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**Town Hall meetings
invite public input**



(l to r) Assistant City Manager Greg Humora, City Attorney Glen Sabine, City Manager Yvonne, Garrett, Mayor Mark Arpostathis, Vice Mayor Colin Parent and Councilmembers Bill Baber, Kristine Alessio and Akilah Weber (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

Jeff Clemetson
Editor

La Mesa's annual town hall meetings, where City Council and city staff hear from residents about issues in their neighborhoods, were held on Jan. 29 at Dale Elementary and Jan. 31 at Murray Manor Elementary. Residents brought up a wide range of topics, but the majority of concerns at this year's events centered around infrastructure

in the city — roads, bike lanes, sidewalks, street lighting, parks, and other nuts and bolts city functions. New to this year's format were several presentations on topics that the city regularly receives phone calls or emails about. La Mesa Police Capt. Matt Nicolas gave a presentation on animal services. He said that most residents do not realize that the shelter La Mesa uses is in El Cajon, even for residents

that live on the west side bordering San Diego. He also said the police often get calls about wild animals such as coyotes, but there is little that they can do because state law says wild animals can't be removed. He suggested deterrents like improving fencing, keeping shrubs and trees well-trimmed, and picking up fruit from trees off the ground to make yards less appealing to wild animals.

See TOWN HALL page 14

City looks to improve life for seniors

Doug Curlee
Editor at Large

La Mesa has been known as the "Jewel of the Hills" for longer than most people can remember. After all, it's the official city motto. People who live here think it's one of the best places in the county to live. But could it be better? There's a concerted effort right now to answer that question, especially for those of a certain age group — 45-years-old and up. The effort to improve life for seniors in the city is called



La Mesa residents take the Livable La Mesa survey during a community input activity in early February. (Courtesy City of La Mesa)

See LIVABLE LA MESA page 5

NEWS BRIEFS

Best of La Mesa ballot raffle
While balloting and tabulating winners for our 2019 Best of La Mesa issue, La Mesa Courier is drawing prizes for people who have voted for their favorite local businesses. Our Best of La Mesa sponsors — Fitness 101, D'Amatos Pizza, Konichiwa Sushi, Lamplighters Theatre, Uneeque Boutique, Centifonti's Yum Yum Donuts and Little Roma — have donated gifts we award to raffle winners. We'd like to offer our congratulations to our first winners Veronica Magana who won a \$50 gift certificate to Uneeque Boutique and Ymelda Beauchamp who won two season tickets to Lamplighters Theatre. If you want to enter into the raffle, it is not too late. Just go to lamesacourier.com and click on the Best of La Mesa logo at the top of the page. Fill out the ballot with all your local favorites and that's it — you're entered. You can also fill out the ballot on page 22 of this issue and send to our office at 444 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 102, San Diego, CA 92108. Winners will be drawn every month leading up to our Best of La Mesa issue in May. Good luck!

La Mesa community survey released
With the stated goal of providing "high quality facilities and services" that meet existing and emerging needs, the city of La Mesa hired True North Research, an independent survey research firm, to conduct a statistically valid citywide survey in January to better understand how residents feel about the way the city is providing vital services; understand where the city should spend resources; and

See NEWS BRIEFS page 5



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‘These Eyes Have Seen’ ... maybe everything

Doug Curlee
Editor at Large

Walking into a room of senior citizens has always triggered the same reaction for me. I can't help but wonder what stories might be behind those eyes — what life-changing events they have known that might have changed their lives, for better or worse.

The people who run Sunshine Retirement Communities thought much the same thing, which is why the company has started a program called “These Eyes Have Seen,” in an effort to capture and document those stories at the 21 facilities it runs in 10 states.

Sunrise Retirements CEO Luis Serrano decided to start

compiling those stories for the company's website and a Facebook page, both called These Eyes Have Seen.

As a child, and then a young man in Mississippi, Bill Goggin was a scholar who ended up being recognized by the city, the state, and ultimately as a Presidential Scholar — he wound up at Harvard College.

The Jan. 31 stop at Waterford Terrace Retirement Community in La Mesa yielded some rich material for the project.

“I never expected any of that,” Goggin said. “But I'm really glad it all happened.”

George Howell said he escaped death three times in his youth. First, a nearly fatal childhood battle with malaria, and then two incidents as a young sailor stationed in Washington, D.C.

“I almost got shot by a police officer for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and a buddy and I almost got killed riding in a car driven by a driver we didn't realize was blind drunk when he picked us up hitchhiking. He ended up rolling the car three times.”

Joann Livingston's family homesteaded near Yuma, Arizona, and started growing things that weren't normally grown in the desert — and wound up doing it so well the family was invited to Egypt by then-president Anwar Sadat, to show Egyptians how to do it.

The list includes Richard Lederer, a prolific author and longtime language columnist for the San Diego Union-Tribune, whose columns on language and the proper use of it made me a better writer over the years.

But possibly the most life-changing story — one that was all too common in the late 1950s and early 1960s — happened to Dr. David Eiser.

He was a young kid who was looking forward to his father renting a house at the seashore in New Jersey.

The family went to the rental office to sign the papers and pay the rent. When the rental agent asked them to fill out the formal application forms, Eiser's father scratched out the word “church” from the question about where the family attended services, and substituted the word “synagogue.”

The rental agent saw that, and told the family he needed



Joanne Livingston showed Egypt how to grow vegetables in the desert.

to go to the other office and make sure the house was ready for occupancy.

A few minutes later, he came back and apologized, saying, “I'm so sorry, that house has already been rented, and I didn't know that. We don't have another house open right now.”

The family left, and as they got into their car, David's mother asked him if he knew what had happened there.

David said, “Well, they rented to someone else — it's no big deal.” His mom said, “No, David that's not what happened. What happened is that they won't rent to Jews.”

It was a life lesson David Eiser never forgot.

Things like that make you realize that there are stories

everyone should hear and learn from.

Things our seniors could teach us all, if only we listen.

That's what These Eyes Have Seen is all about, obtaining and conserving the stories — good and bad — that life experiences can teach us.

If only we have eyes and ears to learn.

Which stories make the Sunshine Retirement Communities website will be determined by the company's home office in Bend, Oregon, and the results won't be known for several weeks yet.

But it'll be worth looking at when it happens.

—Doug Curlee is Editor at Large. Reach him at doug@sdcnn.com. ■



David Eiser shares a story of enduring anti-semitism. (Photos by Doug Curlee)



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Community’s strength in ‘Salute to Local Heroes’

Jeff Clemetson
Editor

Every year, chambers of commerce all over the region hold formal dinners to usher in their new boards of directors. When Mary England formed the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce 11 years ago, she wanted her chamber dinner to have something more to it.

“I wanted to incorporate a little bit of the strength of our community in addition to having the dinner,” she said.

That bit of community strength is The Salute to Local Heroes — an event honoring emergency service personnel from La Mesa Police, Heartland Fire, paramedics and RSVP volunteers.

Every year, each department names two heroes who stood out in their field. In years past, these local heroes included paramedics who saved a gunshot victim, a police officer who used quick thinking to track down a stolen car, and a fire-rescue canine officer.

“In the past when I write the text for the evening program, I’ve had tears in my eyes for what these people have accomplished and why they were chosen — saving lives,” England said. “These are people who go to work every day, do their job and we get to just have the flavor of what they do for one night.”

That night this year’s event is on March 14. The 11th annual Salute to Local Heroes will once again be held at the Town & Country Resort Hotel, 500 Hotel Circle North in Mission Valley starting at 5 p.m. Like all years past, this event will have a theme: “Puttin’ On The Ritz.”

England likes the themes because they create a “party atmosphere” but she stressed that attendees are not required to dress up — business casual or business attire is perfectly acceptable.

“Some of the chambers have black ties, we don’t do that,” she said.

In addition to voting in the new board of directors and honoring the heroes, the chamber event includes an auction, a full course plated meal — vegan



La Mesa Chamber of Commerce CEO Mary England and Stella the canine rescue dog at last year’s Salute to Local Heroes (Courtesy LMCC)

and gluten-free options available — and a cash bar.

Tickets for this year are \$95 for individuals; \$170 for a couple; and \$700 for groups of eight. All pricing includes parking. Tickets are available through the chamber website, lamesachamber.com, or by calling 619-456-7700.

Like all La Mesa Chamber of Commerce events, Salute to Local Heroes is open to the public — not just chamber members.

“Whether people are active in our community or not active in our community, this is an opportunity to come together and celebrate the strength of the community. That is really the essence of the night,” England said.

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

Salute to Local Heroes 2019 honorees*

American Medical Response
Christian Grote
Aaron Thomas

Heartland Fire & Rescue
Dean Sergeant – Engineer

La Mesa Police
Erin Jones – Crime Analyst
Det. Ryan Gremillion

Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol
Mike Sparks
Johnny Florez

* Look in next month’s issue for details on the heroic deeds of this year’s honorees.

27 Ways to Drive Up the Sales Price of Your Home

La Mesa - Because your home may well be your largest asset, selling it is probably one of the most important decisions you will make in your life, and once you have made the decision, you’ll want to sell your home for the highest price in the shortest time possible without compromising your sanity. Before you place your home on the market, here’s a way to help you to be as prepared as possible.

To assist homesellers, a new industry report has just been released called “27 Valuable Tips That You Should Know to Get Your Home Sold Fast and for Top Dollar.” It tackles the important issues you need to know to make your home competitive in today’s tough, aggressive marketplace.

Through these 27 tips you will discover how to protect and capitalize on your most important investment, reduce stress, be in control of your situation, and make the best profit possible.

In this report you’ll discover how to avoid financial disappointment or worse, a financial disaster when selling your home. Using a common-sense approach, you will get straight facts about what can make or break the sale of your home.

You owe it to yourself to learn how these important tips will give you the competitive edge to get your home sold fast and for the most amount of money.

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 1023. You can call anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Get your free special report NOW.

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Rising through the ranks at Casa de Pico

Former dishwasher becomes key figure at iconic restaurant

Frank **Sabatini Jr.**

By the time Lino Rodarte was in his early teens, he knew how to make cheese with milk he extracted from cows. Under the guidance of an aunt, he also learned how to produce scratch-made tortillas and cook steak rancheros to serve with them.

Growing up in the central Mexican state of Zacatecas, he was fortunate to earn a little money from his culinary inklings by cooking for a wealthy rancher in his hometown. Yet with a taste for new adventures, he came to San Diego in 1977 and soon landed a dishwasher job at Casa de Pico in



Lina Rodarte is a self-made professional with humble roots. (Photos courtesy of J. Walcher Communications)

Old Town San Diego's Bazaar del Mundo.

The restaurant was only six years old at the time. It presented Rodarte with a challenging fast-paced environment, which by most odds, wouldn't afford a young immigrant who spoke limited English the opportunity to oversee more than 130 employees as well as food costs and quality control of the kitchen.

But it did. Rodarte became general manager of Casa de Pico in 2005, shortly after restaurateur Diane Powers lost her lease in the Bazaar del Mundo and moved the popular Mexican restaurant to 5500 Grossmont Center Drive in La Mesa. That same year, she moved her other Old Town restaurant, Casa di Bandini, to Carlsbad while keeping in place nearby Casa Guadalajara. And just six years ago, she opened Casa Sol y Mar in Carmel Valley.

In various capacities, Rodarte had a hand in them all.

His ascent within the company kicked into motion when he began sticking around after washing the dishes to learn from the chef various knife skills and how to manage food supplies.

"I was going on 18 years old and I was excited to learn new things," he recalls. "I would watch the cooks, and the chef

taught me kitchen procedures and to always treat workers with respect."

After three months, Rodarte was promoted to line cook at Casa de Pico. A few years later, he was transferred to Casa di Bandini to train new line cooks. That opportunity led him into becoming head chef and kitchen manager of the restaurant for the next 20 years.

Powers recalls back then a fresh-faced Rodarte eager to learn new skills while showing great dependability.

"He caught on fast and we saw he had a good aptitude for flavors and food presentation," she said.

Rodarte excelled in the kitchen. He made the leap from cooking basic meals in Mexico as a teenager to working with everything from sauces and seafood to grilled meats and seasonal specials as a young adult.

During this period, in 1994, he introduced fajitas to the menu. He saw the Southwest-style stir-fry on numerous menus while driving through Texas on his return from Memphis, where he had helped a friend open a couple of restaurants. With the support of Powers, the dish was introduced to all four Casa restaurants. And customers quickly embraced it.

Tequila-lime shrimp served over Mexican rice is yet another



The indoor-outdoor La Mesa restaurant seats about 500 customers.

of Rodarte's enduring contributions, along with the "macho grande" plate featuring a hearty lineup of carne asada, a chicken tamale, chicken taco, crispy beef taco, chile relleno, rice, beans and guacamole.

"It's for big eaters," Rodarte quipped, while modestly adding that Casa di Bandini received eight gold medal awards by the California Restaurant Association while he ran the kitchen.

Shortly before Powers moved Casa di Bandini and Casa de Pico out of Bazaar de Mundo, she offered Rodarte the general manager position at Casa de Pico.

In the transition, Rodarte helped her reopen the restaurants at their new locations while training new chefs and cooks at Casa Guadalajara in Old Town.

"Diane took note of my experience over the years, and I'm very grateful. I've raised my kids and bought my house working for her," he said.

Rodarte is a familiar face at Casa de Pico. As general manager, he meets and greets scores of customers as they fill the indoor-outdoor restaurant, which seats 500 people. He also manages 136 employees, keeps careful checks on food costs and exerts a sharp eye on food quality.

For the latter effort, he takes part in weekly taste testings of existing and seasonal dishes to ensure quality and consistency.

"Lino and I do tastings every week," said Powers. "We can



The carne asada tampiquena plate has been on the menu for at least 25 years.

taste test 50 new recipes before we settle on 12," adding that the popular flame-grilled carne asada tampiqueno is among the many classic dishes she and Rodarte once put through the rigors. "It's been on the menu for about 25 years."

In his precious free time, Rodarte enjoys mountain hiking and picnicking around Julian and Cuyamaca.

"I just turned 59. So when I retire from this job and have more time, I want to travel to the Rocky Mountains and the mountains of Peru."

For more information about Casa de Pico and the other restaurants in the group, call 619-463-3267, or visit casadepico.com.

—Frank Sabatini Jr. is the author of 'Secret San Diego' (ECW Press) and began his local writing career more than two decades ago as a staffer for the former San Diego Tribune. You can reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com. ■

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► **Livable La Mesa**, from page 1

Livable La Mesa. The is part of a national movement that looks at life for seniors in communities. There are some fairly heavy hitters working on this project, including the World Health Organization and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Back in April, both those organizations recognized La Mesa as an age-friendly community, which prompted grant money to fund the project from the San Diego Foundation.

In any project like this, there needs to be a major effort to ask people what they need to make their lives as seniors better.

Heading up the La Mesa effort is Sue Richardson, the city’s community services director, and Lori Clarke, chief program officer for San Diego State University.

“There are eight categories we need peoples’ feedback about,” said Richardson. “Buildings and outdoor spaces, transportation, housing, social programs, respect and social inclusion, civic participation, communication and information, and community support and health services. We’ve gathered much of that feedback through a series of community conversations and what are called ‘pop-up’ events, where we ask people 45-and-up what their biggest concerns and questions are.”

Lori Clarke says that’s the first step — knowing what the concerns are.



Megan Howell, recreation supervisor of La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center, takes community input at a Livable La Mesa event. (Courtesy City of La Mesa)

“When we have that feedback, we’ll then start committees that will come up with possibilities that can ultimately be taken to the city of La Mesa government for possible action,” she said.

Carole Hair, an attendee at one of the community conversation meetings, provided a good example of the questions citizens want answers to.

“My husband and I live just across the line, actually in Del Cerro, but we really want to move to a place like La Mesa. We’re empty-nesters now, and we need to get out of a four-bedroom home that’s just way too much for us. Things we need to know are things like: will there be good public transportation for us when we need to stop driving, which will come sooner than we’d like it to. Will there be good housing available for us to get into ...

access to stores, restaurants — the things most seniors worry about.”

The month of March will begin the process of breaking the gathered information into categories that can be worked on.

This is not a quick process. It may take most of a year to outline the goals the research indicates are needed.

If you haven’t had a chance to attend one of the workshops in person, you can still offer input on the Livable La Mesa effort online at tinyurl.com/livablelamesa.

No one is guaranteeing huge successes here, politics being what it is. But simply the fact that effort is being made should turn the heads of those who make decisions.

—Doug Curlee is Editor at Large. Reach him at doug@sdcdn.com.■

► **News Briefs**, from page 1

assess opinions on a variety of topics such as public safety, traffic and parks and recreation. The city conducts a community survey every two years.

In summary, the report from True North showed that 90 percent of residents rated the quality of life in La Mesa as excellent or good. Overall, 86 percent of residents surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with the city’s performance in providing municipal services. These results are comparable to the survey that was conducted in 2017. With regard to customer service, slightly more than 9 out of every 10 residents who had interacted with city staff in the prior 12 months rated staff as helpful, professional, and responsive.

When residents were asked what they felt the city could do to improve the quality of life, their top priorities were addressing homelessness issues, improving and repairing roads, providing affordable housing, and limiting growth and development. Residents also indicated that adding and improving sidewalks would improve the quality of life.

The 2019 community survey can be viewed on the city’s website at bit.ly/2GtmOGc. For questions about the survey, contact the City Manager’s Office at 619-667-1105.

Jacob calls for housing, health, fire protection

In her State of the County speech, Chairwoman Dianne Jacob on Wednesday called

for new measures to boost the stock of affordable housing, improve behavioral services and beef up fire protection in the most vulnerable communities.

She outlined proposals aimed at encouraging affordable housing in the county’s unincorporated area, while also safeguarding existing homes and new development from wildfire.

“We’re facing a conflict between shelter and safety, and we must find some balance in this battle,” said Jacob, who represents much of the fire-prone backcountry.

Her housing initiatives include doubling the size of the county’s housing trust fund, to \$50 million, and increasing financial incentives to make it easier to build granny flats and other secondary dwellings next to existing houses.

“Many of you may know the term YIMBY, ‘yes in my backyard.’ Here we are talking about actual backyards,” Jacob said.

Her wildfire proposals include strengthening the building code for construction in high-risk fire areas and offering grants to existing homeowners to encourage the installation of safer vents, walls and other fire-resistant materials.

“The fact remains that San Diego County is one bad Santa Ana wind away from a disaster. New homes and communities must be built to give people and property the greatest chance of survival.”

She also laid out plans to improve and expand mental health and substance abuse programs, and noted that many

of the homeless are in critical need of such services. She said the region must develop a coordinated system of care that focuses on individuals, not programs. In addition, she proposed improvements related to PERT, the county’s psychiatric emergency response teams.

On senior issues, Jacob provided updates on The Alzheimer’s Project, the county-led effort to address the local dementia epidemic, and Collaboration4Cure, the research offshoot of the project. She announced the launch of a new respite care voucher program for those who need a break from the demands of caring for someone with dementia or other health challenges.

On the energy front, Jacob called on her board colleagues to join the community choice energy movement, saying the county should team up with local cities to open up the energy market.

“County government is already allowed to shop the energy market. We buy the bulk of our electricity from providers other than SDG&E,” she said. “If the county can shop for energy, why not the rest of us? Why not ratepayers, school districts and others?”■



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Guest Editorial

Advice on empowering women in business

Anne McClure

An aspiring young lady recently asked me for advice as she strives to reach executive status in her career. The question initially struck me as odd, as it's not like I can recommend reading a specific book or listening to a self-help podcast. Nonetheless, there are certainly a number of things young women can do to be successful and work toward moving up the corporate ladder.

Need I state the obvious? Work hard. Do you need to put in more than eight hours per day? Maybe. But working long hours isn't necessarily the key to being promoted. On the other hand, being a clock-watcher will certainly get noticed ... just not in a good way. Volunteer for extra responsibilities. Do your research when working on a project, investing the necessary time to produce a quality result.

Do something you love. It is a lot easier to work hard when you love what you do. We invest far too many hours in the workplace to be involved in a career or a role that we do not find rewarding. If you don't love it, do some soul searching and put yourself on the right path. Your job doesn't have to be perfect, but finding the overall feeling rewarding and enjoyable will allow you to achieve greater success, and more importantly, overall happiness.

Use your voice. There is a balance between being too vocal and being a fly on the wall. If you wish to move up the corporate ladder, you need to be heard. During meetings, be engaged. Don't just listen and

pay attention; more importantly, contribute. Share your ideas. Know the topic so that you can give intelligent input, don't talk just to hear yourself speak. Volunteer to perform the necessary research for the task at hand. Have an opinion derived from intellectual thought and share it.

Surround yourself with people who support you. Hopefully you work in an environment where people believe in you and are encouraging your growth. If you don't, it may be time to re-evaluate your path.

Remain positive. Looking through a lens of positivity is a lot healthier than constantly seeing the glass half-empty. While you may have an outlet at home for venting about work issues, most of your time at home, and definitely at work, should be spent spreading good news. Negativity breeds negativity and it can consume your thoughts, your actions, and your physical well-being. There is no room for "woe is me" in the executive wing. Focus on your blessings, the successes you've achieved, the things that went right. Make sure the majority of your mental energy is spreading good news, not your worries or your complaints.

Avoid negative people. The biggest part of remaining positive is who you surround yourself with. Both at home and at work, remove yourself from negative environments. Some people choose to be negative. Everything they do includes complaining, blaming others, feeling persecuted — it's a miracle they've lived past their teenage years. While these people may be humorous, or you may believe you can "fix" them, ultimately

they drain your energy and can cause you to see things through their same jaded glasses. Learn how to cut those conversations short. Don't contribute to negative discussions, and certainly do not bad-mouth others in the workplace. The grapevine is alive and well and you do not want your name attached to anything that can negatively impact your reputation.

Envision what you want. Allow that to be your driving force. Believe it and make it happen. While this may be a picture of yourself in a role, try to focus on certain behaviors or attributes you believe are important for you to have in order to attain the role. For example, if you're working on your confidence, envision yourself as the confident individual you want to be. If you wish you were more positive, see yourself as spreading positivity through the workplace. Wake up every day and write it down. Spend time contemplating the words as you compose them. This five-minute daily exercise can set your mood for the day. It will inspire you into positive action.

Be aware that you are always making an impression. Remember that and keep that in focus (this is a great parenting tactic too). The relationships you build today, while they may seem small, can lead to incredibly significant results — often unknowingly. The actions, and reactions, you provide is ultimately crucial to opportunities in the future.

Be confident. Present yourself confidently and capitalize on your strengths. There is a balance between confidence and over-confidence. Finding

it is important. Presenting yourself with poise and knowledge helps ensure others see self-assurance but not self-righteousness. If you believe in yourself, others will too. The more confidence you exude, the more confidently you are viewed.

Foster collaboration. Recognize that, while you may be confident, others have a voice. Encourage others to speak and be respectful of ideas. People want to be part of an organization in which they themselves are valued. While you may be working on your own career path, be cognizant that others are doing the same. As such, encouraging the exchange of ideas, respecting contributions by others, and giving credit to people within the workplace helps create an organization built on respect.

Get to know everyone. Whether your workplace has 10 employees or 10,000 employees, staff members at all levels are contributing to the success and growth of the organization. Recognizing employees' individual strengths and/or circumstances, helps create an environment built on respect. While an entry-level employee may not be responsible for the next biggest negotiated contract, she may be a factor in your company's next five-star Yelp review. Everyone has a contribution to the organization. Celebrating individuals by simply getting to know them will help others to promote you, both vocally and emotionally.

Follow through. Remember what you have committed to doing, and follow through.

Guest Editorial

Don't investigate mystery charge, investigate gas taxes instead

Sen. **Brian Jones**

I'll keep this simple: Why are California's gas prices almost a dollar more than almost anywhere else in the country? Because of all the laws, regulations and taxes that the Democratic majority have added onto the price of fuel.

Recently, 19 Democrat legislators sent a letter to the California Attorney General requesting an investigation into a "mystery" charge they feel is unfairly inflating the state's gas prices. Instead of taking responsibility for their price-increasing policies, the Democrat legislators want to blame "Big Oil." They claim that the oil companies are adding a secret surcharge between the refinery and the pump to gouge consumers.

This is not the first time the issue has come up. When Democrat legislators created or have sought to expand the state's pricey Cap-and-Trade Program, they loudly complain that "Big Oil" is conspiring to hike gas prices. When they say "Big Oil," they are talking about the large multinationals, but in California, we have many small businesses in the oil industry that create high-paying jobs all over the state, particularly in the Central Valley.

In fact, last year, my Republican colleague Senator John Moorlach of Costa Mesa sponsored a bill to increase transparency on gas prices by disclosing all government-imposed costs (e.g., taxes and fees). Senate Bill 1074 would have required gas stations to post near each gas and diesel pump a list of cost factors adding to the price of fuel. The list would have disclosed how much the consumer pays in federal, state and local taxes, as well as the costs associated with environmental rules and regulations.

Some of the costs hidden in the posted per-gallon price of fuel at the pump that SB 1074 would have revealed to the consumer:

- Federal tax.
- Excise tax.
- State tax.
- Local sales tax.
- Cap-and-Trade Program compliance costs.
- Low-carbon fuel standard program compliance costs.
- Renewable fuels standard program compliance costs.
- Refinery winter and summer reformatting costs.
- Underground storage tank fee.

The legislation went nowhere. In fact, the Democrat-controlled Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development, where Moorlach's bill had its one and only hearing, made amply clear

that it didn't want the public to be aware of the real costs of all the programs and taxes they have imposed.

All told, the aforementioned taxes, compliance fees, and costs add just under one dollar to the per-gallon cost at the pump. Plus, as Cap-and-Trade and the Low Carbon Fuel Standard programs kick into higher gear in the coming years, the cost to fill the tank is projected to jump another one to two dollars per gallon by 2030, according to an analysis done by Stillwater Associates's carbon policy team in 2018.

Make no mistake, California's high fuel prices are not due to some nefarious "price gouging" actions taken by "Big Oil," but are the result of the laws and policies that Democrat legislators have supported and continue to support. I question why those same legislators are only saying they can't understand why the price of gas is so high, and why they don't want consumers to know exactly what they're paying for at the pump.

Similar to hiding gas-pump costs, hiding from the public the details of a multitude of other government-imposed costs provides a better understanding of why California is grappling with the highest percentage of people in poverty and a homelessness crisis so acute as to defy explanation.

- California has 25 percent of the homeless in the nation, and double the national average of homeless per 10,000 people.

- According to the California Poverty Measure, almost 40 percent of Californians are living in or near poverty.

The Democrat legislators talk a good game, then hide from the facts. The "transparency-at-the-pump" bill would have given drivers knowledge on just how much all the various taxes and programs imposed on fuel are really costing Californians.

Democrat legislators don't want Californians to know how much they have to pay in taxes because they know Californians would rise up in anger. Californians deserve better. I welcome your thoughts on the rise of gas taxes. Email me at senator.jones@sen.ca.gov.

—Sen. Brian W. Jones is chair of the Senate Republican Caucus and was elected to the California state Senate in 2018 representing the 38th Senate District which includes Lemon Grove, El Cajon, La Mesa, Santee, Poway, Escondido, San Marcos, Lakeside, Valley Center, Rancho Santa Fe, Julian, Ramona, Rancho San Diego, Bonsall, Fallbrook, Borrego Springs, and parts of the city of San Diego.■

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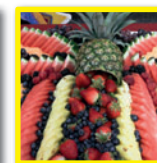
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► Empower, from page 6

Ensure others in the organization know they can rely on you. Whether you promise a frontline employee you will get someone to look into their slow PC, or you commit to calling a colleague for a reference, make sure you do as you say. Follow-through can also be taken to the next level, simply remembering an earlier conversation with a co-worker. Asking about the vacation they mentioned, or their spouse's surgery; these small gestures reflect your human side and allows staff to see you with more depth.

There isn't a formula for rising on a career path. Nonetheless, it is within your control. Focusing on what you can do versus your obstacles will ultimately put you in the driver's seat and provide you with self-satisfaction and overall happiness. Remember your more natural traits as a female. Are you compassionate? Sensitive? Intuitive? Build on your strengths. Don't try to hide them or be something you're not. Be the best version of you.

—Anne McClure is CEO of Cabrillo Credit Union San Diego.■

Let's build on the success of community colleges

Rep. Susan A. Davis

When discussing higher education, many people may think of the traditional four-year university. But in reality, our community colleges have come to satisfy a critical need in higher education as a bridge to further education and the first step toward lucrative careers. They are a vital component of higher education that rightly deserve additional attention.

As the chair of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment, I will be looking at ways to expand the impact of community colleges. This will be an especially important conversation as we work to reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA) this Congress.

The rising costs of tuition and a lack of investment from all levels of government have put high-quality post-secondary education increasingly out of reach for millions of Americans. In this high-cost environment, community colleges often bridge the gap for millions of middle class families who cannot afford to pay for four-year universities.

Additionally, community colleges have historically shown

a tremendous ability to reach out and support first-generation college students and others for whom achieving a post-secondary education may be more difficult. I strongly believe that it is the job of Congress to match that success by finally providing resources for this important work.

That's where the HEA reauthorization comes in. We can improve our higher education system, and increase access to all forms of higher education if we lift up community colleges and address the affordability of four-year universities.

The HEA was last renewed in 2008 and has been working under short-term extensions. In a rapidly changing world and an ever-changing economy, we need to ensure the HEA is meeting the needs of our students.

Two out of 3 jobs in the modern-day economy are filled by individuals with a post-secondary education. Over their lifetimes, bachelor's degree holders make approximately \$1 million more than high school graduates, and associate degree holders make \$400,000 more than high school graduates.

We must do everything possible to make higher education pathways affordable to everyone — not just those at the top or those who can afford to go to traditional four-year private institutions.

The chance to reauthorize HEA does not happen every year — which is why we cannot waste this moment by passing a bill that changes higher education only at the margins.

House Democrats have articulated a vision of proposing immediate investments in

students to make higher education more affordable today.

And there is no great mystery on how to do that. We simply need to expand Pell grants and we need to make them more flexible.

A comprehensive HEA reauthorization cannot stop at merely expanding federal resources. We also need to make sure we address accountability, especially given that the Department of Education is weakening many standards meant to protect our students. The Department of Education's decision to roll back consumer protections for borrowers that date from the 1990s makes it more likely that students will be on the hook should they fall victim to one of many fraudulent institutions. Congress has a duty to protect taxpayers and students from low-quality schools by restricting those schools' access to federal student aid.

We must also look at the work community colleges have done outside of the traditional conception of higher education. The partnerships many of our institutions have made with local communities are quite amazing and unique.

There are few places better at bringing together students, local businesses, and instructors than American community colleges. They are currently on the front lines of changing the future of work. We must adapt our education model to this new reality.

One critical investment that community colleges have made is expanding apprenticeships and partnering with local businesses to ensure their workforce needs are met. While the progress has been

extraordinary so far, we must go beyond where we are. We need to start thinking beyond the traditional trades and expand career education into areas not traditionally associated with apprenticeships such as banking, health care, cybersecurity, and other expanding career fields.

Community colleges not only serve a critical role in making a traditional post-secondary education a reality, but they can help students who may not be interested in a four-year degree find success in high-quality, high-paying careers. We must acknowledge the important role community colleges play in preparing students for further study, and we must expand upon the other important services and pathways to higher education that they provide.

We want to make sure community colleges help all sorts of students, from adult learners to individuals who have no interest in attending a university, acquire the skills they need to succeed in today's modern economy.

But it's also much more than that. It's about creating an environment that nurtures people so they can achieve success, care for their families, and make a difference in their communities.

—Congresswoman Davis represents central San Diego, including the communities of Old Town, Kensington, Mission Hills, University Heights, Hillcrest Bankers Hill, North Park, South Park, Talmadge, Normal Heights, as well as La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley and parts of El Cajon and Chula Vista.■

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Republican Women informed about border security

Pat Boerner

The February meeting of Navajo Canyon Republican Women of California featured Joshua Wilson, executive vice president and media representative for the National Border Council Local 1613. NBPC Local 1613 represents Border Patrol Agents assigned to the San Diego sector of the U.S. Border Patrol.

We know concerns over border security are at an all-time high and the consequences of unknown people and drugs entering our country illegally have created a dangerous environment on both sides of the border.

The pain and suffering that results from these illegal crossings has reached such a level that it is morally wrong to continue ignoring the situation. It is time for Congress to work to solve this crisis.

Now is the time to make your voice heard and let our government know that we want a barrier along our southern border in conjunction with the use of smart technology to help the professionals secure the border.

We pay our taxes, and we are entitled to a secure border. It is time to take politics and partisanship out of it and come up with a secure border plan. Please contact your representatives and let them know how you feel.

Navajo Canyon's next meeting will be March 12 at the Brigantine in La Mesa. We will welcome former state Senator Joel Anderson as our speaker.

Anderson has long been the cornerstone of Republican politics in East County, receiving 26 legislator-of-the-year awards and co-authoring over 450 bills with the Democrats, even while retaining his most conservative voting record. His local office was a model for meeting the needs of his constituents and giving dozens of young

Republicans the experience to serve as interns.

Anderson will be discussing the 2020 election and how the San Diego electorate will be involved. The California Republican Party will have their 2019 convention in Sacramento, Feb. 22–24. Anderson will discuss the election of a new Republican State Chairman and the future outlook for elections in California as well as what you need to know about ballot harvesting, single-payer health care, canceling of Prop 13 and much more.



Senator Joel Anderson

Check in begins at 10:30 a.m. for the 11 a.m. meeting. An always-delicious full course lunch is served for a cost of \$25. Cash and checks are accepted. Reservations are required, and the room is usually full to capacity. Many months we have a waiting list to attend, so please RSVP early to rsvpwrcnc@gmail.com or text Marjie at 619-990-2791. For more information on our activities, please visit our website at RWCNavajo-Canyon.org and check us out on Facebook at Republican Women of California – Navajo Canyon.

—Pat Boerner writes on behalf of the Republican Women of California Navajo Canyon.■

YIMBYs vs. NIMBYs: Dem meeting features housing discussion



Tina Rynberg and Jeff Benesch

Cory Briggs, an influential, and some would say controversial, thorn in the side of developers, hoteliers and local government, has thrown his hat into the ring in the San Diego mayoral race.

On Wednesday, March 6, Briggs returns to the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club where he has proven to be a popular advocate of open government, environmental protection and women's



Cory Briggs (Courtesy LMFDCL)

rights. Briggs has decided to run on a platform that includes fighting Mayor Kevin Faulkner's initiative to waive height restrictions and other regulations for housing developments near transit



Ginger Hitzke (Courtesy Circulate San Diego)

centers. Framed to help San Diego meet its Climate Action Plan goals by building dense housing near public transit,

See DEM MEETING page 13 —>

News from your County Supervisor

DIANNE'S CORNER

Dianne Jacob



In my recent State of the County address, I laid out an ambitious list of initiatives that will help us address many of our biggest challenges.

Among the proposals outlined in my speech that will come to the Board of Supervisors over the next few months:

Housing: Doubling the size of the county's housing trust fund to \$50 million, and increasing financial incentives to make it easier to build granny flats and other secondary dwellings next to existing houses.

Wildfire protection: Strengthening the building

code for construction in high-risk fire areas and offering grants to existing homeowners to encourage the installation of safer vents, walls and other fire-resistant materials.

New homes and communities must be built to give people and property the greatest chance of survival.

Mental health and substance abuse services: Developing a coordinated system of care that focuses on individuals, not programs, and making improvements related to the county's Psychiatric Emergency Response Teams (PERT).

Energy: Joining the community choice energy movement and teaming up with local cities to open up the energy market.

County government is already allowed to shop the

energy market. We buy the bulk of our electricity from providers other than SDG&E.

If the county can shop for energy, why not the rest of us? Why not ratepayers, school districts and others?

With two new members on the Board of Supervisors, it's time to open the window to bold ideas and fresh opportunities. I plan to make the most of it!

I welcome your thoughts and feedback on what is already turning into a busy 2019.

—Dianne Jacob is San Diego County Supervisor for District 2. For more District 2 news, visit diannejacob.com or follow her on Facebook and Twitter. For assistance with a county issue, call 619-531-5522 or email dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov.■

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Sudoku & Crossword puzzle answers from page 19

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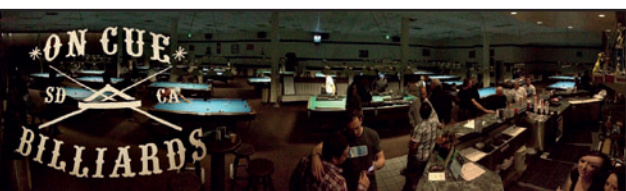


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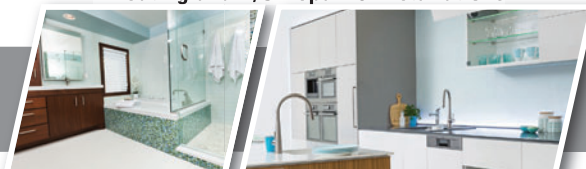


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Chancellor Cindy Miles announces retirement

Anne Krueger

The 10-year era of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District with Chancellor Cindy L. Miles at the helm will soon draw to a close.

With what she described as “mixed feelings,” Miles announced today that she will retire at the end of the year. Her retirement contract, which went before the Governing Board on Feb. 19, called for Miles to remain until the end of the year to allow time for a successor to be selected.

“I’m a believer in listening to the rhythm of one’s soul — and, after 30 years of teaching and leading in community colleges, there’s a calling impossible to ignore that’s pulling me in a new direction,” Miles said. She adds that her primary goal has been to clear the way for the college and district communities to “make amazing things happen for students.”

“And that’s been happening, again and again,” Miles said.

She regards as high points of her tenure the accomplishments of colleagues: passing a \$398 million bond measure for new, modern facilities; rejuvenating both campuses in the wake of a devastating recession; tripling grant dollars; and setting records for scholarships, as well as landmark numbers of degrees and certificates awarded. More than 5,500 degrees and certificates were awarded at Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges in 2018, a 140 percent increase from 10 years ago.

During the decade that Miles served as chancellor, the two-college district in eastern San Diego County has been nationally recognized for removing barriers to student success and eradicating longstanding equity gaps that have impeded students of color in their college pursuits.

“I’m so proud of everything that the district has achieved in the past 10 years. It’s been a pleasure to work with the amazing faculty, staff and administrators who are dedicated to our students,” Miles said. “I know we are making a difference in the lives of our 30,000 students each year.”

Veteran Governing Board trustee Bill Garrett, who served as board president for nearly the entirety of Miles’ tenure, praised the chancellor for leading innovations such as the East County Education Alliance, a partnership with the Grossmont Union High School District, to ensure a smooth path for students between high school, college and a career. The partnership, which began in 2014, was selected for a national Innovation of the Year Award from the League for Innovation in the Community College.

As the result of new state funding, the Alliance in fall 2018 began offering the

Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College Promise, which provides a year of free enrollment at Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges for first-time college students who are attending full-time. With the promise of additional state funding in the 2019-20 state budget, a second year of free enrollment is expected to be offered.

The prestige of the two campuses has climbed during the Miles era.

Cuyamaca College received the 2018 John W. Rice Diversity & Equity Award from the California Community College Chancellor’s Office for its groundbreaking program that eliminated remedial math and English classes and dramatically increased the number of students, including traditionally underrepresented students, who complete those classes and go on to complete their education goals. Grossmont College was recognized as a Champion of Higher Education in 2018 for its work to significantly increase the number of students earning an Associate Degree for Transfer, an associate degree that guarantees transfer to the California State University institution.

In a personal note to colleagues, Miles praised the campus and district communities for cultivating a climate of civility, something she talks about often, sometimes even jokingly as a Texan raised to always speak kindly of others, but to also cut down to size an inflated ego when it was warranted — but never in harsh tones.

“When you hear my people say, ‘bless your heart,’ it’s Texan-speak for ‘isn’t that special,’” she says with a chuckle.

Her trademark warmth and caring has impacted lives.

One classified professional credits the chancellor for inspiring her to go back to school to acquire the college degree she had always dismissed as a pipe dream.

“She took a genuine interest in me and took the time to ask me about my goals,” said Dawn Heuft, who worked for several years across the hall from Miles as an administrative assistant in the Business Services office. “She encouraged me and inspired me to get my bachelor’s in web design and development and I am now working as an interim instructional design technology specialist for Grossmont College. I love this job and I will be forever grateful to Dr. Miles for her kindness and mentoring.”



Chancellor Cindy L. Miles has served the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District since 2009. (Courtesy GCCCD)

For Miles, who joined the district in March 2009, it is all about the golden rule.

“I’m encouraged that all our stakeholder groups — our board, administrators, faculty, classified professionals, unions, and senates — increasingly exhibit concern for what’s best for our students rather than for themselves,” she said. “And, it is this collective, reflective focus that makes this work worth doing, despite relentless demands and change.”

Miles has played an influential role in state and national community college organizations. She has served on committees and task forces for the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Council on Education, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, the Community College League of California, and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

Before arriving at the district, she served as founding president of the Hialeah campus at Miami Dade College. Miles previously served as vice president/chief operating officer of the League for Innovation in the Community College and as a faculty member, researcher, grants developer, program director, and senior administrator at community colleges in Texas and Colorado. Prior to her work in higher education, Miles served more than a decade in the allied health field as a medical technologist.

Miles received her doctorate in educational administration from the University of Texas at Austin; a master’s degree in secondary and higher education from Texas A&M University-Commerce; and a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Texas at Austin.

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

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The band plays on ...

A look at Grossmont High's music programs



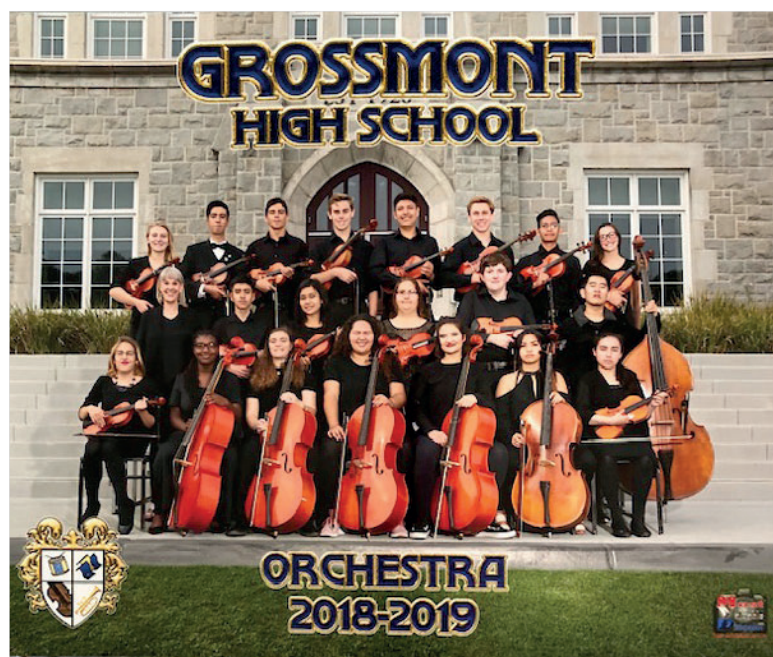
Foothiller Footsteps

Connie and Lynn Baer

In 1921–1922, Grossmont's second school year, its first orchestra was offered as a school subject for only strings

and wind instruments — 18 students were enrolled under director Chesley Mills. During these early years, the orchestra played at graduations; was an integral part of the Christmas pageants; and, of course, presented school concerts in the school auditorium. Orchestra was the only instrumental music program available for students until marching band was offered in 1930.

During the next nine decades, the instrumental music director directed the band as well as the orchestra, but some years, a separate orchestra



teacher was hired. For the past four years, Grossmont High School has been honored with the services of a volunteer orchestra director Karen Childress-Evans, who holds a doctorate of education and whose accomplishments include 45 years of music teaching, including in the La Mesa Spring Valley District, as well as serving as the director of visual and performing arts in the San Diego Unified School District.

Today, Mrs. Childress-Evans volunteers four days a week at Grossmont, teaching one beginning strings class and one intermediate/advanced orchestra class.

"Once I retired as an administrator, I wanted to give back to the community where I live doing the thing I loved best, teaching string orchestra music," she said. "I offered my services to a variety of schools around the area, but in 2014–15, GHS band director James Llamas jumped on my offer. Since then, I have brought in funding for the string program through grants and personal donations and have grown the program six-fold. We formally added a beginning strings class to the beginning band class two years ago. This group is the foundation of the advanced group since Grossmont does not have any middle school string orchestra feeders at this time."

Grossmont Strings

Under Mrs. Childress-Evans, the Grossmont String Orchestra has grown in size from six students to almost 40. Student levels range



(l to r) Andrew Zeller, Cameron Zeller, Dr. Childress-Evans, Iran Guerra, and Sepehr Lotfi (Photos courtesy GHS Museum)

from beginning to advanced and include violin, viola, cello, and bass. Performances during the year include several lunch-time outdoors quad mini-concerts such as Halloween and Veterans Day, the Winter Concert, the Spring Adjudicated Orchestra Festival, the Spring Concert, the Dessert Show Auction and Gala, the District String Showcase, and, of course, the GHS graduation performance.

Each year, the Grossmont Strings perform for a panel of judges at the annual CMEA-SBS Band and Orchestra Festival. The beginning violins — who start as beginners in August — participate in all full-group performances including this prestigious festival. This group consistently brings home excellent ratings and positive comments commending these students (many of whom began their musical endeavors as beginners in high school) for performing music usually performed by those with years more experience.

Grossmont Footnotes

The Footnotes, the advanced string quintet, are the most advanced students. This elite audition-only group acts as a recruitment ensemble and earns money through its performances for the Grossmont Instrumental Music Association, which pays for events, trips, coaches, instruments, materials, and supplies for the school's instrumental music programs.

The Footnotes have performed in a variety of venues throughout San Diego County including in a Classics 4 Kids fundraiser in Rancho Santa Fe, various private corporate events, philanthropic organization luncheons and teas, and GIMA fundraisers. Members of this group also perform in various district and county honor orchestras as well as solo and ensemble festivals.

To build the program, Childress-Evans has been working with Parkway Middle



Grossmont High School orchestra director Karen Childress-Evans

School's new music teacher, Ryley Taylor, to rebuild its band program in the hope of developing an orchestra to feed into Grossmont's program.

Looking ahead, Childress-Evans shares, "Our orchestra enrollment numbers continue to increase every year. We welcome any student who is interested in becoming an outstanding string player to join us. We have loaner instruments. All you need is a desire to learn and we'll take you."

"A special thank you to Mr. Dan Barnes for generously and passionately supporting the school's instrumental music department and to Mr. Ray Webb, instrumental music director. Also thank you to the Grossmont High School Educational Foundation for providing us with recently installed new instrument cabinets for our violins and violas!"

The orchestra welcomes your donations to build its program; to donate, please visit bit.ly/2UYNkdJ. For more information about Grossmont's historic instrumental music program, consider a purchase of our book, "Instrumental Music 1920-2016," or visit the GHS Museum from noon to 3:30 p.m. on March 6; or our website at foothillermuseum.com. Contact ghsmuseum@guhsd.net or call 619-668-6140.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum. ■

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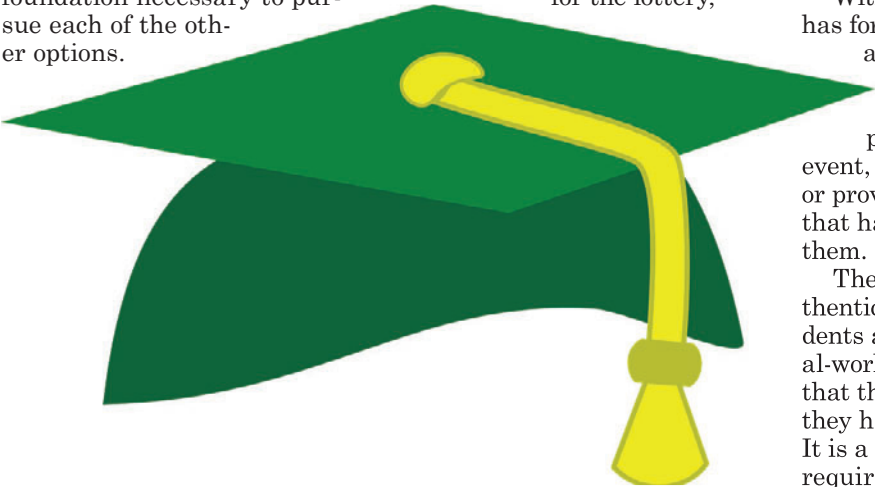
College enrollment on the rise for Helix students



Helix Highlights

Jennifer Osborn

When Helix became a charter school in the 1997-98 school year, the major goal was to provide all students with their choice of post-high school activities, whether that was attending a two- or four-year college or trade school, going into the military, or entering the workforce. To that end, Helix’s mission is to prepare all students for the opportunity to attend college, should they so choose, knowing that a college preparatory education also provides the foundation necessary to pursue each of the other options.



Helix’s college access counselor recently evaluated application and enrollment data for the past 20 years and noted that the work being done at Helix has provided more students the ability to attend college following graduation. Approximately 60 percent of Helix graduates state plans to attend a four-year college or university, while a little more than 30 percent say they will start at a two-year college.

Final chance for 2019-20 enrollment

Saturday, Feb. 23, is the last day to attend an information meeting, which is required for all new students wishing to enroll for 2019-20. The meeting will be held in the Helix Performing Arts Center at 10 a.m. At the meeting, families will receive an access code that will allow them to complete the online enrollment application for the lottery,

10 year college applications trends for Helix Charter High School students*						
	Applied		Admitted		Enrolled	
	UC	CSU	UC	CSU	UC	CSU
1998	60	118	50	93	30	38
2008	86	562	78	364	38	106
2018	180	337	131	256	73	96

*Data only shows the trends for UC and CSU schools, and does not include private and out-of-state institutions.

which is required for all interested students. Enrollment applications are due no later than Wednesday, Feb. 27 at 3 p.m.

Judges needed for senior boards

Have you ever had a job where your skills were evaluated by filling in bubbles on a sheet, using a No. 2 pencil? Chances are good that the answer to this question is “no.” With this in mind, Helix has for many years required all students to complete a senior project, which entails creating a product, coordinating an event, planning a performance, or providing an actual service that has been designed by them.

The senior project is an authentic assessment, where students are asked to perform real-world tasks in order to show that they can apply the things they have learned in school. It is a stand-alone graduation requirement — it is not part of

a grade in a class. Rather, students must complete the senior project at a passing level in order to meet the requirements of graduation.

The final phase of the senior project is senior defenses and senior boards, which provide an opportunity for our students to shine and to feel a sense of accomplishment as they demonstrate their knowledge and skills to their community. Community members are invited to participate as judges for upcoming senior defenses and senior boards.

Senior defenses will take place on April 10, 11, and 12 from noon-3:30 p.m., and senior boards will take place on Tuesday, May 28, and Wednesday, May 29, from noon-4 p.m. Community members are welcome to participate in any or all dates. Please contact me at josborn@helix-charter.net to confirm your participation.

The senior project is just one example of Helix’s ongoing

efforts to provide graduates with the tools necessary to succeed in their future endeavors, whether it is college, full-time employment, trade school, or the military.

Rotary speech contest features Helix students

Helix seniors Jonah Leota, Jasper Monteith, and Sophia Rogers competed in the La Mesa Sunrise Rotary 4-way Test Speech Contest on Feb. 8. Rogers took first place and will move on to the next level of competition coming up in March.

Excellence in Education

If you are interested in finding out more about Helix Charter High School, please attend one of our Excellence in Education tours. Reserve your spot using our website, helix-charter.net.

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

► Dem meeting, from page 9

therefore reducing the reliance on cars, Briggs thinks it’s all just a favor for the Republican mayor’s developer friends and supporters.

So where does this put conscientious developers that truly are building and planning units to provide access for first-time homebuyers to buy affordable housing? What about the fact that a majority of San Diegans cannot afford to purchase housing within acceptable commuting distance to their jobs? What about the many progressive politicians that are listing affordable housing, public transit and climate action goals near the top of their campaign promises?

These questions and more will be discussed by Briggs, and Ginger Hitzke, president of Hitzke Development, a real estate development company specializing in in-fill, redevelopment, transit-oriented, mixed-use, eco-friendly affordable housing. Hitzke has her own affordable housing story, and her past experiences have

shaped her current opinions, as well as her career goals, philanthropy, interests and many accomplishments.

We’ll also be hosting Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez-Fletcher. She will be discussing affordable housing, homelessness, public transit, and meeting our statewide climate goals — all issues she is very concerned about. And of course we’re looking forward to hearing about her plans to run for Secretary of State in 2022.

In addition, we secured club favorite and Voice of San Diego publisher and CEO Scott Lewis as moderator of the panel.

La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club meets the first Wednesday of each month at the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Drive, La Mesa. Meetings start at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit lamesafoothillsdemocraticclub.com.

—Tina Rynberg is president and Jeff Benesch is vice president of programming of La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club.■



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► Town Hall, from page 1

Community Services Director Sue Richardson presented on the Livable La Mesa project, which looks at ways to improve life in the city for people age 45 and older. [See story on page 1 for more information about the project.]

Assistant City Manager Greg Humora presentation was about the city's outreach, community relations and transparency efforts. Major communication tools include the city's new mobile-friendly website where residents can get information on public meetings; report problems using YourGov; look over city finances using OpenGov; sign up for newsletter updates from different city departments; and find information tables on things like active construction projects.

Humora also encouraged residents to use Nixle, a program used by public safety departments that alerts about emergencies in the community through text or email. For example, Humora said, when police deploy a helicopter to look for a suspect in a neighborhood, a Nixle is sent out to inform residents what they should know.

La Mesa also expanded its social media platforms to include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and NextDoor.

Most recently, the city invested in technology that allows for all City Council meetings to be streamed over the internet through the city website and Facebook page.

Public Works Director Richard Leja gave a very thorough presentation on how the city fixes roads — from how it chooses what roads to fix to all the different ways the city repaves streets and the material used.

Roads, sidewalks, bike lanes

Even with Leja's detailed presentation, many residents still had questions, or wished to share concerns about various road repair projects, or lack thereof, in the city.

At the Jan. 29 meeting, resident Paul Hitchcock asked about a project at the corner of Lowell Street and University Avenue that was done twice. Leja said that the contractor had to redo the work because it wasn't up to the city's expectations and standards. He added that the city is diligent in hiring contractors that are licensed bonded and insured.

"That's what La Mesa can enforce in addition to our technical standards," he said. "But we can't do [the work] for them. What we can do is not pay them when they do it wrong."

Mayor Mark Arapostathis added, "When we have a contractor that is not doing what we want, we will never use that contractor again."

One resident wondered why the city has bumped out certain sidewalks. She said the new configuration no longer allows for cars turning right at an intersection to pull alongside cars going straight through traffic lights and said this has caused some streets to back up at lights in the mornings.

Humora said the bulb out sidewalks create an overall safer right of way at intersections.



Residents line up to speak at the Jan. 29 town hall meeting. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

"What we've tried to do is recognize that the right of way space is not just for vehicles, but for pedestrians and also for bicycles. We're trying to strike a balance out there," he said, adding that the bulb outs do not lose very much efficiency.

Craig Reed, representing the community group Envision La Mesa, shared that they recently conducted a survey of the group's constituents to find out what was most important to them. "No surprise, but street improvements were No. 1," he said, and added that the residents' concerns were "more than potholes." Dangerous intersections, pedestrian safety and bike safety, especially around Helix, were also high priorities for the members.

At both town hall meetings, there were several residents who brought up the issue of bike lanes and bike safety. Some of the suggestions made by residents included making the city's bike routes continuous and installing Class 1 bike lanes — those with a barrier between cars and bikes — on major thoroughfares.

Leja said the city is always looking for grant money to expand bike lanes or build better ones, sharing that La Mesa recently received a grant that will allow it to put bike lanes going both ways on University Avenue between Baltimore Drive and the western city limits.

Other road-related issues brought up at the town halls included poor street lighting, repeated road closures around Palm Avenue due to back-to-back construction projects in the area, and speeding drivers, which Arapostathis said was the No. 1 issue he hears about from residents.

Leja said that the city has a "detailed traffic calming program" that includes a variety of measures to reduce speeds on streets, including adding speed bumps in residential neighborhoods.

"In six to eight weeks we will be installing bumps on the city's No. 1 street, as far as concerns go, Stanford Avenue," he said.

Resident Tom Brady asked what was being done about traffic signals in the city, especially along busy streets like Fletcher Parkway and Jackson Drive where he says they are on cycles that are inefficient, especially at night.

"We are finishing right now as part of a highway safety grant installing fiberoptic control systems all the way up

and down Fletcher Parkway," Leja said. "They go back to a centralized traffic management center where we can control those timings to react more to the need. Prior to having that coordination, we rely on the timing of the signal system itself. Now that we are going to have that system connected, we'll have more ability to address the traffic flow on a corridor-wide basis."

Trash cans and 'eye sores'

Cleaning up the streets from trash and blight was also a concern shared by residents.

"What I've noticed in our city ... is that we have no trash cans," said Mary Gibson, a resident in west La Mesa, who compared the differences between how El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue look in La Mesa versus San Diego.

"They have a trash can at every bus stop [in San Diego]. They have a trash can on both sides of the street every 50 feet. They have plastic bags in them, and people use them, and they're maintained. Once you get to the 'Welcome to La Mesa' sign — zero," she said.

Another resident wanted to know what the city could do about the blighted building "eye sores" created in the wake of illegal marijuana dispensaries that once inhabited them but have recently been shut down.

"The city can't force any development on private property," said City Attorney Glen Sabine. "But what it can do is force the private property owners to comply with the standards. There are property standards that they have to abide by, and they may include excessive accumulation of debris or trash, dilapidated buildings, for unsecured structures, unsecured barriers that would allow people to come in and illegally [reside]."

Utility woes

A few residents voiced concerns related to utilities.

A resident named Carlos said he was worried about cellular antennae's popping up all over the city as service providers look to expand 5G networks in the area.

"One of the things that these companies are going to do is they are going to come in and make a presentation and show you these street lights with small versions of antennas," he said. "But over time, once the door has been opened, they are going to add on more and more and more."

See TOWN HALL page 15 →

► Town Hall, from page 14

Carlos suggested that the council pressure these companies to take aesthetics into account before installing new towers. Federal law prohibits cities from blocking the installation of cellular towers.

Councilmember Kristine Alessio said that despite the inability to block antennae projects, the city does have some sway over how they look, and suggested residents pay attention to the Planning Commission agendas where these projects are first presented to the city and attend those meetings to give their input.

A Dallas Street resident asked about how the city decides where to underground cables.

“The city does have an undergrounding utility district program in concert with SDG&E,” Humora said. “You pay a tiny, tiny portion of your bill every month that goes into the program.”

Humora said that the City Council sets priority for which streets are undergrounded and that the next street to be worked on is Massachusetts Avenue.

The program itself is getting stretched thin, Humora said, because resources from SDG&E are declining every year and projects are becoming more expensive. However, La Mesa is saving money because the city bids the jobs itself instead of SDG&E.

Parks

A resident named Samantha expressed concern over a lack of park space in La Mesa. She said that the city has less than 50 percent of recommended square feet per population total of park space.

“I think it’s great the AARP has noticed us as an aging community, but I also think we need to embrace our families that we have here.”

Arapostathis reported that the city recently acquired a piece of land on Waite Drive and Murray Hill Road that will be the city’s fifteenth park. Future parks, he added, will likely be pocket parks built into new developments in the city, parks on roofs or other solutions not yet conceived for developers to add park space.

Alessio encouraged residents interested in parks to get involved with La Mesa Park and Recreation Foundation which raises money for expansion of parks in the city.

Downtown events

Polly Kanavel, a city planning commissioner, raised concerns about resident notification during city events that shut down the streets.

“I’m on the Flag Day Parade committee and one of our issues is we have to ask that street be closed near the parade route so we can line up the floats and cars and all of that,” she said. “The problem is, there are some apartments tucked in those areas and a lot of times the notification will go to the property owner, who could even be out of state and it doesn’t often trickle down to the actual residents.”

She requested that the city send notifications to the addresses.

Another resident brought up the issue of the Friday Farmers Market. He said it should be moved because it is affecting businesses on La Mesa Boulevard.

City Manager Yvonne Garrett said that the city staff is looking at options right now and will be reporting back to council in March.

Vice Mayor Colin Parent said he was personally committed to keeping the market on La Mesa Boulevard and to find ways that would minimize the impacts on businesses.

“Hundreds and hundreds more people are enjoying the market on Friday compared to the prior location,” he said. “I think that’s an important thing to balance with the concerns that we are hearing from some of the businesses.”

Changes in shopping districts

John Schmitz had this question for the Council: “What is the future of the Fletcher Parkway corridor and Grossmont Center?”

Schmitz pointed to recent closures of Toys ‘R’ Us, Babis ‘R’ Us and Best Buy as reason for the city to be concerned about the future of big box retail centers in the city.

Garrett was able to provide some answers.

“Babies ‘R’ Us is going to be a new Costco Gas station,” she said. “It is going to have 34 pumps, which will be wonderful for us because that’s a good sales tax generator for the city, so we’re excited to have them come to our city.”

For the Best Buy property, she said, plans have been submitted to the city from the property owner for redevelopment, but she was unable to share any details. And the family that owns Grossmont Center is still trying to decide what direction to take the property.

“They definitely are thinking about and contemplating a mixed-use that will have residential, office as well as retail [space], but they have not made a final determination about how to proceed in that area,” she said.

Climate plan

Several residents brought up the La Mesa’s Climate Action Plan (CAP) and asked how the city was doing in meeting its goals.

“We need to reduce vehicle miles traveled 3 percent per year the next 10 to 15 years to make the goals of the Climate Action Plan,” said resident Jack Shu.

Leja said the city was currently in process of adopting Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) standards for traffic studies.

Garrett added that the city is working on the CAP’s implementation plan which will be taken to City Council for approval in March.

“We are working on putting out a report card to show where we are and where we need to be by the 2020 goal,” she said.

A resident named Wendy who is part of the environmental group San Diego 350, thanked the city for adopting the CAP. “We just want to

make sure that the commitment to the resources to fully implement that plan are in place,” she said.

Odds and ends

Although most residents used the town hall to voice concerns or issues in their neighborhoods, there were a few who came to present to the Council their own projects that involve the city. Jim Newland, representing La Mesa Historical Society, said the society will soon start a project to update the city’s historical resource survey. The original survey was taken in 1984 and has not been updated since.

“Because of that there have been some concerns that have come up over project review and the ability of the city to clearly comply with the California Environmental Quality Act as it relates to historical resources, as well as our general plan’s historical preservation element and the city’s historical preservation ordinance,” he said.

The survey will be conducted by society volunteers and students from San Diego State University’s history department. It will involve taking pictures of residential and commercial properties and gathering information about them.

Newland said the society is reaching out to the community “to let them know what this is and not fear it. It’s not going to hurt you, in fact there is a lot of benefits of historic preservation to a community — economic, social, cultural.”

The goal of the survey is to find which properties have



Brenda Gibson

potential to be historical and recognize which ones are not eligible. Being included in the survey does not mean the property will be in the historical register. Newland added that they are aiming to survey all buildings built before 1980.

Newland wasn’t the only one to make a presentation at the town hall. Three students from Helix Charter High School presented a school project that they want to test in La Mesa that would filter out debris from the sewer water system. The high-tech design would automatically alert the city when the mesh bags that filter out the debris are full and need to be emptied.

After the students’ presentation, Councilmember Akilah Weber praised the project.

“All the ideas that have come about how we can fix [plastic waste] have really been focused on the ocean, but not necessarily preventing things from going there so I am really very impressed with your idea,” she said.



James Newland (Photos by Jeff Clemetson)

Future town halls

Some residents shared with the Council their appreciation of the town hall meetings and offered some suggestions for improving them. Ideas included holding them more often; holding smaller group sessions; live streaming and recording them so people can view them more conveniently; and holding them at middle and high schools, which often have better parking than elementary schools.

Brenda Gibson, chair of La Mesa’s Community Relations and Veterans Commission, reminded residents that they can voice their issues year-round to her commission.

“You can come to our meetings, which is on the fourth Wednesday of every month and you’re welcome to share, share, share so you don’t have to have it all bottled up for just one time a year,” she said.

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

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Julie White

ORZO SALAD WITH ASPARAGUS

With asparagus coming into season for spring, this is a really nice, easy recipe. It comes from my swimming buddy Janine. Thank you, Janine! We both love to cook and recently went to the spice store in Hillcrest called Penzey's. It is worth a trip just to see all of the interesting and unusual spices, mixtures and extracts. It is really a fun place for anyone who likes to cook or bake.



(Courtesy Julie White)

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch of fresh asparagus, ends cut and trimmed into 1-inch pieces
- 1 16-ounce box of orzo pasta
- 2/3 cup flat leaf Italian parsley, chopped
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Juice from 1 lemon (about 1/3 of a cup)
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons plain yogurt or sour cream
- Pinch of each: sugar, salt and black pepper
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Directions:

In a large pot of salted boiling water, blanch the asparagus for two to three minutes. Remove to drain and cool.

In the same pot of water, cook the Orzo according to package directions. About nine minutes cooking time.

Drain and rinse with cool water. In a large serving bowl, combine the asparagus, feta, orzo, parsley and lemon zest.

In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, yogurt or sour cream, sugar, salt, pepper and oil.

Toss and refrigerate until serving time. Can be served at room temperature. It would make a complete meal if you added cooked shrimp.

—Finally, my winter fat is gone. Now I have spring rolls.■

Pizza and cheesesteaks the 'back-East way'

Surf Rider Pizza Co. bakes up a family-friendly experience

Restaurant Review

Frank Sabatini Jr.



Two big surprises await at Surf Rider Pizza Co. in La Mesa Village.

For starters, the location doubles as an industrious bakery that cranks out daily cupcakes, layer cakes, fruit bars, cookies and other confections meant to grab you by the sweet tooth the moment you walk in — not something customers expect from a place with “pizza” in its name.

Secondly, if you assume this is yet another California-style pizzeria capable of infuriating Northeast transplants with their insipid crusts and lackluster sauces, you're dead wrong. Despite catchy photographs of West Coast beach scenes dominating the walls, Surf Rider's founder, Hilary Rossi, is a native Philadelphian who vigilantly ensures customers experience an accurate taste of her hometown.

Of course if you roll in for cheesesteaks, a whole set of uncompromising standards apply to those as well, including the architecturally wondrous rolls shipped in from Philadelphia's legendary Amoroso's Baking Company.

Rossi moved to San Diego in the late '90s and initially cooked at Deborah Scott's former Kemo Sabe in San Diego's Hillcrest neighborhood. She simultaneously worked in food and beverage for Hornblower Cruises.

Then in 2010, she teamed up with pastry chef and former Bay Area resident Rachael Musico to open Surf Rider in Ocean Beach. The community

immediately loved it. Three other locations of various sizes ensued — in Mission Beach, Crown Point and most recently, in this 4,150-square-foot space that offers a full bar and two patios — one of them kid-friendly with games. The address serves also as “pastry headquarters” for Musico.

Its expansive kitchen supplies desserts to the other Surf Rider outlets as well as to a portfolio of regional restaurants that fall under The Patio Group, which purchased Surf Rider two years ago while retaining Rossi as vice president of food and beverage, and Musico as pastry chef.

Rossi constantly bounces between Surf Rider locations making quality-control checks.

“I insist on hand-rolled dough. And if you don't hear the crunch when the pizzas are being cut, it's not right,” she said.

Hinting that olive oil in the dough formula is part of the secret, her resulting thin crusts yield a resilient crunch that holds up even after the pizzas cool to room temperature. Better yet, they joyfully escape the comparison to cardboard.

“I'm also super crazy about my pizza sauce. It's my mother's recipe that I slightly tweaked by adding more Parmesan cheese than she does.”

Indeed, I was struck by how the red sauce captured the soulful depth of flavors you'd encounter in Italian mom-and-pop joints throughout Philly, New York and New Jersey. Request a little cup of it for dipping your crusts, and you'll get my drift.

Rossi's oil-based “white sauce” graces the signature “surf rider” pizza, which showcases her favorite ingredients: Gorgonzola cheese, Roma tomatoes, basil and roasted garlic.

Surf Rider Pizza Co.

8381 La Mesa Blvd.

619-340-1270

surfrider.pizza

Prices: Salads, \$4.95 to \$9.95; sandwiches, \$10.50 to \$11.50; stromboli, \$18.50 to \$20; pizzas (all 18-inch), \$17 to \$24; pizza by the slice, \$3.25 and \$3.95

A mere slice engulfs the palate with strong, sustaining flavors that you don't expect from pizza lacking meat and red sauce.

There's also Rossi's “dirty sauce,” which was born out of a jalapeno-cream cheese dip that she engineered to bake on pizza. It lands on the outstanding spicy veggie pie featuring pepperoncini, jalapenos, artichoke hearts, roasted peppers and more. It's used also on the “dirty” cheesesteaks filled with either beef or chicken breast.

The climactic moment of my visit is when I took my first chomp into the former. Even in my visits to Philadelphia, I can't remember a cheesesteak leaving this deep of an impression on me.

Accented with grilled onions, cilantro, and white American cheese, which Rossi says *must* be melted into the finely sliced rib eye as it cooks on the grill, the dirty sauce is a boon to the construct. Rather than altering the sandwich's classic flavors, it enhances them with mild heat.

As for the cheese, Rossi is anti-Cheez Whiz. She admits to hating the electric-orange milk byproduct that eateries across the nation offer as an option, saying it wasn't the stuff she grew up eating on her cheesesteaks. Here, it's white American or nothing.



(l to r) Hilary Rossi and Rachael Musico (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

I also ordered a regular chicken cheesesteak, most of which came home with me. Even without the dirty sauce, the abundance of juicy, minced breast meat combined with grilled onions, mushrooms and green peppers made for a fantastic second meal. To think that barely two decades ago, chicken cheesesteaks were considered sacrilegious variants to the classic beef ones. If you're still leery, Rossi's version will make you think otherwise.

From the illuminated dessert case fronting the order counter, I carried out a lemon-lime curd cupcake with sweetish frosting, a deliciously dense cream cheese brownie, and Musico's now-famous carrot cake sandwich cookie.

Seeing them in their clear-plastic box, nobody would have guessed I had just exited a place that slings damn good pizzas and makes mind-blowing cheesesteaks. Bite into any of them and you'll get the feeling you're not in California anymore.

—Frank Sabatini Jr. is the author of ‘Secret San Diego’ (ECW Press) and began his local writing career more than two decades ago as a staffer for the former San Diego Tribune. You can reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.■



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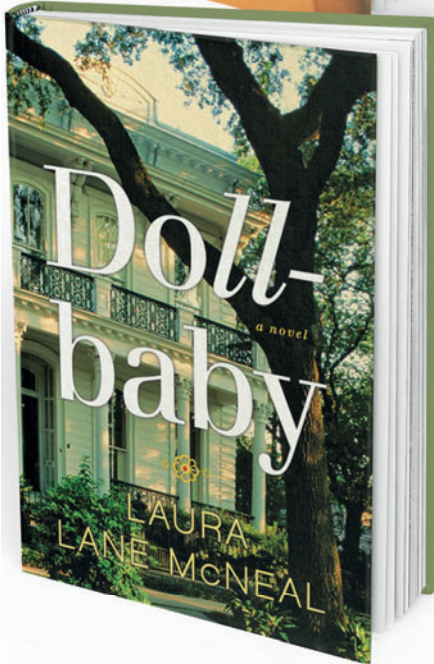
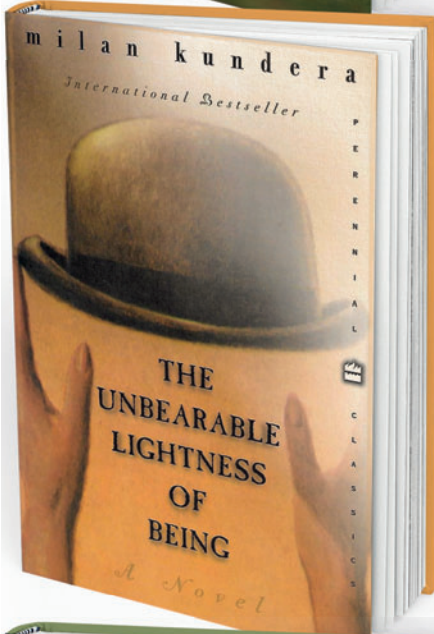
Friends of the Library flashback reading list



Chelsie Harris

We're celebrating the Friends of the La Mesa Library's 50th birthday! This organization was founded in 1969 and has been supporting the library through fundraising and advocacy ever since. Check out these titles, all of which are based in the 1960s.

Grace Carter, 11, has a talent for hiding things. She's had plenty of practice, burying thoughts and feelings that might anger her strict Evangelical pastor father, and concealing the deep intuition she carries inside. "The Knowing," as Grace calls it, offers glimpses of people's pasts and futures in "This I Know" by Eldonna Edwards.



Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things" is set in the state of Kerala, on the southernmost tip of India, where fraternal twins Esthappen and Rahel fashion a childhood for themselves in the shade of the wreck that is their family.

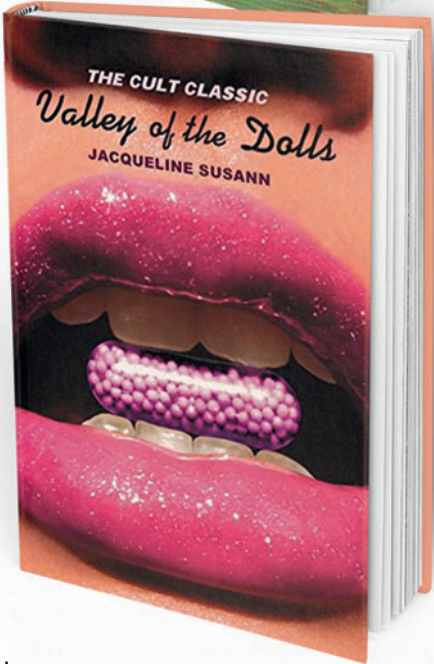
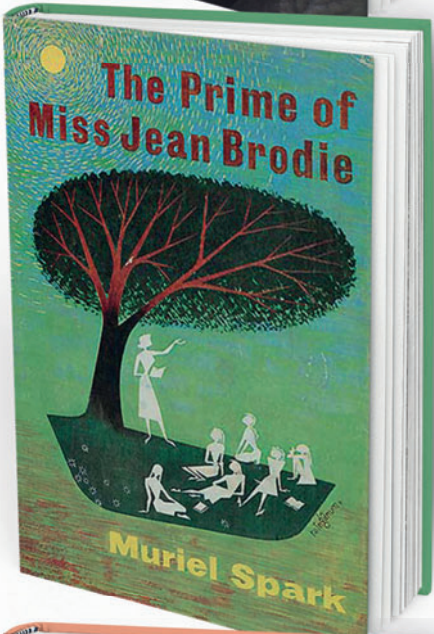
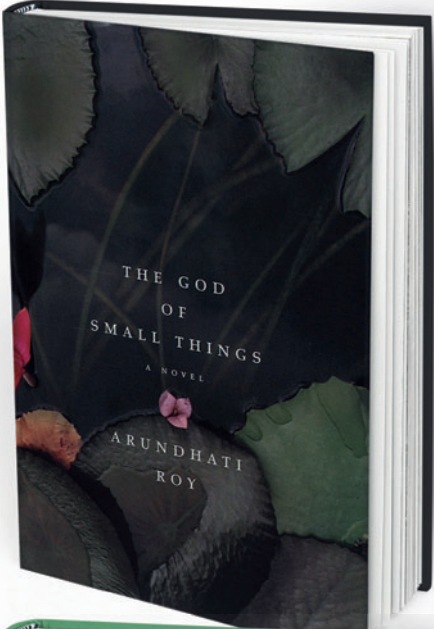
"The Unbearable Lightness of Being," by Milan Kundera, is a story of irreconcilable loves and infidelities. Juxtaposing Prague, Geneva, Thailand and the United States, this masterfully written novel encompasses the extremes of comedy and tragedy.

"Valley of the Dolls" by Jacqueline Susann: Washed down with vodka or swallowed straight for Anne, Neely, and Jennifer, it doesn't matter, as long as the pill bottle is within easy reach.

These three women become best friends when they are young and struggling in New York City and then climb to the top of the entertainment industry, only to find that there is no place left to go but down — into the "Valley of the Dolls."

"The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie," by Muriel Spark, begins at the staid Marcia Blaine School for Girls, in Edinburgh, Scotland, where teacher extraordinaire Miss Jean Brodie is unmistakably, and outspokenly, in her prime. She is passionate in the application of her unorthodox teaching methods; in her attraction to the married art master, Teddy Lloyd; in her affair with the bachelor music master, Gordon Lowther; and — most importantly — in her dedication to "her girls," the students she selects to be her crème de la crème.

Laura Lane McNeal's "Dollybaby" is a big-hearted coming-of-age tale set in Civil Rights-era New Orleans — a novel of Southern eccentricity, secrets, and laughter. When Ibbey Bell's father dies in a tragic accident in the summer of 1964, her mother unceremoniously deposits Ibbey with her eccentric grandmother, Fannie, and throws in her father's urn for good measure. Fannie's Victorian house is like no place Ibbey has ever been — and Fannie, who has a tendency to end up in the local asylum every once in a while — is like no one she has ever met. Fortunately, her black cook, Queenie — who has run Fannie's household ever since it was Fannie's household — and Queenie's feisty



daughter, Dollbaby, take it upon themselves to initiate Ibbey into the ways of the South, both its grand traditions and its darkest secrets.

Join us at the La Mesa Library on Saturday, March 9 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. as we celebrate the Friends of the La Mesa Library's 50th birthday. The Shirthouse Band is performing bluegrass at 11 a.m., followed by face painting and crafts for kids at noon. The event is culminating with a performance by Sara Petite, four-time San Diego Music Award-winner of Best Country/Americana Band, at 1 p.m.

—Chelsie Harris is managing librarian of 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 visit online at sdcl.org. ■

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PUZZLES ANSWERS ON PAGE 9

SUDOKU

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

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1		6		5				7
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CROSSWORD Pigskin Parade

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Theater org.
- 5 Mrs., in Montreux
- 8 Cruces
- 11 Chateau on the Loire
- 12 NC Cape
- 13 Big name in New Haven
- 14 Coquettes
- 15 Meet event
- 16 High, musically

DOWN

- 9 Glamor
- 10 Some strikes
- 11 Tire trauma
- 12 Quarterback
- 14 Wonder of Norway
- 18 "... a lady of her fortune..."
- 22 Legendary Loch
- 25 Hollywood's Loy
- 26 Vanderbilt, et al.

ACROSS

- 17 Quarterback
- 19 generis
- 20 Possess
- 21 Pungent bulb
- 23 Sea bird
- 24 Meander
- 26 Funnyman John-son
- 27 Lessons
- 29 Customs payment
- 30 Kiwi's cousin
- 31 Dolt

DOWN

- 32 Quarterback
- 37 Figs.
- 38 Seventeenth letter
- 39 Bagnold
- 41 Long, long tales
- 44 Poet Hughes, et al.
- 45 Asian starch
- 46 Claire or Balin
- 47 Grapes, e.g.
- 49 Number in a brace
- 50 Part of RSVP
- 51 Quarterback

ACROSS

- 1 E strange
- 2 Standard
- 3 Longtime leader, in Belgrade
- 4 Bus. abbreviation
- 5 Malicious one
- 6 Portuguese territory
- 7 Poet's preposition
- 8 Charters

DOWN

- 9 Summer coolers
- 11 Sub
- 12 Video companion
- 13 Detested one
- 16 Indian dwellings
- 20 Condemns
- 21 Canaanite commander
- 22 West Side Story girl, et al.

ACROSS

- 32 Phoenix source
- 31 Summer coolers
- 33 Sub
- 34 Video companion
- 35 Detested one
- 36 Indian dwellings
- 40 Condemns
- 41 Canaanite commander
- 42 West Side Story girl, et al.

DOWN

- 43 Lead's principal ore
- 44 Designations
- 48 Helen Gurley Brown's mag.
- 52 Mountain pass
- 53 London drama sch.
- 54 Smell
- 56 Western union: abbr.

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Juggling art with a busy schedule



FOOTHILLS ART ASSOCIATION

Linda Michael

For Mandy Tolliver, Foothills Gallery's featured artist for March, art has been a source of "comfort, joy, and sometimes, frustration."

Tolliver grew up outside a small town in the Florida panhandle, where she spent most of her time outdoors. Her mother has a degree in fine art from Louisiana State University, and "definitely had a hand in" not only her love of nature, but

also her love of capturing nature's beauty.

"At this point in life, my ability to devote a large amount of time to creating art does wax and wane," Tolliver stated. "Being a mother of three boys, an active duty military spouse, a nurse, involved with church, schools, and our wonderful FAA, I wear many hats, and (mostly) can juggle them well. However, I look forward to a time when I



A painting by Mandy Tolliver (Courtesy Foothills Art Association)

and I do my best to absorb as much as I can from some truly wonderful mentors. I look forward to our future together (however long that may be) and I value each and every one of you."

Meet Mandy Tolliver and enjoy her artwork at an artist's reception on Saturday, March 9, 2-4 p.m. at the Foothills Gallery in La Mesa's Porter Hall, 4910 Memorial Drive.

—Linda Michael is editor of Footnotes, the newsletter of the Foothills Art Association. ■

can devote more time to developing the kernel of natural talent I was given. The Foothills Art Association is such a rich resource, with so many experienced and talented members,

Today's world needs a Mr. Rogers

Gen-X in a millennial world

Genevieve Suzuki



Pains," and, of course, "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood."

Fast-forward 30 years. I can't even tell you how much my heart breaks for our children.

We went from a secure nation to a country of children who have school drills that include them jumping beneath their desks and behind bookcases in case there is ever an active shooter. We have a U.S. president who holds rallies, railing against anyone who isn't with him and encouraging an "us against them" attitude. There are also articles about how measles is making a comeback thanks to anti-vaccination campaigns and the extinction of animals I never thought we'd lose.

I'm not alone when I tell you there are days when I wake up and force myself to take a huge breath before getting on with my day.

There's something to be said about being able to look up to a famous person who isn't known for scandal. Derek marveled during the documentary about how Mr. Rogers had a wonderfully clean record. My generation loved Mr. Rogers and will forever be indebted to him for protecting us as children and soothing us as adults. After Sept. 11, 2001, PBS knew we craved his voice and broadcast several public service announcements featuring Mr. Rogers urging us to continue to believe in humanity.

Meanwhile, nowadays we have Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime and a thousand TV channels, but not one soft presence calming and soothing our children.

I guess what I'm saying is there's a void crying to be filled. I'm hoping we snap back to a national feeling of hope, acceptance and peace. And I still believe Mr. Rogers' dream is still alive in each and every one of us. After all, we need to give our own children that gift he so lovingly bestowed upon us years ago: a carefree childhood.

—Genevieve A. Suzuki is a local attorney who lives and works in La Mesa. ■

If only Fred Rogers had known how much we need him now, I feel certain he would have somehow found a way to become immortal.

The other day I came home from work to find my husband, Derek, and our 9-year-old daughter glued to the TV. Thinking they were watching some cartoon, I barely looked up as I tried to shove my briefcase under some furniture to forget impending work.

"You should watch this, Gen," Derek said, pulling my attention to the 2018 documentary, "Won't You Be My Neighbor," about PBS's favorite sweater-wearing gentleman down the street, Mr. Rogers.

And while I was among Mr. Rogers' biggest fans — I watched it every day as a child — seeing him on TV again felt as though I was watching a favorite long-gone relative on home videos. I immediately felt that lump in my throat as tears sprung to my eyes. Hearing his ever-gentle voice telling us a human truth made me want to sob in the corner.

In all of my four decades, we have never needed Mr. Rogers more than we do now.

When I was growing up in the 1980s, I had the benefit of the wisdom of the Greatest Generation, which saw the rise and fall of brutal authoritarian regimes. The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the 1963 March on Washington and Gloria Steinem and women's rights were vital pieces of our nation's past, and we took it for granted they were precisely that: history.

I also watched "Sesame Street," which showed me kids living in an urban neighborhood just like my apartment building, and family shows, such as "The Cosby Show," "Family Ties" and "Growing

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8 reasons to love St. Louis

Global Gumshoe
Ron Stern



No one could ever accuse St. Louis of being dull. With a championship baseball team, deliciously diverse cuisine, and a rich cultural heritage, this city has an iconic mix that locals adore and visitors enthusiastically embrace. Here is a small tasting menu of the best St. Louis has to offer.

The Gateway Arch

Looming over the city, the Gateway Arch is a marvel of engineering skill. The 630-foot-tall structure was built as a tribute to President Thomas Jefferson and is the tallest man-made monument in the United States. The impressive visitor's center is where you will learn about the history of the arch and from where you will take a tram to the top for sweeping views of the St. Louis skyline. And don't miss a unique perspective of the arch from a one-hour, narrated cruise of the Mississippi with Gateway Arch Riverboats.

Cardinals baseball

On game days, locals can be seen wearing red and white hats and jerseys all over town. And why not? The St. Louis Cardinals are the most successful National League team in the history of the sport, winning 11 World Series. Be sure to take in a game at Busch Stadium while you are here and capture the spirit.



The Gateway Arch is the tallest man-made monument in the U.S.

Fabulous barbecue

There's no doubt that the people of St. Louis love their barbecue. Famous for their signature rectangular cut, St. Louis spare ribs are known worldwide. Here, you will find the best in smoked ribs, brisket, pork, and turkey both downtown and in the local neighborhoods. Restaurants like Sugarfire, Bogart's, Pappy's, and Salt + Smoke have loyal followings for their particular cooking methods and house-made sauces. Salt + Smoke was also recently awarded the 2018 Readers' Choice Award for the No.1 macaroni and cheese in the city. You certainly won't leave St. Louis hungry.

Cultural attractions

With more than 30 diverse museums as well as gardens, parks, and open spaces, St. Louis has a rich cultural landscape. Outdoor attractions include The St. Louis Zoo — voted The Nation's Best Zoo by USA Today Readers' Choice Awards — and the Missouri Botanical Gardens, among the top three botanical gardens in the world. There are also museums dedicated to history, art, children, photography, and science, and what's even better is that most offer free admission. The National Blues Museum, which celebrates and preserves the history of this modern American art form, is here as well. According to the St. Louis Blues Society, there are more blues music artists here than anywhere else in the world.

Liquid refreshment

With more than 60 breweries (including Anheuser-Busch), craft beers and brewpubs, St. Louis is one of the best places to satisfy your thirst. Even some top-notch non-alcoholic drinks are made here such as Fitz's Premium Root Beer. At Fitz's, they make a variety of craft sodas and 20 different floats like the humongous Mt. Everest — vanilla and chocolate ice cream stacked atop their signature root beer. Consider this the mother of all root beer floats!

Culinary bliss

Over the years, a blending of cultures has provided St. Louis with

Where to stay: Magnolia Hotel

Centrally located, this historic hotel was made famous as the birthplace of the "chocolate on a pillow" custom started by Cary Grant who stayed here.

a tasty tapestry of restaurants, cafes, bakeries, and bistros. At Sidney Street Café, Chef Kevin Nashan, a James Beard Best Chef: Midwest award winner, infuses his creativity into every dish of his New American cuisine.

Not uncommonly, many who move away from St. Louis return to their roots years later. Former Chef de Cuisine Michael Gallina (of the highly touted Blue Hill at Stone Barns in Tarrytown, NY) recently opened Vicia together with his wife Tara in a technology and innovation section of St. Louis known as Cortex. Using fresh ingredients from local farms, they serve vegetable-forward food in a daytime casual atmosphere with fine dining at night.

With wait times as long as five hours, Peacemaker Lobster and Crab Co. has been a huge success since opening in the Benton Park neighborhood. This East Coast-style crab shack offers lobster rolls and boils with all the sides in a fast-casual atmosphere. All of their seafood is flown in daily but make your reservation early!

Sweet and tempting

Some of the sweetest things in life are made right here in St. Louis. This includes Switzer's cherry twists, the gourmet popcorn at Sweets & Treats of St. Louis and Mom's Originals chocolate-covered pretzels. Then there are the St. Louis institutions such as the Chippewa neighborhood's Ted Drewes. The usual lines of fans tell the story of this long-standing location that has been selling frozen custard in the form of malts, concretes, shakes, and sundaes for more than 80 years.

Goosey Louie's Butter Cake is another St. Louis favorite. What started out as a baking error turned into a local confection sensation featuring a creamy, moist cake that is sold all over the city.

While you probably are familiar with microbreweries, how about a "microcreamery?" Picture handcrafted ice cream made in small batches with natural ingredients and a high butterfat content and you will get the idea. Fortunately, you can find such an establishment right here in trendy Lafayette Square at Clementine's Naughty and Nice Creamery. Owner Tamara Keefe chucked a \$75 million corporate career to pursue her real passion — making ice cream! Open since 2015, her shop uses hormone and rBST-free milk from local, grass-fed, pasture-raised cows, and all of the 100 percent natural ingredients are churned into a decadent 16-18 percent



The Missouri Botanical Gardens (Photos by Ron Stern)

butterfat ice cream. In fact, Keefe says that she is the only certified, all natural, ice cream maker in Missouri. With flavors like Goosey Butter Cake and Strawberry Balsamic and boozy (the "naughty" part of the shop's moniker) selections such as Maple Bourbon and Chocolate Cabernet, this is an ice cream worthy of poems.

Historical neighborhoods

The more than 80 local neighborhoods, many of which have been revitalized, are part of what makes St. Louis a remarkable, historic city. The downtown area, for example, includes the Gateway Arch, City Museum, National Blues Museum, and an abundance of restaurants, nightlife, and sports venues.

If you are in the mood for a good calzone or tiramisu, head over to The Hill district, dubbed as Little Italy. At the Belmar Loop in University City, you can find that old classic record at Vintage Vinyl,

take in a movie at the restored 1924 Tivoli Theater, or dine among nostalgic memorabilia at Blueberry Hill. The six-block area includes its own Walk of Fame featuring 140 brass stars lining the streets.

St. Louis seems to quickly work its magic on travelers visiting the city for the first time. You can visit museums in the morning, take in a Cardinals game in the afternoon, dine on the best barbecue in the evening, and then top it off with some of the best ice cream in the country, all in just one day. Come experience the excitement for yourself and see why so many are in love with St. Louis.

—Reach Ron Stern at travelwriter01@comcast.net or visit his blog at globalgumshoe.com. This was a sponsored visit; all of the meals, accommodations, transportation, and attractions were provided at no cost for this review. All opinions herein are the author's. ■

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DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

American Cuisine	Dessert	Mexican Cuisine
Bakery	Dinner	Micro Brewery
Barbeque	Donut Shop	New Restaurant
Beer	Family Restaurant	Nightclub
Billiards	Fine Dining	Outdoor Dining
Breakfast	Greek Cuisine	Performing Arts Theatre
Brunch	Golf Course	Pet Friendly Dining
Buffet	Happy Hour	Pho/Noodle House Restaurant
Burger	Health Food Store	Pizza
Burrito	Hot Wings	Romantic Dining
Casino	Indian Cuisine	Salad
Casino Buffet	Irish Pub	Sandwich
Casual Dining	Italian Cuisine	Seafood
Catering	Japanese Cuisine	Spanish Cuisine
Chinese Cuisine	Jazz Bar	Sports Bar
Cocktail	Juice/Smoothies	Steakhouse
Coffee Shop	Live Music Venue	Sushi
Comfort Food	Lunch	Thai Cuisine
Dance School	Margarita	Vegetarian/Vegan
Deli	Martini	Wine Bar

BUSINESS & RETAIL

Accountant	Dispensary	Optometrist
Acupuncture	Dry Cleaner	Personal Trainer
Antiques	Electrician	Pet Boarding/Dav Care
Appliances Store	Electrician (Company)	Pet Groomer
Art Gallery	Event Organizer	Pet Groomer (Mobile)
Attorney	Financial Planner	Pet Sitter
Auto Dealership	Fighting Gym	Pharmacy
Auto (Used) Dealership	Florist	Photographer
Auto Repair Shop	Furniture Store	Physical Therapist / Rehab
Bank	Garden Supply	Plumber
Barber	General Contractor	Pool Services
Bike Shop	Gift Shop	Real Estate Agent
Boutique	Gvm/Workout Studio	Real Estate Office
Car Wash	Handyman	Retirement Living
Child Care	Hair Salon	Solar Company
Chiropractor	Home or Residential Cleaning	Supplement Store
Computer Repair	Home Care / Caregiver	Tailor
Consignment/Resale	Hardware Store	Tanning Salon
Cosmetic Services	Hospital	Tattoo/Piercing Studio
Credit Union	Hotel	Veterinarian
Day Spa	Insurance Broker	Veterinarian Hospital
Dentist	Jewelry	Waxing or Threading Salon
Dermatologist	Locksmith	Wedding Planner
Dispensary	Manicure/Pedicure	Windshield Repair
DJ (Event)	Massage	Yoga Studio
Doctor	New Business	

LA MESA COURIER

COMMUNITY AND ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS



Winter Art Exhibit

The William C Herrick Community Health Library in La Mesa has announced a new exhibit showcasing the works of 10-year-old local artist Mia Bruso. Running through the end of March, this is the first time in the gallery's history that its featured artist has been a child. Free. 7777 Alvarado Road. Hours are from 9 a.m.–8 p.m. on Tuesdays, 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays through Fridays, and 9 a.m.–1 p.m. on Saturdays. For more information, phone 619-825-5010 or visit herricklibrary.org. ■

FEATURED EVENTS



'Seussical The Musical'

Through March 3

Christian Youth Theater presents a musical for the entire family based on the writings of Dr. Seuss. The Cat in the Hat, Horton the elephant, the Whos of Whoville and more come to life in this fun production. Fridays and Saturdays at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. at the Joan B. Kroc Theater, 6611 University Ave., San Diego. Tickets range \$14-\$20. Purchase at bit.ly/2ScFtFJ. Visit cytsandiego.org.



San Diego Summer Camp Fair

Looking for a camp, school or program for your kids this summer? Don't miss the San Diego Camp Fair at Balboa Park. The live, interactive summer camp expo taking place noon to 3 p.m. in Room 101 at the Casa Del Prado in Balboa Park. Over 50 local day camps, overnight camps, and many others from out of state will be exhibiting. For more information, visit bit.ly/2Wq7sqJ.

Anza-Borrego Archeology Weekend

The Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is hosting the 15th annual Archaeology Weekend from 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m. on Feb. 23 and from 9:30 a.m.–noon on Feb. 24 at the park's

visitor center. This year's event theme is "Celebrating the Cultural Heritage of the Colorado Desert." Visitors can learn more about the prehistoric cultures of the area and the people who lived there. There will be activities for children and adults, presentations about Native American culture, local rock art and a silent auction/treasure sale, as well as field trips to archaeological sites. Free. 200 Palm Canyon Drive.



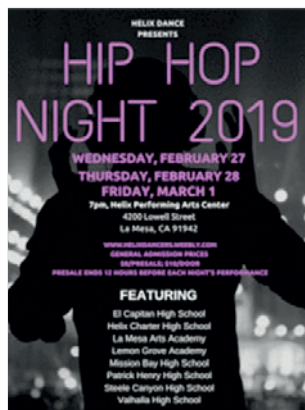
Joyful Noise

The United Church of Christ in La Mesa invites patrons to see local artists Joyful Noise perform as part of the Valerie Victor concert series. Show will begin at 2 p.m. and will include a variety of styles and sounds including folk, pop, classics, and even Hawaiian. Free. 5940 Kelton Ave.



A Healthy Outlook

The Grossmont Healthcare District's Dr. William C. Herrick Community Health Care Library, 9001 Wakarusa St. in La Mesa, will host "A Healthy Outlook on Aging, Medicines, Alcohol, Tobacco" from 10–11 a.m. The program is part of the library's "Wellness Wednesday" series, normally held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Admission is free. Light refreshments will be served. 7777 Alvarado Road.



Hip Hop Night

Join eight regional high schools for a weekend of beats, dancing, and hop-hop. Featuring line-ups from schools including the La Mesa Arts Academy, El Capitan HS,

Helix Charter and more. Located at the Helix Mainstage Theatre. Tickets are \$8 pre-sale or \$10 at the door. 4200 Lowell St. Tickets and showtimes available at bit.ly/2SYbiZc.



'10 out of 12'

Through March 31

Playwright Anne Washburn's newest, most adventurous work embarks on a remarkable trip into the backstage world of a technical rehearsal. Don a private headset and you'll hear a near-perfect recreation of what goes on behind the scenes, complete with backstage chatter, opening night jitters, potential crises looming large, and human stories unfolding. \$22. 5915 Severin Drive. Tickets and showtimes available at bit.ly/2SYGOGA.

Nature's Light and Form

St. Madeleine Sophie's Center (SMSC) present Nature's Light & Form at Sophie's Kensington Gallery. The exhibit will feature paintings by San Diego artist, Adrian Stewart, as well as artwork from two of Sophie's artists, Devon Jenson and Brant Simpson. The show is on display from March 1 – 30. A free public reception will be held at Sophie's Kensington Gallery on Friday, March 1, 2019, from 5–8 p.m. 4186 Adams Ave.



'Disney's Moana Jr.'

Through March 17

San Diego Junior Theatre presents the premiere of "Disney's Moana Jr.," directed and choreographed by Junior Theatre's Francine Mague. The special pilot production is a partnership with Music Theatre International and Disney Theatrical Group and showcases San Diego performers, musicians and technicians all ranging in age from 8 to 18. Performances are Fridays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. at Casa Del Prado Theatre, 1800 El Prado, San Diego. Tickets range from \$14-\$16. A special

family night in which all audience members will receive a complimentary gift and may choose to wear pajamas will take place Friday, March 8. Box office: 619-239-8355 or juniortheatre.com.



'Best San Diego Hikes'

Join co-author Don Endicott for a 45-minute presentation on the revised second edition of "50 Best Short Hikes, San Diego," the last book originally written by renowned local hiking expert Jerry Schad, first published shortly after his untimely death in 2011. The talk will be a photographic and narrative tour of representative hikes from the book, including those in Mission Trails. 1 p.m. at Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center, 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail. This event is free but registration is required. Register at 50bestshorthikes-sd.eventbrite.com.



Through the Lens

Join Nainsook Framing + Art for an artist reception and showing of work by 20 local photographers. Hors d'oeuvres + drinks will be served. 6 – 8 p.m. Free. 8130 La Mesa Blvd.



Cuyamaca Blood Drive

Cuyamaca college is hosting a blood drive in partnership with the San Diego Blood Bank. Anyone 17 and older, who weighs at least 114 pounds and is in good health may be eligible to donate blood. A good meal and plenty of fluids are recommended prior to donation. All donors must show picture identification. 10:30 a.m.–4 p.m. 900 Rancho San Diego Parkway. Donations by appointment or walk-in. Schedule an appointment at sandiegobloodbank.org.



Mary Poppins

Through March 16

One of the most popular Disney movies of all time is capturing hearts in a whole new way: as a brand-new Broadway musical! Based on the books by P.L. Travers and the classic Walt Disney film, Disney and Cameron Mackintosh's "Mary Poppins" delighted audiences for over 2,500 performances and received nominations for nine Olivier and seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical. See it now live at Encore! Theatre. \$12. 9620 Campo Road. Tickets and showtimes at bit.ly/2IpdFQB.



Friends of the Library 50th

Join the Friends of the La Mesa Library to commemorate our 50th Anniversary! The Shirthouse Band will kick off the event at 11 a.m. followed by crafts & face painting for the kids at noon. Local singer-songwriter Sara Petite will take the stage at 1 p.m. Bring your family to enjoy this free event at the La Mesa branch library. 8074 Allison Ave.



Essential oil DIY

Essential oil and crystal roller ball roll on craft. 6:30 p.m. at

Starbucks, 5416 Lake Murray Blvd. \$25 for materials.



Let's Plant!

Join Nan Sterman for one of her annual, hands-on vegetable seed starting workshops. Nan brings all the seeds, planting supplies, and equipment and teaches you about all you need to know about seed starting. After a few hours' work, you'll take home your entire summer vegetable garden, seeded and ready to sprout tomatoes, peppers, melons, cucumbers, zucchini, squash, basil, and much more. \$95 per person. 3845 Spring Drive. Register online at bit.ly/2TcsQRD.



Danny Green Trio

The Danny Green jazz trio, whose debut CD won the 2009 San Diego Music Award for Best Jazz Album, is led by pianist and composer and Grossmont College music instructor Danny Green and includes fellow instructor and jazz bassist extraordinaire Justin Grinnell as well as the versatile Julien Cantelm on drums. Catch them in the Ciccati Theatre during the Cuyamaca College spring concert series. \$5. 7:30 p.m. Visit bit.ly/2SYGmrL. ■

RECURRING EVENTS

Mondays

Note Catchers

Calif. Note Catchers, four-part harmony chorus, invite ladies of all ages to their rehearsals 7 – 9 p.m. Performances throughout SD. Located in Social Hall of La Mesa First United Methodist Church. 4690 Palm Ave. 619-575-6165.

Thursdays

Movie Matinee

The La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center hosts a series of modern and classic film

viewings every Thursday at 1 p.m. in the center's main hall. Cost is \$2 per ticket. For movie listings, visit bit.ly/2FVrOSQ.

Fridays

La Mesa Farmers Market

La Mesa's Farmers Market offers fresh local produce, florals, pastries, live music, and arts & crafts each Friday. 3 – 7 p.m. along La Mesa Boulevard. Free. Visit lamesavillageassociation.org. ■

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