

—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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Judy
McCarty



Summer Stephan is a Chief Deputy District Attorney in San Diego County and the recipient of several awards for her prosecutorial work. She will be the keynote speaker for our Tuesday, Feb. 14 meeting of the Navajo Canyon Republican Women Federated (NCRWF) at The Brigantine in La Mesa.

NCRWF to hear concerns about new marijuana laws

With the ballot approval legalizing recreational marijuana use in California, she is prepared for additional ramifications of marijuana use in California and the effect it will have on our citizens (users and non-users), law enforcement, and the state.

We look forward to learning how this new law will impact our community. Check-in time for the 11 a.m. meeting is 10:30 a.m. A full-course luncheon will be served at noon, followed at 12:30 p.m. by our speaker. Cost

of the luncheon meeting is \$25 and reservations are required. Please RSVP to NCRWF99@gmail.com (RSVP in the subject line) or call 619-990-2701.

Once again, NCRWF placed first among 43 different Republican Women Federated clubs in San Diego County for the number of hours NCRWF members volunteered to community service and also for the hours contributed to political activities in 2016.

We are very proud of our efforts to improve our neighborhoods and contribute to service clubs, while at the same time “giving our all” for Republican policies and candidates. We are gratified by our club’s growth and this recognition but even more so by the results. We’ll enjoy the inauguration Jan. 20.



San Diego County Chief Deputy District Attorney Summer Stephan (Twitter)

For more information on all our activities, visit us at navajocanyonrnf.org and also like us on Facebook. Our membership drive for 2017 has just begun, and we’d love to have you join us!

—Judy McCarty is publicity chair for the Navajo Canyon Republican Women Federated. Reach her at jhmccarty@cox.net.



Navajo Canyon Republican Women Federated member Terry Casey (left) presents books to the librarian at Rancho San Diego Library.



Member Pat Boerner (left) presents books to the librarian at the El Cajon Library. (Photos courtesy of NCRWF)

NEWS BRIEFS

Streetscape project wins award

At their annual holiday mixer and Urban Forestry Awards banquet in December, The San Diego Regional Urban Forests Council (SDRUC) recognized the city of La Mesa’s Downtown Streetscape Project.

The project received accolades for Best Innovative Urban Forest Project for its innovative use of silva-cells along La Mesa Boulevard. Silva-cells are the metal grates found around the tree trunks when they are planted in sidewalks or along any paved surface.

Other winners included the Tree San Diego Parks Plus event for Best Community Tree Planting Event or Arbor Day; Global Forest Link for Best Urban Forestry Education Project; Bruce Englebert and Cynthia Irmer for the Trees and Water Award; and Anne Fege for Best San Diego Regional Urban Forests Council Representative.

SDRUC is a coalition of agencies, businesses and educators that work to improve and support urban forests and urban greening to make communities “cleaner, healthier and more prosperous,” according to a press statement from the organization.

See BRIEFS page 16 —————>



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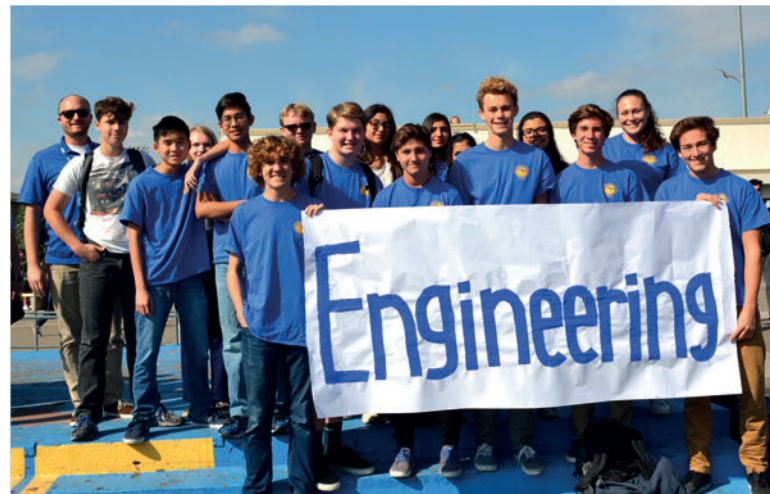
Connie and Lynn Baer

For 96 years, Grossmont High School (GHS) has offered its students a rigorous academic curriculum. This year, Foothillers have an opportunity to explore the world of engineering. The Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Engineering pathway joined the five other career pathways available to Grossmont's students: Education; Transportation; Arts, Media, and Entertainment; Information Communication Technology; and Health (Sports Medicine).

PLTW Engineering is a three-year course sequence, which focuses on preparing students for a university engineering program. The first course is Introduction to Engineering Design where students explore the engineering design process while applying math, science, and engineering standards to hands-on projects such as designing a new toy or improving an existing product. A class such as this needs an experienced instructor.

"I worked in software engineering and quality assurance prior to teaching physics and general science," said GHS Science and Engineering teacher Robert Pyle, adding that he is a graduate of the College of Engineering at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

The first-year course has 25 10th-grade students in the class. Most of the students are enrolled in honors classes and plan to take honors and Advanced Placement classes as juniors and seniors.



The first class of Grossmont students from the PLTW Engineering pathway (Courtesy of GHS Museum)

PLTW Engineering has an established curriculum, which is largely project based. First semester, the students finished a project to create a "Puzzle Cube" child's toy, which required them to design, accurately sketch by hand, correctly 3D model in the computer design program (Autodesk Inventor), and construct a prototype and proof of concept of the item.

This year's course demands quite a bit of pen/paper sketching and technical drawing, computer-aided design, design process, as well as public speaking and working as a team. (Foothillers from the past may have participated in the mechanical drawing classes offered for decades to students and taught in the 1935 Manual Arts Building, built by the WPA)

Pyle said he likes "the fact that the course is directly applicable and great preparation for the sorts of engineering courses students may see in college. The pathway is designed to cover broad aspects of engineering and exposes the students to multiple areas. The courses will give any possible engineering student a step up going into college."

Next year's course for 11th-grade students, which Pyle will also teach, is Principles of Engineering, which explores many areas of engineering.

This course allows students to explore a broad range of engineering topics including mechanisms, strength of structure and materials, and automation, and then they apply what they know to take on challenges — like designing a self-powered car.

Grossmont will choose from six options for the third-year course. The teacher must have a specialty in one of these six areas: Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering and Architecture, Computer Integrated Manufacturing, Computer Science Principles, Digital Electronics, or Environmental Sustainability.

In the spring, the class plans to visit SDSU's Engineering department. Obviously, the students who complete the three-year course of PLTW Engineering will be well-prepared for their college engineering experiences.

To learn more about Grossmont's six pathways, visit bit.ly/2jUpelg.

The GHS Museum is open noon–3:30 p.m. Feb. 1, 2017 or other Wednesdays by appointment. Email ghsmuseum@guhsd.net or call 619-668-6140 or visit foothillersmuseum.com.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum. Reach them at ghsmuseum@guhsd.net. ■

Vineyard and viticulture classes at Cuyamaca

Anne Krueger

Cuyamaca College has secured a grant of nearly \$260,000 to bolster its new viticulture apprenticeship program and cover the cost of a planned 2-acre vineyard on the Rancho San Diego campus.

The viticulture apprenticeship program, the only one of its kind in Southern California when it launched in the fall of 2016, is aimed at addressing a shortage of qualified workers knowledgeable in vine and pest diseases, irrigation practices and harvest operations that are critical in the growing viticulture industry.

"Even though San Diego County has 115 wineries, we're not recognized as a

premium wine-growing area, and that has made finding skilled labor difficult," said Izaac Villalobos, general manager at Fallbrook Winery. "The Cuyamaca College program will go a long way in helping to alleviate the challenge of finding skilled labor."

Although the viticulture apprenticeship program was launched in the fall, initial funding to support the effort was lacking and only three apprentices signed up. The grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office will help grow the program, pay for a 2-acre vineyard near the Water Conservation Garden and cover operating costs.

The California Community Colleges Board of Governors approved the grant at its Jan. 17 meeting in Sacramento.

Graduates of the Viticulture Technician Apprenticeship program will leave Cuyamaca College understanding the basic principles of soil science, soil fertility and irrigation construction, in addition to having the skills needed to plant and maintain vineyards, cultivate and harvest wine grapes, process the product through the bottling process, and handle retail operations and support customer service. Besides taking 14.5 units of courses in the Ornamental Horticulture Department, students also are required to complete 3,000 hours as a paid apprentice.

We are thrilled about the opportunity to expand and strengthen our Viticulture

See CUYAMACA page 11 →

► Cuyamaca, from page 10

Apprenticeship Program,” said Cuyamaca College President Julianna Barnes. “Our program will play a key leadership role in the region in training future professionals to take on needed roles in the wine industry.”

San Diego County’s wine grape crop has risen in value from \$378,000 to \$6.5 million in a decade, the San Diego County Farm Bureau says. California’s wine industry, meanwhile, employs more than 41,000 people, excluding seasonal and temporary employees, and the state – which is the fourth largest leading wine producer in the world – crafts 85 percent of the wine consumed in the country.

Applicants to the program, which falls under Cuyamaca College’s Career and Technical Education division, must be at least 21 years old.

Anyone interested in applying for the new program should contact Donald Schultz in the Ornamental Horticulture Department at Cuyamaca College at either 619-660-4023, or Donald.Schultz@gccd.edu

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



Helix Highlights

Jennifer Osborn

Class project leads to change

Thanks to the efforts of students in Helix’s business class, the city of La Mesa is looking into creating a cross-walk at the intersection of Lowell Street and Highlander Way. Business instructor Giff Asimos asked his entrepreneur students to find an issue in the community that affects them, and propose a solution. The students found that safety issues exist for students using Highlander Way coming and going to and from school, as well as when walking to 24-Hour Fitness for physical education classes. Students built a model of the area, evaluated the various safety issues, and came up with some solutions to make it safer. They presented to the Helix governing board, and arranged meetings with La Mesa city personnel to address the issue. As of this writing, the students and Asimos will meet with the city engineers to work together to address the issues.

Performing Arts Department calendar

As usual, the Helix Performing Arts Department



Helix senior Rilyn Garder (far left) leads the cast of “Sweet Charity” in a dance rehearsal in preparation for their upcoming production. Gardner is performing in and choreographing the show to fulfill her senior project. (Courtesy of Helix Charter High School)

calendar is packed with upcoming performances. Mark your calendar!

The Highland Players present “Sweet Charity” a musical with music by Cy Coleman, lyrics by Dorothy Fields and book by Neil Simon. Show dates are Feb. 8, 9, 10 and 11 at 7 p.m. in the Mainstage Theater. Tickets are \$10 and are available at highlandplayers.ticketleap.com.

Helix Vocal Music presents their annual Cabaret concert. Performances are Feb. 15 and 16 at 7 p.m. in the Mainstage Theater. Tickets are \$10 and are available at helix-choirs.ticketleap.com.

Helix Dance will present a special performance called “Hip Hop Night.” This dance concert is a collaboration of several different

school dance programs and independent dance groups. As of this writing, scheduled to perform are: Valhalla High School, La Mesa Arts Academy, Lemon Grove Academy, Point Loma High School, Patrick Henry High School, The Origin, Grossmont College, ASPIRE tap and Helix Dance. Performances are Feb. 24 and 25 at 7 p.m. in the Mainstage Theater. Visit helixdancers.weebly.com for ticket information.

Helix in the Super Bowl

Congratulations to Helix alumnus, Levine Toilolo, who will play in this year’s Super Bowl as a member of the Atlanta Falcons. Toilolo graduated from Helix in 2009, then went on to play for Stanford.

He is in his fourth year as a tight end for the Falcons.

2017-18 enrollment

Enrollment for the 2017-18 school year has started. Families interested in enrolling their incoming ninth grader, or new students grades 10–12, will need to attend an upcoming Intent to Enroll meeting in order to be considered for enrollment. The following are the remaining scheduled dates and locations (all are on Wednesdays):

- Feb. 1, 6 p.m. – Parkway Middle School
- Feb. 8, 6 p.m. – La Mesa Arts Academy
- Feb. 15, 6 p.m. – Mount Vernon Academy
- Feb. 22, 6 p.m. – Helix Charter High School

More details regarding the enrollment process can be found on the school website, helixcharter.net (click on “Entrance Boundary/Lottery Information” on the left side of the page).

If you are interested in finding out more about Helix Charter High School, please attend one of our Excellence in Education Tours, held twice monthly. The tours for February are Feb. 9 at 8:10 a.m. and Feb. 23 at 5:30 p.m. Reserve your spot using our website, helixcharter.net.

As always, we welcome your input. Please don’t hesitate to contact me at josborn@helix-charter.net.

—Jennifer Osborn writes on behalf of Helix Charter High School.■

Families Using Smart Tech for Pet Care

According to the American Pet Products Association, 65 percent of U.S. households own a pet of some kind. Whether they’re cats, dogs, reptiles or birds, families enjoy having a pet in the home. Feeding, caring and walking pets are often the first form of responsibility for kids and everyone enjoys the unconditional love, companionship and spunky personalities offered by furry, scaly and feathered friends. And animal owners are using technology in some surprising ways to show their love and appreciation – from using nanny cams, to leaving Animal Planet on the TV, to spending more money on pets than on friends, according to a recent study conducted by Cox Homelife. Here are some highlights of the study, are you doing any of them?

Make pets comfortable while home alone:

- 58% adjust the thermostat.
- 57% leave out toys.
- 80% leave on lights.
- 40% turn on the TV or radio.

Use a pet sitter, then checking on the pet sitter:

- One in three pet owners reported they would be more likely to use a pet

sitter if they could monitor their activity through home automation technology.

- 75% of pet owners ask for a pet sitter when leaving pets at home alone for extended periods of time.
- Pet owners said they use home automation technology to check when the pet sitter visited, how long they stayed, watch what they did while they were at the house, make sure the dog is safely in its kennel, and ensure they locked the door behind them when they left.

Buy smart technology for pets

There are many ways technology can improve peace of mind and quality of life for pets. Dog and cat owners differ on which technologies they’d consider buying:

- Automatic food and water distribution: 32% of dog owners versus 46% of cat owners.
- GPS tracker: 36% of dog owners versus 25% of cat owners.
- Video monitoring system: 32% of dog owners versus 26% of cat owners.

- Smart collars to monitor vitals: 13% of dog owners versus 11% of cat owners.

Spend a lot on pets:

Pet owners spend more money on gifts for their pets than for their friends and work colleagues.

- One in five pet owners spend at least \$100 on their pets each month.

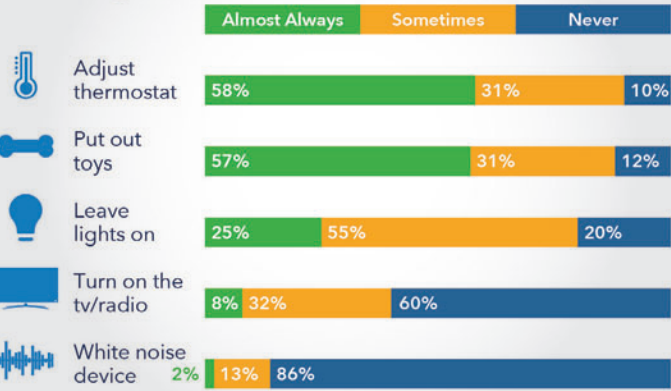
It’s evident that pet owners love their pets. And while video monitoring of pets is a perk of having a home monitoring and automation

system, it also provides peace of mind for the entire household. Cox Homelife’s state-of-the-art security and home automation technology can not only safeguard your home and its contents, but also provide warning of potential damage caused by weather events such as the heavy rains and flooding and monitor for flooding, smoke and carbon monoxide, in addition to a host of other customizable features.

For more information, visit cox.com/homelife.

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Raunchy British romp comes to La Mesa

David Dixon

One playwright whose work doesn't get produced often in San Diego is the late English writer, Joe Orton. Known for his uniquely British and absurd sense of humor, Orton's shows include dark comedies like "Loot," "Evening Mr. Sloane" and "Funeral Games."

A production of his low-brow, "What the Butler Saw," is now playing at La Mesa's Lamplighters Community Theatre.

Set in a psychiatric clinic, the madness begins during an interview between Dr. Prentice (Nathan Boyer) and an attractive younger woman, Geraldine Barclay (Katherine Saint Marie). He tries to convince her to take off her clothes for his own perverted reasons.

Prentice lies to Geraldine and says he wants her to be naked to decide if she has what it takes to be a stenographer. The doctor's lie gets him into trouble when his wife, Mrs. Prentice (Julie Clemmons) randomly enters the

room. What follows is an insane misadventure with a variety of oddball characters and out of control situations.

One of the most amusing traits about Prentice for Boyer is his self-important and all-knowing attitude.

"He hides behind his desk and puts up a pompous front," Boyer said. "Orton mocks so many elements of the establishment."

Clemmons acknowledges how over the top Orton's humor can get. "It's like Benny Hill on steroids," she said.

While Clemmons hasn't played in too many British farces, she loves the ones she has performed in during her career. Clemmons isn't sure if she will be taking some of her younger kids to the play. A lot of the jokes are sexual and edgy, to say the least. She believes, however, that even sensitive viewers will still laugh hysterically through the performance.

Many of the scenes were more shocking to watch when the theatrical piece premiered in 1969. Devin Wade, who plays an often-shirtless bellhop, Nicholas



(l to r) Frank Godinez as Dr. Rance, Julie Clemmons as Mrs. Prentice and Nathan Boyer as Dr. Prentice in a scene from "What the Butler Saw" (Courtesy of Adriana Zuniga Williams)

Beckett, really appreciates what Orton was able to get away with. Some of the particular subjects that Orton pokes fun at throughout numerous silly situations are homophobia (Orton was openly gay) and transvestitism.

Although British comedic artists have always been open to mocking taboo subject matter, Beckett feels that today's American generation is generally more sensitive. "The timing is perfect for this story," he said. "There are topics that need to be addressed again."

A particular character that doesn't conform to the social norm is an insane inspector, Dr. Rance (set designer, Frank Godinez). He wants to cross dress and hopes to fool around with practically everyone at the clinic.

"I love Orton's writing and speaking his dialogue," he said. "His writing is chock full o' nuts. I just dig Orton's style."

Before auditioning, Godinez was surprised when he found out that some of his female performing arts friends had no interest in auditioning for "What the Butler Saw." Godinez didn't realize why they were repulsed until re-reading the script. "Orton hides the more controversial content so well with big fancy words and terminology," he said. "He's quite amazing to be able to teach a lesson while getting away with lowbrow comedic moments."

The couple responsible for the mischievous interpretation is director Keith Anderson, and co-producer, Mary Anderson. "What the Butler Saw" is Keith Anderson's 47th community theater production in San Diego County.

Every cast/crew member has a lot of respect for the Andersons. A supporting actor who loves the ego-free set is Bud Emerson who depicts a hapless officer, Sergeant Match.

"What the Butler Saw"

Lamplighters Theatre
5915 Severin Drive,
La Mesa
Through Feb. 19
For tickets and
information,
visit
lamplighterslamesa.com
or call 619-303-5092.

"One of the things I like about Keith and Mary Anderson is they don't cast people who don't have character," he said. "You never see them cast stars who are toxic."

For Keith Anderson, Orton's script stands out because of the satirical tone.

"Orton satirizes the English social scene, monarchy and socialism," he said.

Mary Anderson finds the timing of the production to be ironic. Opening night was the evening after the recent presidential inauguration.

"Rance is writing a book and mentions that he finds facts to be meaningless," she said. "Given the current social climate, that's very prominent in today's world."

Given some of the extreme reactions to the presidential inauguration ceremony, Orton's narrative promises to provide a hilarious eve of fun. Mary and Keith Anderson, along with the cast, are pulling no punches for nonstop belly laughs.

—David Dixon is a freelance theater and film writer. Reach him at daviddixon0202@gmail.com.

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In loving memory of Gordon Jones

James Newland

It is with great sadness we announce Gordon Jones, president of the La Mesa Historical Society (LMHS) from 2002–2010, died on the morning of Sunday, Jan. 15 at his home in La Mesa Village. He was 78. Gordon was born in Pasadena in 1939 and was raised in a small logging town in Oregon. He graduated from the University of Oregon and had a successful career as CEO of Denver's Coors Family Foundation and member of numerous board of directors, nationally.

While president of the La Mesa Historical Society, Gordon organized the first Historic Home Tour in 2006 and served as chairman of



James Newland (left) and Gordon Jones (Courtesy of La Mesa Historical Society)

this popular event until 2011. He also served as member of the city of La Mesa's Historic Preservation Commission until 2016 and was actively involved in landmarking several La Mesa historic homes. Gordon also wrote a downtown walking

tour book for the Historical Society.

Gordon had numerous health scares since a quadruple bypass in 2006, which included a battle with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Our thoughts are with his daughter Shelly during this difficult time.

We are so grateful for his committed service to the preservation of local history. He was a person that truly embodied the spirit of celebrating La Mesa's history and he will truly be missed by all. A memorial service is being planned and specific information will be sent out at a later date.

—James Newland is president of the La Mesa Historical Society. For more information or to contact the LMHS, visit lamesahistory.com. ■

Rowing club receives recognition

Brittany Poler

Women's rowing was little known when its oldest team in the United States was established in 1892. This rowing team is called ZLAC, and was founded by three sisters and a friend who used the initials of their first names to form the acronym. The team is currently located in Pacific Beach. The women's junior and master rowers compete in regional, national, and international regattas year round.

ZLAC's purpose has inspired many women such as La Mesa's Keara Farrel, one of two team captains at ZLAC. Farrel also rowed for San Diego State University.

"Rowing is more than a healthy activity; it is a way of life," she said. "It teaches you discipline, humility, confidence and work ethic. These characteristics have translated over in to my everyday life to result in a healthier and happier me."

ZLAC quickly became Farrel's new home where she met lifelong friends, embraced

a set of traditions and continued her passion for rowing. One of Farrel's most memorable experiences was the team's trip to the Southwest Regional Masters Regatta last July in Oakland.

"So many rowers, both novice and experienced, pushed themselves to new limits for this regatta by ... racing for the first time and rowing in multiple races in a single day," she said. "Everyone came home with a smile on their face, and some were fortunate enough to have medals around their neck!"

The ZLAC Rowing Club and the ZLAC Foundation are participating in the "Woman on the Water" exhibit by the Women's Museum of California. This exhibit celebrates the history of woman on the water in San Diego. To congratulate women of ZLAC, State Senator Joel Anderson provided certificates of recognition at the reception of the exhibit.

"ZLAC has empowered many women in our community, and I am grateful to be a part of their 125th year celebration," he



ZLAC team captain Keara Farrel was recently given a certificate of recognition from Sen. Joel Anderson. (Courtesy of Sen. Joel Anderson's office)

said. "It is also exciting to learn that La Mesa's very own Keara is serving as an extraordinary team captain for ZLAC's masters team."

The exhibit runs until Sunday, Jan. 29. More information about ZLAC Rowing Club can be found on zlac.org.

—Brittany Poler is a legislative intern for Sen. Joel Anderson. ■

News and notes from your County Supervisor

DIANNE'S CORNER

Dianne Jacob



Insurance break: Some rural landowners became eligible for lower property insurance rates starting Jan. 1, thanks to improved fire protection ratings.

Many parcels in these communities are expected to be eligible: Boulevard, Campo, Deerhorn Valley, Dehesa, Descanso, Dulzura, Harbison Canyon, Jacumba, Jamul, Lake Morena, Pine Valley, Potrero, Santa Ysabel, Shelter Valley and Tecate.

For more information, contact your insurance company or the County Fire Authority at 858-974-5999.

The better fire protection ratings reflect the county's

efforts to beef up services across the region. The county has invested more than \$400 million since 2003 in improved fire and emergency services.

Game over: While I will miss the Chargers players and their contributions to the community, all I can say to Mr. Spanos is good riddance.

He betrayed San Diego fans and that's something a lot of us won't ever forget.

I think we now have an opportunity to turn the Qualcomm Stadium site into a regional attraction we can all be proud of, with perhaps a world-class entertainment and sports complex, facilities for San Diego State and park space to make the most of its riverside location.

A new term: Sheriff Bill Gore recently did me the great honor of swearing

me in for a historic seventh term.

I am deeply grateful for the trust that East County voters have placed in me over the years. I will continue to do all I can to live up to that trust.

I've also been named the 2017 chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors. I'm scheduled to deliver the annual State of the County address on Feb. 1. Contact my office for details.

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 San Diego County's District 2. ■

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Fire non-emergency line: 619-667-1461
Animal Control: 619-667-7536
Graffiti removal: 619-667-7560
Weed abatement: 619-667-1465
Traffic signal maintenance: 619-667-1166
Streetlight maintenance: 619-667-1450

La Mesa Mayor: 619-667-1100
City Councilmembers: 619-667-1106

EDCO: 619-287-7555
Helix Water District: 619-466-0585
Helix Water after hours emergency: 619-466-3234

Gov. Jerry Brown: 916-445-2841
U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris: 619-239-3884
U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein: 619-231-9712
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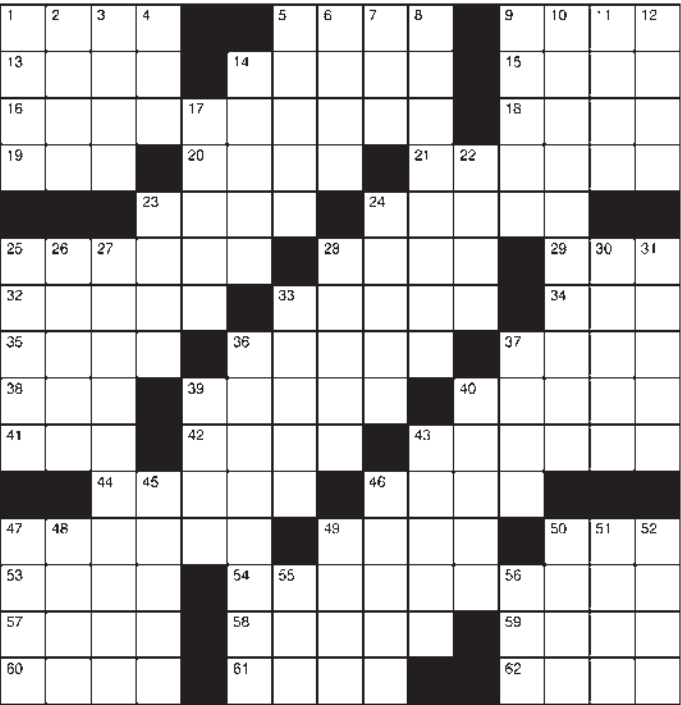
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PUZZLES | ANSWERS ON PAGE 3

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Impetuous
- 5 Money, in Napoli
- 9 So be it!
- 13 Woodwind
- 14 Church assembly
- 15 Louise or Veronica
- 16 One of the Lockridges' sleuths
- 18 Things to grind
- 19 Verse
- 20 Tops
- 21 Way out
- 23 Love god
- 24 Hamlet, e.g.
- 25 Require
- 28 North African sea-port
- 29 Short for depot
- 32 At ____ : bewildered
- 33 Play division
- 34 Before dent or angle
- 35 Mud
- 36 Safekeeping place
- 37 Surrounded by
- 38 Former Middle East grp.
- 39 Discoveries
- 40 List of candidates
- 41 Greek letter

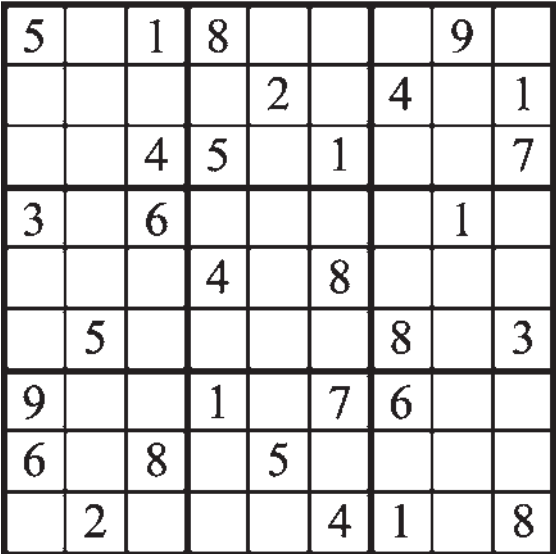
- 42 Partner of ifs and buts
- 43 Scottish bigwigs
- 44 Piggeries
- 46 Dark breads
- 47 Seedy Manhattan area
- 49 Erin
- 50 Tone
- 53 ____ -and-shut case
- 54 TV Susie
- 57 Take five
- 58 Make merry
- 59 Gobi-like
- 60 NT book
- 61 Clarence and Doris
- 62 The Bay St.

DOWN

- 1 Red, in Seville
- 2 Not up yet
- 3 Aching
- 4 Pronoun
- 5 French city
- 6 Concerning
- 7 Rubbish!
- 8 Supporter of a cause
- 9 Fright
- 10 American essayist-critic
- 11 Pieces out
- 12 Headland
- 14 Hairnet
- 17 Tall tales
- 22 Stare
- 23 Allay
- 24 Combats
- 25 Stop the flow
- 26 Inventor Howe
- 27 Shoes of the Fishorman author
- 28 Moves hurriedly, as a cloud
- 30 Overused
- 31 Assistants
- 33 White ____, NM
- 36 Martha's island
- 37 Doleful word
- 39 Weather word
- 40 Piece of paper
- 43 Austrian region
- 45 Camping shelters
- 46 Goes up
- 47 Adriatic wind
- 48 Fuel org.
- 49 The green emotion
- 50 Zeus' wife
- 51 Trinity author
- 52 Book or loose follower
- 55 Educational org.
- 56 Noah's second son

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.



► **Vandalism**, from page 7

believe, to secure the property,” she said. “The police do the best job they can to monitor [the field] but they have their hands full as well.”

One of the most important preventative measures is for the leagues to report every act of theft and vandalism to the police so they know where to beef up patrols, Officer Steffen said.

“It’s all based upon where we see the crimes occurring, so if people aren’t reporting them we don’t know there’s an issue,” he said. “If you see something, you have to say something and then we can handle the situation.”

Community members can also help by treating the fields

with respect, keeping pets on leashes while using the fields and cleaning up their trash. They can also make donations to leagues to help pay for damaged and stolen equipment.

“We operate on the bare minimum, but we do this because we’re trying to provide a positive opportunity for these 13- and 14-year olds — trying to teach them values, respect and all this while they play the game of baseball,” Hemming said.

To donate to Patriots Baseball, visit their GoFundMe page at gofundme.com/ShiraField. To donate to the San Carlos Little League, visit their website at sancarlos-littleleague.com.

—*Reach Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdcmn.com.* ■

► **Briefs**, from page 9



San Diego Foundation offers scholarships

The San Diego Foundation has announced that hundreds of scholarship awards are available for San Diego students pursuing their dreams of higher education. The 2017-2018 Common Scholarship Application is available online now until Feb. 1, 2017 at 2 p.m.

The Community Scholarship Program, the largest in the region outside of the university system, provides a variety of scholarships to high school students, current college students, graduate students and adult re-entry students. Since 1997, the program has awarded more than \$26 million to thousands of students.

“According to U.S. Census data, 35.7 percent of San Diegans 25 and older have a bachelor’s degree or higher,” said Kathlyn Mead, president and CEO of The San Diego Foundation in a press statement. “While many individuals choose to enter the workforce immediately, we want to give everyone the opportunity to pursue higher education if they so choose. The San Diego Foundation Community Scholarship Program strives to ensure the cost of college is not a limiting factor to academic success. Thanks to philanthropy, we are making higher education more accessible and attainable for all San Diegans.”

Using one online application, students can access more than 100 types of scholarships for the 2017-2018 academic year, with awards generally ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Awards are granted to four-year universities, two-year colleges, graduate, or trade/vocational schools.

The Common Scholarship Application can be accessed at bit.ly/2iEBwtX. For more information about the scholarship process, please contact scholarships@sdfoundation.org.

Nominate a nurse

School nurses take care of children’s boo-boos and tummy aches while they are away from their parents during the day. And now there is a way to give back and take care of them for a change.

Pfizer, the maker of Children’s Advil, Children’s Robitussin and Children’s Dimetapp, recently launched a contest to find America’s

Greatest School Nurse.

Until Feb. 23, parents can nominate their favorite school caregiver. One nurse from each 50 states and Washington D.C. will be chosen as finalists and each will receive \$500. Then from March 27 to April 16, people from across the country will vote for their favorite of the 51 nurses who they think is most deserving the title.

The title winner will also be rewarded a trip for themselves and up to three guests to a continental U.S. destination of choice for eight days.



Emerson tapped for Healthcare District board president

The Grossmont Healthcare District (GHD) recently elected its board officers for the 2017 calendar year.

La Mesa resident Michael Emerson was elected as board president, Gloria Chadwick as vice president and Virginia Hall, GHD’s newest board member, as secretary. Board member Robert “Bob” Ayres, previous board president since July 2014, was selected by Emerson to serve as board treasurer. Also serving on the five-member board is Randy Lenac, who also recently joined the board of directors for the Association of California Healthcare Districts as a GHD representative.

“I’m very excited and both honored and privileged as we look ahead and take advantage of opportunities to serve our community,” Emerson said in a press statement. “I have seen firsthand how seriously we take our role of addressing unmet health care needs and monitoring the health care services provided under contract at Sharp Grossmont Hospital. Every constituent can feel confident that we are committed to doing our utmost to assure that patients’ needs are met and that reasonable expectations are exceeded.”

Emerson, who joined the GHD board in 2008, is serving for the first time as board president. Emerson also serves on the Grossmont Hospital Corporation (GHC) board of directors, the legal entity for the hospital lease agreement between Sharp HealthCare and GHD. In addition to serving on the 15-member GHC board, Emerson serves on three

GHC committees, including Finance, Facilities and Quality and Safety.

La Mesa Beautiful seeks new members

Following a year of successful events and projects — Annual Plant Sale, Awards Luncheon and clock installation at The Lookout in the Village — La Mesa Beautiful is looking to expand its membership in 2017.

In an email to current members, La Mesa Beautiful said 2016 was a “very successful membership year.” The email also thanked retiring board members Bob and Chloe Bradshaw and Beverly Horton “for investing countless hours over many years to further the goals” of the group.

For information on where to go to get a membership application, interested parties can call Angela Shaw at 619-792-4090 or email lamesabeautifulmembership@gmail.com.



La Mesa Palms under new ownership

The 80-unit La Mesa Palms multifamily community at 4300 Echo Court has new owners. Vista Investment Group LLC recently acquired the apartments for \$18.97 million from a private family investor that had owned the property for more than 40 years.

The garden-style apartment complex consists of 20 four-plex buildings with spacious two- and three-bedroom units that average 1,100 square feet. The property was 92.5 percent occupied at the time of closing.

“The previous owner has been an excellent steward of the property, but little has been done to improve the asset to stay current with market trends. We believe we can add significant value with a thoughtful renovation and professional management, he said.”

Vista will implement a multimillion dollar capital improvement program that will begin with upgrading the buildings’ exteriors and grounds, as well as the interior renovation of vacant units. Unit upgrades will include quartz countertops, vinyl wood plank flooring, and stainless steel appliances. Other units will be renovated as turnover permits, according to Barach.■

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“Darren has been providing In-Home/ Mobile Physical Therapy and increasing home safety for seniors in San Diego since 2004.”

Call (858) 692-5835 now, for your free guide.

Weight-loss belly balloon: Is it right option for you?

Dr. Julie Ellner

A new FDA-approved procedure is now being offered in San Diego for weight-loss. The gastric "belly" balloon is a non-surgical, outpatient procedure that has been shown to be up to three times more effective for weight loss than those who do diet and exercise alone. It is a non-surgical, non-pharmaceutical means of creating a profound sense of fullness.

One of the reasons why people hit a weight-loss plateau is because dieting alone increases chemical hunger. This is a way to relieve the hunger and be successful without surgery or drugs.

In this 10-minute procedure, I insert a deflated silicone balloon through the patient's mouth into the stomach with an endoscope. Once inserted, it is inflated with sterile saline. Inflated, the balloon is about the size of a grapefruit about one third the size of the stomach. This creates a feeling of fullness and helps patients moderate food intake. The procedure is performed under IV sedation, so the patients go home right away, with a profound sense of fullness.

After six months of using the balloon to learn successful behaviors and losing the weight, the balloon is removed. Patients continue with another six months of follow-up with me, as I help them stay on track with their new behaviors to maintain their weight.

Most weight is lost in the first three months, but because the gastric balloon stays in for six months, patients have more opportunity to learn the right amount of food to eat to maintain their new weight, or even lose more weight.

The balloon has been available for almost two decades outside of the U.S. and has proven successful in over 80 European and other countries. For millions of people who want to lose weight without surgery, it gives them the boost they need.

The balloon is gaining in popularity because it helps those who are overweight,



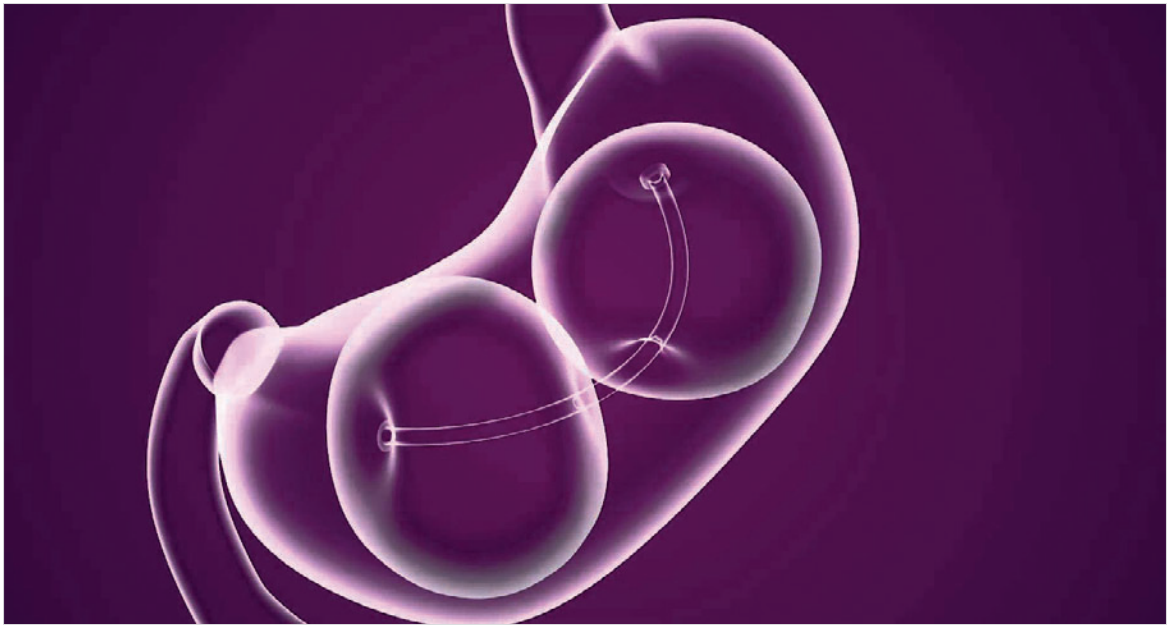
Dr. Julie Ellner

but don't qualify for or don't want surgery. For years, it has been those stuck in the middle – needing to lose more weight than can be accomplished with dieting, but not heavy enough to need surgery – who had no viable options. The balloon helps bridge the gap between diet failure and major surgery.

The FDA has approved the balloon for those with a Body Mass Index between 30 and 40. However, many people in the lower weight categories, wanting to lose up to 50 pounds, receive the balloon and are extremely successful. I consider all applicants carefully, on a case-by-case basis.

I will be hosting a free seminar for those who want to learn more on Feb. 6, 6 p.m., at 5555 Reservoir Drive, Suite 203, San Diego 92120. RSVP by phone to 619-286-7866 or 800-258-2723, or online at BellyBalloonDoctor.com or AlvaradoHospital.com.

—Dr. Julie Ellner, M.D. is a bariatric surgeon who works with Alvarado Hospital and specializes in weight loss.■



A weight loss belly balloon is a surgical approach to weight loss. (Stock image)

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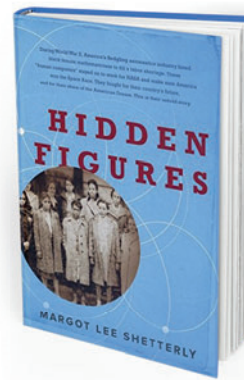
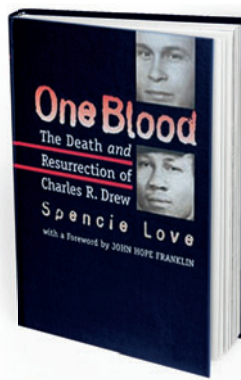
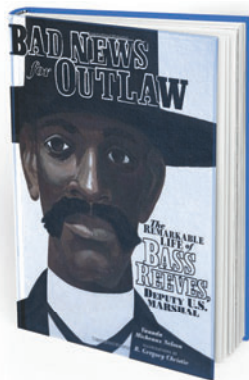
African-American achievements celebrated in books



Jake
Sexton

The recent success of the movie “Hidden Figures” is a wonderful companion to this year’s African-American history month. The movie (and the book that inspired it) showcases amazing, yet underreported, achievements by African-Americans who deserve recognition and admiration. So let’s look at some books that continue this work.

The movie “Hidden Figures” was based on the book “Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race” by Margot Lee Shetterly. The book is a set of oral histories about four African-American women (Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson and Christine Darden) who worked for NASA in the 1960s as mathematicians and engineers and whose calculations and problem-solving were vital to the success of the American space program. The book not only tells the tales of their scientific achievements, but discusses their personal lives and their struggles with the stifling rules of Jim Crow at the same time.



In the 1930s and 1940s, Dr. Charles Richard Drew focused on advancing the field of blood transfusion and preservation. His research made the creation of blood banks possible, his efforts saved thousands of lives during WWII, and he became the first director of the American Red Cross Blood Bank. Tragically, he died young in a car accident in 1950. Author Spencie Love wrote a book about his life, “One Blood: The Death and Resurrection of Charles R. Drew,” with a unique focus. After Drew’s death, an urban legend sprang up in which Drew allegedly died because he could not get treated at the local “whites-only” hospital. Love refutes this claim, but tells the stories of other African-Americans from that era who died because of a racist medical system.

Going back to an earlier century, we have a fascinating tale of larger-than-life lawman Bass Reeves. Born

in Arkansas in the 1830s, he escaped from slavery into Indian Country as a young man. He became a successful farmer and rancher, but in the 1870s was recruited as a deputy U.S. marshal to track down outlaws on the run. Known for his skills with a gun and a penchant for disguises, Reeves is credited with over 3,000 arrests, and there are some who think that the fictional character the Lone Ranger was actually based on his exploits. His tales of adventure are told in “Bad News for Outlaws” by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson.

Locally, we have San Diego civil rights pioneer Dr. Carrol Waymon. He helped found the city’s Citizens Interracial Committee to look at relations between the white, Latino and African-American communities. The committee’s work eliminated a host of discriminatory ordinances and traditions regarding employment,

education and commerce, enabling people of color to live in any neighborhood and attend any school in San Diego. His only book, “On Being Black in San Diego—Anytown USA,” is hard to find, but can be ordered through the library.

With another local slant, we have the winner of the 2016 Eisner Award (the Academy Awards for comics and graphic novels) from San Diego Comic-Con. “MARCH” by U.S. Congressman John Lewis, Andrew Aydin and

Nate Powell is a three-volume work remembering Rep. Lewis’s involvement in the civil rights movement. Rep. Lewis began participating in the struggle against Jim Crow as a college student and became a national civil rights leader by his early 20s. The book should be an inspiration to Americans of all ages.

Second Saturday Concerts The La Mesa Library has begun our Second Saturday Concert Series, featuring a different musician every month from January through June, 2017. On Feb. 11 at 1 p.m., we’ll enjoy the Americana and folk stylings of local duo The Waits. Concerts are provided through the generosity of the Friends of La Mesa Library.

—Jake Sexton is librarian at the La Mesa branch of the San Diego County Library. Call the library at 619-469-2151, visit in person at 8074 Allison Ave., or go online at sdcl.org.



Julie White

TOMATO ASPIC

My mom, Dorothy, also known as Dee Dee, is turning 90 years young this month. I am dedicating this month’s recipe to her since she loves to enjoy it with roasted leg of lamb, roasted chicken or beef. It is an English tradition to serve Aspic with rich, roasted meats. Somehow it cuts through their richness. I remember growing up with my grandmother Louise serving this at our holiday meals.

Aspic is a tangy, refreshing, little side dish that is very interesting. Speaking of



interesting, my mom is the most talented, creative, lively, ahead-of-her-time person I have ever known. She’s also a great cook. So, here’s to you mom, with love!

Ingredients:

- 1 small 3 ounce package of Lemon Jello
- 1 cup of boiling water
- 1 small can of tomato sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar
- 1 stalk of celery, diced very fine
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced

Directions:

Dissolve the Jello in the boiling water. Stir well. Add the remaining ingredients and let set for a few hours. ■



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FEATURED EVENTS

JAN 28 **Second annual Party in the Stars fundraiser**
Saturday
The La Mesa Arts Foundation will hold its second annual Party in the Stars fundraiser to benefit the La Mesa Arts Academy, formerly La Mesa Middle School. The event starts at 7 p.m. in the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Drive. It will feature live music from Joey Harris and the Mentals, and The Tighten Ups; silent auction items; and food and beverages from Hooleys and Continental Catering. For more information visit LaMesaArts.org and follow @LMArtsFoundation on social media.

JAN 31 **Town Hall Meeting**
Tuesday
In an on-going commitment to communicate with residents, the La Mesa City Council will host a Town Hall meeting from 6:30–8:30 p.m. at Lemon Avenue Elementary, 8787 Lemon Ave. This is the first of two open-forum sessions for citizens to share their concerns, ideas and opinions on issues in their neighborhood and throughout the city. For more information call the City Manager’s office, 619-667-1105.

FEB 1 **Boulevard Stroll**
Wednesday
Local artists and musicians entertain as businesses stay open late so folks can shop after dinner the first Wednesday of each month from 5-8 p.m. for Boulevard Stroll in La Mesa. This monthly event is intended to enhance the business district and bond the community. Visit bit.ly/2kgPZ0H.

FEB 2 **Second Town Hall Meeting**
Thursday
The La Mesa City Council will host the second of two Town Hall meetings from 6:30–8:30 pm. at Rolando Elementary, 6925 Tower St. This open-forum session is for citizens to share their concerns, ideas and opinions on issues in their neighborhood and throughout the city. For more information call the City Manager’s office, 619-667-1105.

FEB 4 **‘Why Restoring Our Native Habitat is Critical’**
Saturday
Mt. Helix Park will host the first of its two-part Nature/Sustainable Living lecture series. Join California native plant expert Ed Piffard for this free lecture as he explains the process and purpose of habitat restoration as it applies to Mt. Helix Park and the region. Includes a walk along the Yawkey Trail and a hands-on demonstration of weed abatement as well as planting techniques. Parking at the top is limited so come prepared to take the short 10 to 15 minute walk up from the lower parking areas at the corner of Vivera and Mt. Helix Drive. Coffee and pastries will be served. Set for 9–11 a.m. in the park’s amphitheater, 4905 Mt. Helix Drive. Visit bit.ly/2j35ah0.

FEB 8 **Ribbon cutting for Studio M.I.F**
Wednesday
The La Mesa Chamber of Commerce will welcome Studio M.I.F. to the business community at 7323 El Cajon Blvd., Suite D. The ribbon cutting is set for 6 p.m. Enjoy food and beverages between 5:30–7 p.m. Free to all Chamber members, \$10 per person for all guests and \$15 per person for all “at door” attendees. RSVP by Feb. 3 at rsvp@lamesachamber.com or call 619-465-7700, ext. 2.

FEB 9 **Grand opening of Tomea Real Estate**
Thursday
Tomea Real Estate has a new location and is celebrating with a grand opening party from 4–8 p.m. at 5575 Baltimore Drive, #105. RSVP at tomeare.com.

FEB 11 **‘Book Publishing 1-2-3’**
Saturday
La Mesa resident Laurie Gibson will present “Book Publishing 1-2-3,” 2:30 p.m. at Nainsook Framing & Art, 8130 La Mesa Blvd. Packed with stories and practical tips, this writers’ workshop is designed to empower and inspire authors of fiction and nonfiction alike. Includes ideas to help writers refine their craft, tips for connecting with literary agents and editors, and some thoughts on how to promote books successfully. Cost: \$20 (cash or check). RSVP not needed. Contact Gibson at wordworker1@earthlink.net.

FEB 19 **‘Birds and Butterflies and Bats and Bees’**
Sunday
Guest speaker at La Mesa Beautiful’s annual meeting will be Connie Beck — local landscape designer, horticultural teacher and organic gardening instructor — who will share her insights on “Gardening with Nature — Birds and Butterflies and Bats and Bees,” 4-6 p.m. at Nan Coutts Cottage, 5045 Memorial Drive, La Mesa. There is no cost to attend and the public is invited. RSVP to lamesabeautiful@gmail.com. Visit lamesabeautiful.org. ■

MUSIC NOTES

JAN 29 **Organ concert with Bruce Stevens**
Sunday
Highly accomplished organist Bruce Stevens will perform in concert at Central Congregational Church from 4–6 p.m. at 8360 Lemon Ave. This free event is an opportunity to hear a world class organist play the church’s historical organ. An offering will be received and a reception will follow. Visit ccclamesa.com.



JAN 28 - FEB 11 **Jim Earp plays acoustic guitar**
Saturday - Saturday
Jim Earp performs from 7–10 p.m. at San Pasqual Winery, 8364 La Mesa Blvd. Earp is an acoustic guitarist and singer/songwriter whose focus is instrumental steel string in Hawaiian and Celtic styles. He also sings and does a variety of ’70s folk-rock covers. No cover. Wine by the glass; cheese and crackers and desert available for sale. Seating is on a first come, first-served basis in the intimate back room. Visit sanpasqualwinery.com.

ON FILM

FEB 9 - FEB 10 **Best of the Best Film Fest**
Thursday and Friday
This two-evening program features a variety of fiction and documentary short films by the students of San Diego State’s Television, Film and New Media Production program. Each evening features 90 minutes of new work and highlights from past festivals. Starts at 7:30 p.m. both nights in the SDSU Don Powell Theatre. Tickets: \$10. Visit bit.ly/2jcfQFn.



‘Still Alice’
Sunday
The Hemlock Society of San Diego Right-to-Die Film Festival presents “Still Alice.” Julianne Moore portrays a renowned linguistics professor at Columbia University. When words begin to escape her and she starts becoming lost on her daily jogs, she comes face-to-face with a devastating diagnosis: early-onset Alzheimer’s disease. Screens at 1:30 p.m. followed by a Hemlock Chat at Mission Valley Public Library, 2123 Fenton Parkway. Free and open to the public. Visit hemlocksocietysandiego.org.

GALLERY VIEWS

FEB 1 - FEB 28 **‘Love is in the Air’ art exhibit**
Wednesday - Tuesday
Ladybug Art Center in Kensington presents “Love is in the Air,” an exhibit showcasing an array of pieces portraying the mystical emotions of love. Artists include Beth McClellan, polymer clay; Ann Carson, fused and stained glass; Randy Storm, carved gourds; Mae Crauder-Davis, multi-layer acrylic and precious metal; Katy Reeve-Weesner, English watercolors; Deann Tiffany, oils and wood carving; Julianne Rickseeker, printmaking and pastels; and Susan Mae Hull, calligraphy and watercolor. Runs through Feb. 28 at 4685 Biona Drive. Free and open to the public 11 a.m.–4 p.m. Opening reception is Saturday, Feb. 4, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Visit ladybugartstudio.com.

FEB 8 **‘Love Birds’ wine & paint session**
Wednesday
Nainsook Framing & Art will hold a Valentine-themed wine and paint session from 6:30–9 p.m. at 8130 La Mesa Blvd. Bring your own wine. Enjoy 2 ½ hours of fun and creativity. No need for experience. Just grab a friend and bring your wine to an evening of guided painting/art by a local art instructor. Classes are \$35 and include all painting materials. Leave with a finished 11-inch by 17-inch acrylic painting. Visit bit.ly/2k1hr5d.

STAGE CUES

JAN 30 **‘Inside the Actor’s Process: Ensemble’**
Monday
Grossmont College’s Theatre Arts Department takes its 11th annual “Inside the Actor’s Process” production to 15 high schools throughout San Diego County, Jan. 30-March 22, as part of an effort to expose teen audiences to the finer points of stage performance. High schools can schedule a free performance by calling 619-644-7234. Although “Inside the Actor’s Process: Ensemble” will tour local high schools, Stagehouse Theatre performances at Grossmont College on Feb. 3 and 4 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 4 at 2 p.m. are open to the public. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the box office; online at bit.ly/2jkPToP, or by calling 619-644-7234.

FEB 17 - FEB 26 **‘The Matsuyama Mirror’**
Friday-Sunday
Theatre for Young Audiences presents “The Matsuyama Mirror,” a full-length drama at the Experimental Theatre, San Diego State University. A Japanese folktale fantasy for all ages, this coming-of-age story portrays a young woman who copes with the loss of her mother by escaping into the beautiful world she sees in her magic mirror. Rated PG for coming-of-age themes. For times, prices and online tickets, visit bit.ly/2jP7RQI. ■

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EDUCATION

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The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Median Home Price in San Diego County Surpasses \$500,000

November 29 2016

The median home price in October exceeded a half-million dollars for the first time in a decade in San Diego County, real estate tracker CoreLogic reported Tuesday.

Pushed up by high demand and limited supply, the median price hit \$507,500, up 11% from a year ago. It has still not reached the housing boom peak of \$517,500 in November 2005.

Part of last month's price jump was due to a substantial increase in the price of newly built homes and resale condos.

The median price of a new home in the county was \$765,000, a jump of 26% from the same time last year. There were 256 new home sales in October, up 20% from the same time last year.

Median Home Price

All home sales in San Diego County, monthly prices.



Mt. Helix Foothills
SOLD



La Mesa
IN ESCROW



Vista New Construction
SOLD



Bankers Hill Penthouse
IN ESCROW



Campo Horse Ranch
SOLD



Mt. Helix Foothills
IN ESCROW

