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# Mission Times COURIER

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Learn about voting, prizes.  
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## When in drought ...

(l to r) Students Brianna Pinto, Brenden Hawk and Roger Fox-Starkey plant vegetables in the new aquaponics garden at Patrick Henry High School. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

### Aquaponics program saves school garden

Jeff Clemetson  
Editor

**L**ike a front lawn left to go brown and die, the vegetable garden at Patrick Henry High

School was a victim of water restrictions imposed because of the drought. That is, until a grant by a local conservation group funded a unique solution to keep it going.

"The aquaponics garden started because it uses 90 percent less water than traditional agriculture," said Brianna Pinto, the communications officer for the Patrick Henry Aquaponics Club. "We got a grant from ECOLIFE

and they helped us build this system so we can continue to grow food plants, but only using 10 percent of the water we'd normally be using."

The aquaponics system was built mostly after school or during lunch periods by a core group of "around 10 kids" that made up the core of the Aquaponics Club, Pinto said. Those students were

See **AQUAPONICS** page 14 —————>

## Tax relief for working families

New state program gives extra cash to most vulnerable

Jeff Clemetson  
Editor

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

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

"Adding the new California EITC is a tremendous opportunity for hard-working



(l to r) Joseph Sanberg, philanthropist supporting the CalEITC4Me outreach effort; Assemblymember Shirley Weber; Speaker Toni G. Atkins; Doug Moore, executive director of UDW Homecare Providers Union, and Mark Cafferty, CEO and president of the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp. (Courtesy of CalEITC4Me Campaign)

Californians to keep more of the money that they earn and help them to take care of their families," Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins said in a press release. Atkins was instrumental in getting the CalEITC added to the 2015-16 budget.

To qualify for CalEITC funds, you must be an individual with zero dependents who earned less than \$6,850 last year; or a household

with one dependent who earned less than \$9,880; or a household with two or more dependents who earned less than \$13,870.

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

See **EITC** page 23 —————>

## Vote for your local planner

NCPI annual board election to take place next month

Joseph Ciolino  
SDCNN intern

**A**t the Navajo Community Planners, Inc. meeting on Feb. 10, Chairman Matthew Adams announced the candidates who will be running for the board this year.

The election will take place on March 9 at Tifereth Israel Synagogue from 6:30 to 7 p.m. followed by the regular planning group meeting directly after.



Maggie Pound Brigand Kline

According to city laws and requirements, individuals wishing to vote must bring a driver's license and identification showing that they live in the community of San Carlos, Allied Gardens, Del Cerro or Grantville. Individuals who own businesses within the community can vote as well.

Any member of the community can vote for any candidate. Local residents are encouraged to get involved, attend and vote.

While many candidates are already board members wishing to renew their spot on the roster, there are a couple new individuals who placed an application to run, Brigand Kline and Maggie Pound.

Brigand Kline, San Carlos, is a financial planner originally from Florida and graduated from the United States Naval Academy and served for 12 years. He received his master's in Business Administration from San Diego State University and served as SDSU Alumni Association President in 2010. He was the treasurer of his local HOA from the past seven years. He is looking to get more involved locally and promote community needs.

Maggie Pound, San Carlos,

See **NCPI VOTE** page 14 —————>

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NEWS BRIEFS



(l to r) On the Go coordinator Stephanie Keith, 250,000th rider Anna Ritter, volunteer driver Howard Kugler (Courtesy of J. Walcher Communications)

On the Go celebrates a quarter of a million rides

On Jan. 20, Jewish Family Service of San Diego (JFS) celebrated the 250,000th ride of On the Go—a program that provides seniors with easy, accessible and affordable transportation to medical appointments, social engagements, errands and more. Volunteer driver Howard Kugler had the honor of transporting Anna Ritter from her San Carlos home to the College Avenue Center, located at 6299 Capri Drive to make the quarter-million milestone. This was not Ritter’s first ride. On the Go helped her recuperate since the loss of her husband in 2004 by taking her to and from College Avenue Center to visit with friends, play games, exercise and listen to interesting lectures. When Ritter has medical appointments, On the Go also helps get her there. San Diego seniors lack easy, accessible and affordable transportation, causing them to miss medical appointments, personal appointments and errands to the pharmacy, bank and more. On the Go is a service that is available to all San Diego seniors, regardless of background or religion. Volunteer drivers, like Kugler, help these older adults maintain their independence and quality of life. For more information, visit [jfssd.org/driver](http://jfssd.org/driver).

Scholarship for conservation

Conservation-minded high school seniors are encouraged to apply for one of five \$1,000 college scholarships offered by the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (RCD). The RCD Conservation Scholarship Program encourages students who are interested in conservation, agriculture, environmental science, natural resources or biology to attend college and pursue careers in resource conservation or agriculture. Applicants must be high school seniors who are planning to attend college in the fall of 2016. The complete application packet can be found on the RCD website at [rcdsandiego.org](http://rcdsandiego.org). Submissions must be received by April 11. “These scholarships are ideal for students who have a real passion about resource conservation or agriculture,” Sheryl Landrum, RCD district manager, said in a press release. “They are not strictly academic scholarships, but also take into account the applicant’s original essay, relevant experience, and letters of recommendation.” For more information about RCD and its programs, contact Sheryl Landrum at 619-562-0096 or [sheryl.landrum@rcdsandiego.org](mailto:sheryl.landrum@rcdsandiego.org). Or visit [rcdsandiego.org](http://rcdsandiego.org).

See BRIEFS page 7



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### How to Sell Your San Diego Home Without an Agent

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

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

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# From scientist to religious minister

## Spiritual center's minister used to be an atheist

Maria José Durán

**P**atti Paris, ordained minister of The Vision Center for Spiritual Living, started her professional career as a scientist in the field of biochemistry. Ten years ago, she was researching leukemia when she switched from helping people with the sickness of their bodies to the struggles of their souls.

"I know, it's kind of weird," Paris said before she started laughing. The 59-year-old woman believes that most people go through a spiritual "drift" in their 20s. "But then, after that period, they find something that they resonate with."

And that's exactly what happened to Paris. She went from an atheist scientist to a minister of God. "I spent years as a staunch atheist. But then, little by little, your soul just calls for things and I started getting those stirrings of 'there is just something else,'" Paris said.

"God is so good," were the first words that Paris proclaimed on stage in the Vision Center service held on Jan. 19. The concert-type room was half empty. That particular Sunday the rainy weather wasn't inviting to go out in, even

for a church service.

Uplifting spiritual music filled up every corner in the room. The meditation quote of the day was, "What the world needs now is for each of us to be who we truly are and to bring our gifts into the world." After five rings of a crystal bowl followed five minutes of silent meditation and prayer.

Vision Center of Spiritual Living is a non-denominational church. "We consider ourselves to be multi-denominational," said Paris. The Vision faith accepts every other creed in a very open way.

The cornerstone of their belief system is that God exists. They think that the "Spirit Almighty" is everywhere — and in everyone. There is no book of rules for people to follow. Their teaching concentrates in giving practitioners the necessary tools to be happier.

"The mission of Vision is to awaken humanity to their magnificence, to the good that they are and the good that they can do," Paris said. During the January services and other events at the Vision Center, the emphasis was on analyzing personal beliefs. Practitioners were encouraged to examine if their thoughts were still serving them or not, and if



Patti Paris, ordained minister of Vision Center for Spirituality, speaks at religious services Jan. 19. (Photo by Maria José Durán)

they weren't, how could they be replaced.

In an average sermon Paris may cite the Bible, the Koran or Snoopy. "Whatever gets the points across," the minister said.

Carl Martins has been attending Vision centers for 25 years. This 72-year-old was raised a Methodist, and then married a Catholic in an Episcopal church. "I've been with every possible denomination," Martins said.

Like many other adults, Martins was attracted by Vision's relaxed religious sense. "I've always believed in getting rid of all the doctrine, the guilt, the sin, the crap that is associated with every other religion," he said.

"We get people from other [religions] that have just been beat up

enough 'till they don't want to do that anymore," said Paris.

Bailey Keck is 22 years old. She started attending Vision last August. She came into the non-denominational church after a bad experience with Baptism. "I'm a nursing student, so I needed to know that there was something at the end," Keck said.

One of the challenges that new faiths like Vision face is how to get people to church in the Internet era. Today, practitioners can stream religious services, watch videos on YouTube or read their prayers online.

For Paris, the solution involves creating a sense of congregation. "What makes us different is we build community here, we get like-minded people to come together

and talk to share stories."

Their church offers many events open to the community to get together. Vision offers Sunday religious services as well as sharing and meditation groups and life counseling classes. But their more popular gatherings flow around music.

John Kurko is the founder of the Vision congregation in Mission Gorge. "Music reaches deep into the soul, it reaches so many levels," he said.

The second and third Thursday of every month The Vision Center for Spiritual Living presents Folkey Monkey. This acoustic music session is hosted by Joe Rathburn and percussionist Jeff Stasny. The event casts different guest singers and different themes for each performance. On Feb. 11's sold-out show, the theme was "All You Need Is Love" and featured an evening of Beatles songs as a "warm-up for Valentine's."

The show on Feb. 25 is also a "love" theme and features songwriter and troubadour Gregory Page. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased through the Folkey Monkey website, folkeymonkey.com.

Vision's spiritual services are free. However, donations are encouraged. "It's about giving back to the places where you're spiritually fed," Paris said.

The Vision Center for Spiritual Living will be hosting a "New Home Celebration" on March 6 at its new location, 4780 Mission Gorge Place.

—Maria José Durán is a freelance writer from San Diego. She can be reached at emyein@hotmail.com. ■

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## Medical Minute

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If your New Year's resolution is to lose weight and have at least 50 pounds to lose, surgical weight-loss may be the answer. There are several different options and most are performed minimally invasively.

Gastric sleeve surgery, which makes up over 60% of all weight-loss surgery procedures performed in the U.S. It is relatively new but is quickly becoming popular because it requires the procedure does not require any implantable devices or re-routing of the intestines. More than half of the stomach is removed, leaving a thin vertical "sleeve."

"The procedure makes your stomach smaller so you require less food to feel full faster," said Dr. Vadim Avulov. "Patients are left with a small capacity for food storage, thus limiting their intake."

Recent research has found that the hunger-producing hormone ghrelin was significantly lowered in gastric sleeve patients. This hormone signals your brain when you are full.

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# Alvarado named among nation's best hospitals

Joins other regional hospitals on elite list

Margie M. Palmer

Alvarado Hospital's clinical outcomes have once again garnered national attention. The institution has received the Healthgrades' Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence for the third year in a row; the nod distinguishes the facility as being among the top 5 percent of more than 4,500 hospitals nationwide for critical care. From 2012-14, Healthgrades' Distinguished Hospitals for Clinical Excellence, as a group, had a 26.5 percent lower risk adjusted in-hospital mortality rate across 19 procedures and conditions compared to all other hospitals. Top performing hospitals are selected based on clinical excellence across a broad spectrum of specialty care and superior outcomes. "Unfortunately, not all hospitals perform equally when it comes to clinical outcomes, so it's important that consumers do their research in order to find the right care," said Evan Marks, Chief Strategy Officer at Healthgrades. Alvarado Hospital has also been

honored twice by the organization for overall orthopedic services and spine surgery. "This award is huge for us," Alvarado administrator Robin Gomez said. "It puts out a report card out to the community that helps them know that when they are choosing healthcare, there is a community hospital right there that is performing at a very high level." Gomez also notes that since Healthgrades uses measurable data to determine the top hospitals for clinical, the distinction is based on objective data. "Being named a 'Clinical Excellence' hospital shows that we have put together protocols and that we're able to get everyone on staff to work as a coordinated care team," she said. "Our goal has always been to provide a strong template for care coordination. This allows patients to be treated quickly and it allows us to efficiently perform protocols that have been set forth by the federal government, which allows us to provide really good care for our patients." Other local hospitals, including UC San Diego (UCSD) Medical Center in Hillcrest, Scripps La Jolla, Scripps Green and Scripps Encinitas were also rated in the top 5 percent of hospitals in the nation for clinical care. UCSD Health institution has received Healthgrades' Distinguished Hospital Award for



Alvarado Hospital displays a banner touting its Healthgrades rating. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

Clinical Excellence and America's 100 Best Hospitals for Critical Care Award for the third year in a row; Scripps Green was named on Healthgrades' Clinical Excellence list in 2014, 2015 and 2016. "We are honored to be among the top 5 percent of hospitals in the U.S. that demonstrate measurably superior health outcomes for our patients," said Patty Maysent, CEO of UC San Diego Health. "As the only academic health system in the region, we are devoted to offering an unparalleled quality of care and exceptional clinical results." UC San Diego Health also performed exceptionally well in both gastrointestinal and general surgery with expertise in weight loss, cancer care and organ transplantation. "We're honored to be recognized by Healthgrades as among the best hospitals in the nation when it comes to delivering high-

quality care across a wide range of patient conditions and procedures," said Maida Soghikian, M.D., chief of staff at Scripps Green Hospital. Healthgrades Chief Strategy Officer Marks said the organization applauds the hospitals that have achieved the 2016 distinction "for demonstrating an unwavering commitment to high-quality care." "The [award] recipients clearly place a premium on producing great clinical outcomes and stand out from their peers in their overall clinical performance," he said. "We commend these hospitals for their well-deserved achievements," —Margie M. Palmer is a San Diego-based freelance writer who has been racking up bylines in a myriad of news publications for the past 10 years. Reach her at margiep@alumni.pitt.edu.■

## 'Tooth Wisdom'



### with Dr. Bradley Ross Dental Implants: More Than Just a New Tooth

If you should ever have the misfortune of losing a tooth, either from an accident, decay, gum disease, or a crack, you may be forced to make a swift decision in choosing the best way to replace the tooth. As a practicing dentist for the last 28 years and after surgically placing and/or restoring thousands of dental implants, I have insight and experience that I would like to share with you. The benefits of replacing a missing tooth far outweigh the costs as well as the negative emotional, physical and social impact that can occur. Having missing teeth will lead to gradual loss of facial support due to bone loss and shifting of adjacent teeth. It can also cause frustration with chewing and make it embarrassing to smile.

#### Dental Implants vs Dentures

Traditional dentures have some benefits, but also have several drawbacks. Since they are removable artificial teeth replacements, they are prone to slipping, and finding a perfect fit for a patient's teeth and gums can be difficult. Unlike dentures and dental bridges, dental implants are strong, permanent replacements that look, act and feel natural. Custom-made for your specific needs, they do not slip and provide less risk of gum irritation.

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A dental implant procedure involves a multi-step process performed by a dentist with special training. Your dentist will place a thin cylinder or post underneath the gum and anchor it directly to the jawbone. The post will fuse to the bone within three to six months. Once it has fused, your dentist will attach a custom-designed crown to the post. When your dental implant procedure is complete, it should look and feel just like your own natural tooth, improving your smile and giving you greater ease with chewing and speaking. Dental implants are made to be permanent — without the hassle of removal and maintenance, other than your regular daily habits of brushing and flossing.

To learn more about Implant Dentistry, please visit our website at: [www.missiontraildentistry.com](http://www.missiontraildentistry.com).

Bradley A. Ross, DDS is the owner of Mission Trails Dentistry, located at 6902 Navajo Road at Jackson Drive. Dr. Ross welcomes questions from readers at [dentistrysandiego@gmail.com](mailto:dentistrysandiego@gmail.com) 619-582-9700

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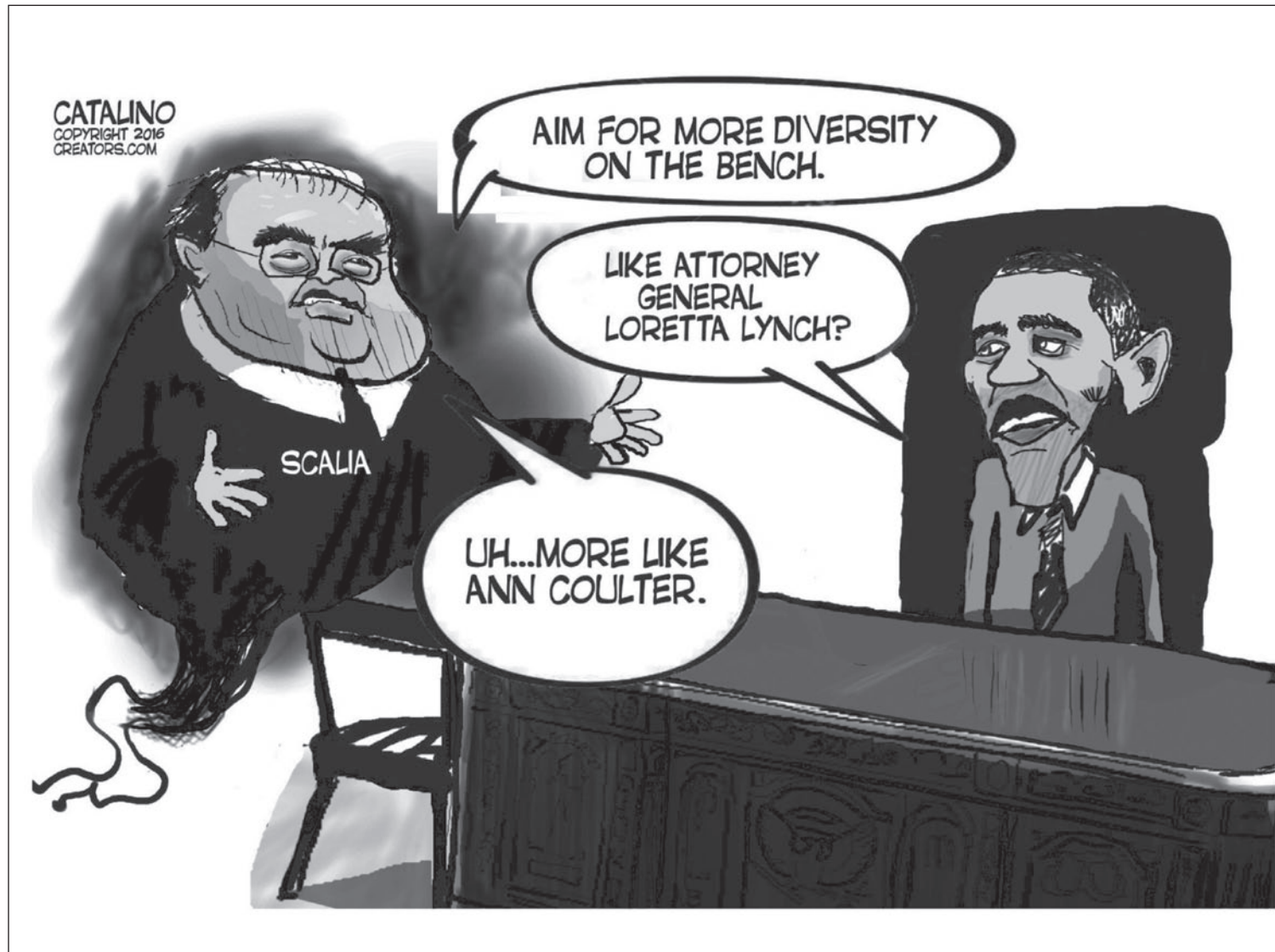
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## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Homelessness along San Diego River needs new strategy

Rob Hutsel

The San Diego River is an amazing resource. It is a cultural treasure and an ecological wonder with boundless potential to enhance the quality of life of people along its 52-mile length.

To realize this potential, perhaps one issue more than any other needs to be addressed: homelessness.

Last month, the San Diego River Park Foundation hosted an important count of homeless people along the river in the cities of San Diego and Santee. Thirty volunteers joined with staff to walk trails and struggle through brush at the break of dawn. It is an important “snapshot” of the river and is part of the national Point In Time Count, known locally as “We ALL Count.”

Our organization has led the river’s count for several years now, and the results are troubling.

In this most recent assessment, 98 tents or other structures were documented along with an additional 42 individuals. This equates to an estimated 189 people living along the river. Of these, 15 were in the city of Santee and 174 in the city of San Diego. This is a 95 percent increase over the 2015 count — truly a stunning and troubling number.

Between Interstate 15 and Friars Road, 15 shelters and eight individuals were documented. The San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless uses a 1.5 multiplier for each shelter. So that is equivalent to 31 people. Those encampments are generally in Grantville, rather than on the Mission Valley portion.

It is a stunning number, especially considering that we believe that many homeless people had been displaced by earlier rain and floodwaters. But even if this isn’t considered, 189 people are living

in terrible conditions in our community. These people for whatever reason are living in harm’s way, areas that are underwater when the river rises.

We are greatly concerned about these people. We come at this challenging social and community issue from a different perspective. We are an organization that is dedicated to creating a better future for our historic San Diego River. One of our key programs is to clean up the river. We have organized volunteers to remove more than 1.8 million pounds — or 900 tons — of trash from in and along the river.

Our October survey documented that 74 percent of the trash along the river was related to homelessness. Just recently, a survey of the river between the 805 and 15 freeways documented 74,620 pounds of trash just on the south side of the river. In this recent survey, 100 percent of the trash was related to encampments.

We cannot help but be heartbroken to see first-hand this human and ecological tragedy.

Our dedicated staff and volunteers will keep working. Partners like the Alpha Project and Urban Corps will keep working alongside landowners, San Diego Police Department and their Homeless Outreach Team, city of San Diego Park and Recreation and Fire-Rescue Departments, and others. In Santee we will work with the city of Santee, San Diego County Sheriff and others.

It has become clear that a new strategy is needed and the community needs to weigh in. Imagine if you found a family member who was sleeping along the San Diego River. Imagine if you heard the river was rising. How would you feel?

We ask that everyone remember that each of these people has a mother, father, grandparent or other relatives. They may even have a son or daughter. Experts have told us that this is the hardest-to-reach population, people who often refuse services for whatever reason. Many have drug or alcohol dependence and/or mental illnesses.

We know that a solution can be found if we work together as a community to find it. While we won’t end homelessness, we

can develop systems and programs to keep people out of harm’s way — programs that are compassionate while also helping heal the river so it can reach its potential.

If you care about this issue, we ask that you let us know so we can keep you informed. If you want to speak up, we ask that you contact your elected officials so they know this is an important issue.

If you, your business or organization have ideas or time to work on this, let us know that, too. We welcome people who want to assist with our monitoring and assessment program. Each Tuesday, we have a volunteer team that walks along the river documenting areas which need attention.

With the count of 189 people living along the San Diego River, we estimate that throughout the year that number can grow to more than 250 people. Some have estimated the count can reach as high as 500. Based upon the recent survey, we also know that focused efforts can make a difference. An example is the Mission Valley Preserve, a city of San Diego-dedicated park, which has seen a dramatic decrease in large measure due to the dedicated efforts of Park Rangers and volunteers.

With improved coordination and collaboration, increased resources and the support of the community, we can build upon this and other successes. If we all work together, we are convinced that the next “We ALL Count” will show positive results. The San Diego River Park Foundation invites you to join us!

—Rob Hutsel is the executive director and co-founder of the nonprofit San Diego River Park Foundation. Reach him at [rob@sandiegoriver.org](mailto:rob@sandiegoriver.org) or at 619-297-7380, ext. 108.■



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## SENIOR INTERN

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## LETTERS

### Regarding "Renters insurance: worth every penny?"

[Volume 22, Issue 1 or [bit.ly/1nogMZh](http://bit.ly/1nogMZh)]

I found this article to be very helpful and learned a lot. I live in northern Virginia most of the year, but I'm a native of San Diego and I still own a condo in the Bankers Hill area, which I occasionally rent out. I appreciated the article and thought Mr. Pentico did an excellent job. I've always enjoyed reading local newspapers when traveling and this is a great neighborhood paper. Thank you and congratulations on your paper.

—Judy Kraus, via email

### Responses to "Allied Gardens Farmers Market struggles, pushes on"

[Volume 22, Issue 1 or [bit.ly/1PT8K1R](http://bit.ly/1PT8K1R)]

I hope this market can continue! It's a nice little market, and as someone who lived in Allied Gardens for the first 25 years of my life, definitely a welcome addition to the neighborhood. If I still lived in the neighborhood, I'd stop by more often, but I hope the locals will support it!

—Benny Cartwright, posted at [missiontimescourier.com](http://missiontimescourier.com)

The picture used in this story explains a lot. This market sells a lot of stuff and not a lot of fresh produce. The selection of farm fresh produce is extremely limited. Every time we drive by, we notice the tents are mostly clothing, etc. We would definitely shop there if it had a produce selection like the market in Little Italy. It would save us the drive! In the meantime, a real grocery store would be lovely!

—Rebecca Paulson-Smith, via Facebook

### Questions for "Local inventor saves the rain"

[Volume 22, Issue 1 or [bit.ly/1UqSoRS](http://bit.ly/1UqSoRS)]

Does the device have a name? Good luck on the project.

—Doug P., posted at [missiontimescourier.com](http://missiontimescourier.com)

I love this idea but have a question. During these last rains, the water was pouring down our downspouts. Can this item handle that large amount of water through the small hose diameter without overflowing from the gutters?

—Linda, posted at [missiontimescourier.com](http://missiontimescourier.com)

**[Editor's note: Sheldon Levinson, inventor of the water capture device, responds:]**

At over 200 gallons an hour pouring through this device, I would think that all of your containers will be filled in just a short time and all of your deep watering as well. Any rain gutter can overflow in a very heavy rain.

At 200-plus gallons an hour able to pass through this device, if you get more than that and you see an overflow, easily remove the device, dry it out and use it again.

Don't forget your yearly debris cleaning.

Nice, easy, inexpensive — enjoy!

—Sheldon, posted at [missiontimescourier.com](http://missiontimescourier.com) ■

## Briefs, from page 3

### Teaching and STEM scholarship for SDUSD high school seniors

The San Diego Education Fund (SDEF) is accepting applications for college scholarships for seniors in high schools within the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) who are pursuing degrees in teaching or STEM studies. Applications will be accepted through 5 p.m. March 21.

SDEF is offering two types of scholarships:

The Rising Educators Scholarship is for students who plan to pursue a degree in teaching by attending a community or four-year college in San Diego County, can demonstrate financial need and plan to teach for three years in the SDUSD. The program works to increase the diversity of the pool of local educators teaching in San Diego schools. The program awards multi-year scholarships (including teaching credential year) to outstanding,

low-income students who reflect the diversity of the school district.

STEM Scholarships are for students who plan to pursue a degree in science, technology, engineering or mathematics by attending a community or four-year college in San Diego County and can demonstrate financial need. Initially established as an endowment by two prominent local educators, Jack and Virginia Mashin, the purpose of the STEM Innovators Scholars Program is to increase the number of students majoring in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Most of the scholarship recipients are the first in their families to attend college, and all come from families with limited incomes. Unique to the scholarships is the mentoring and counseling provided by SDEF to ensure that the recipients graduate from college. Each student is assigned a mentor who works closely with the student throughout the college years.

For more information about SDEF and its scholarship programs, including links to the online application forms, visit [sdef.org](http://sdef.org). ■

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## International conflicts focus of next NCRWF meeting

Judy  
McCarty

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

Once again, our luncheon meeting will take place at Brigantine Restaurant in La Mesa. Check-in time for the 11 a.m. meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$20. Lunch is served at noon, followed by the speaker. Due to space limitations, reservations are required. RSVP to Marjie at NCRWF99@gmail.com or call her at 619-990-2791.

After delivering an Action Track Chair to a severely wounded veteran last year, NCRWF members have decided



Barry Nussbaum (Courtesy of Sutton Porter)

to support "Shelter to Soldier," a non-profit organization that rescues dogs from an otherwise uncertain future in local shelters and trains them to become psychiatric service companions for combat veterans with PTSD. The need is

great: Every 63 minutes a U.S. veteran commits suicide; every 11 seconds an animal is euthanized. NCRWF has committed to raise \$10,000 to sponsor a dog for the 12- to 18-month training period, helping to save both the life of a dog in a shelter and the life of a veteran. This is something we can do.

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

On April 22, NCRWF will host a free public forum to give the community and Republican candidates running in local elections an opportunity to exchange ideas and get acquainted. Be sure to save the date!

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

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

For more information on all our activities, visit us at [navajocanyonrnf.org](http://navajocanyonrnf.org) and also check us out on Facebook.

—Judy McCarty is publicity chairman of the Navajo Canyon Republican Women Federated. Reach her at [jhmccarty@cox.net](mailto:jhmccarty@cox.net).



## Sanders-Clinton race takes center stage

Mayor's contest, D1 and D3 also on docket

Linda Armacost and  
Jeff Benesch

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

See DEMS page 10

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## Dianne's Corner

### News and notes from your County Supervisor

Dianne Jacob



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

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

Public safety: My fellow super-

visors recently joined me in stepping the fight on two critical public-safety issues.

The board backed recommendations aimed at enlisting motel and hotel operators, more school districts and others in our battle against human trafficking across the county. This is a tough issue to talk about, but we MUST face it head on.

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

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

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

These free events include top enforcement experts and scam victims. The next one will be held in Poway in May. Details to come.

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

Have a great East County day!

—Dianne Jacob is County Supervisor for District 2. Reach her at [dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov).

### Charter school measure moves forward to full council

Scott Sherman



Recently the Planning Commission and the Smart Growth & Land Use Committee approved a proposed measure of mine to reform the city of San Diego's Conditional Use Permit (CUP) that would ease permitting requirements on San Diego public charter schools.

Public charter schools serve over 21,000 students in 51 schools within the city of San Diego and the San Diego Unified School District. They have become an

important educational option for thousands of San Diego parents. Unfortunately, the city's burdensome CUP is enormously complex, time consuming and expensive.

My plan would achieve the following:

Revise municipal code to reduce the permitting requirements to help charter schools obtain facilities

K-12 schools with less than 300 students will be permitted in residential multi-family, commercial regional, commercial office, and commercial community permitting zones

These revisions would allow more money to go directly to

education instead of navigating through the permitting process

My office began working with public charter schools and affiliate organizations after being contacted by four charter schools in the district that were having trouble navigating the burdensome permitting process.

Thousands of San Diego working families depend on charter schools throughout San Diego to educate their children. I applaud the Planning Commission for approving this important measure. I urge my Council colleagues to join me in support when this item reaches the full council.

—Scott Sherman is the San Diego City Councilmember for District 7. Call his office at 619-236-6677 or email him at [scottsherman.sandiego.gov](mailto:scottsherman.sandiego.gov).

#### ► Dems, from page 9

We are also excited to have Lori Saldaña, now running as an independent for mayor of San Diego. The former Democratic Assemblymember and long-time local politico has headlined our meetings on a couple of occasions, and always speaks truth to power, and will tell us why she's the best candidate to replace Kevin Faulconer as mayor. As a friend of a host of progressive issues, Saldana finds agreement with most of the ideals and aspirations of our diverse membership.

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

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

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

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

—Linda Armacost is president and Jeff Benesch is vice president of programming for the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club. Reach them at [jeffbenesch@gmail.com](mailto:jeffbenesch@gmail.com).



Hillary Clinton (Courtesy of Clinton for President Campaign)



Bernie Sanders (Courtesy of Sanders for President Campaign)



# Hats off to Terri Clark

Canadian country star to perform at Sycuan Casino

J.S. Anderson

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

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

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

Clark was raised in Medicine

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

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

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

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

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

"[I'm a] big believer of pulling yourself up and going for it ... whether it is in the fields or as a nurse in an emergency room. Country music depicts that lifestyle," she said.

To Clark, great country songs



Country singer Terri Clark in one of her iconic cowboy hats (Courtesy of Sycuan Casino)

are authentic, real, and honest and "tell a story that weaves into your psyche."

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

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

Late last year, Clark performed at the bedsides of 35 veterans in the Nashville VA Hospital as part

of the Musicians on Call initiative. "I got more out of it than they did," she said.

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

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

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

In addition to Musicians On

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

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

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



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Elizabeth Gillingham

**Henry student selected for Honor Band**

Kudos to sophomore student Noah Krasner, who passed a rigorous audition and was invited to play his instrument with approximately 100 other students from across the region in the All Southern California Honor Band.

Students received the music beforehand, and rehearsed tirelessly for two days. They had one dress rehearsal and were expected to play flawlessly in concert the next day at Arcadia High.

Krasner said that he got good advice about music and college life from the director Dr. Travis Cross, who is a professor at UCLA. Cross wrote one of the four pieces performed by the Honor Band. Auditions were held in Glendale in December and the rehearsals were from 7:30 a.m. — 4 p.m. for two days at the Hyatt in Anaheim.

“There were four bass clarinets in the section, including me, and I was placed third chair,” Krasner said. “It was plenty of fun, I learned lots, made new friends, and I hope to do it again next year.” ■



Noah Krasner (left) with conductor Dr. Travis Cross (Photos courtesy of Patrick Henry High School)

**PHHS student of the month**

Congratulations to Anthony Gonzalez, who was selected as the Kiwanis and PHHS Student of the Month for January.

Gonzalez earned the respect and admiration of the PHHS administrative team for putting together the December Powder Puff game played between the seniors and the juniors. Organizing this game meant finding students who were willing to play in an exhibition game of flag football where the girls play against each other with the assistance of PHHS football team captains. In addition, the varsity cheerleading captains



Anthony Gonzalez

helped coach the male students on cheers to entertain the crowd.

Gonzalez found players to sign up and participate in practices; secured free chaperones to support the game (so they could make more profit on the game); established rules and regulations to keep everyone safe; and reported his progress on a weekly basis to our administrative team.

The game was held on a rainy Friday night and was a huge success, helping our senior class raise over \$2,500 for their upcoming prom. Thank you Anthony for an outstanding job! ■

**PHAME is coming soon**

The building that will house the Patrick Henry Arts Media and Entertainment (PHAME) Academy has a roof and will be ready for the fall semester 2016. Construction at PHHS has been fast and furious but we’re beginning to see that all the noise and inconveniences are beginning to pay off in that the building is getting closer and closer towards completion.

For those who live near Henry, thanks for your patience and for putting up with the extra cars. We are close to adding more than 100 parking spaces on the southwest corner of the campus, which should ease the stress created by this project.

PHAME looks amazing with its new footprint on the campus taking shape and casting a view of what a modern 21st century performing arts center should look like. The next few months will be devoted towards installing the walls, adding furniture and chairs, finishing the electrical components, adding fancy lights, and completing the classroom spaces.

When the building is complete, we will have a full-size stage, orchestra pit, 508 seats, a ticket booth, and a two-story glass wall for the main entrance. We will also have four new classrooms that will be used for our video production pathway, allowing students to learn about how to broadcast information in a variety of forums.

This is the first phase of three major construction projects that are scheduled for PHHS in the next



(l to r) Principal Elizabeth Gillingham with vice principals Jennifer Pacofsky, Bill Miller and Jim Good

three years. Just as the modernization and PHAME project is wrapping up, we will be starting Phase 2, where we’ll be adding a new two-story, solar-powered building in the southeast corner of our property. A 24-classroom building will break ground in July and continue construction for the coming school year. Once it is completed, we will remove the old bungalows that currently sit behind PHAME and add more parking, which will fully restore our parking lot to our original design prior to the construction of PHAME for student and staff use.

—Elizabeth Gillingham is the principal of Patrick Henry High School. ■



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(l to r) Taylor Lionetti, Diane Cao, Eric Thomas, Vincent Thompson, Julia (last name withheld by request), Coach Deniz Kocoglu, Quincy Puffer, Gabriel Reed, Miguel Talamantez, Wesley Fulton (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

# Wired to win

## Magnolia Science Academy's rockin' robotics team

Jeff Clemetson  
Editor

The trophy case at Magnolia Science Academy just got a bit more crowded thanks to the school's robotics club.

"With the robotics club, we [compete in] the FIRST Lego League (FLL)," robotics instructor and team coach Deniz Kocoglu said. "It's a pretty popular competition around the world. There are around 400 teams participating in Southern California."

Kocoglu's teams of seventh- and eighth-grade students are divided up into several task groups in order to build each robot.

Project managers implement the robot's tasks according to the theme of the competition. This year's theme was trash and recycling so the Magnolia students built a robot that completed tasks related to composting.

Next, the team's builders and coders go to work building the robot's mechanisms using a Lego Mindstorms robotics kit and programming its functions on a computer.

"It's kind of like block coding but more advanced," eighth-grader Taylor Lionetti said. "You connect the computer to the robot and all the information transfers to the robot and then cords go everywhere to all the different motors and that's how it works."

Lionetti said this was her first year on the team, and she plans on continuing studying robotics when she enters high school next year.

"It was a really fun experience," she said. "Building the robot was something new, programming the robot was something new."

Competing in and winning robotics competitions is not new for Magnolia. This year's trophies are just the latest additions to the robotics program's many achievements, Principal Gokhan Serce said. Magnolia teams have competed in the FLL Cup for over eight years and have also competed in an underwater robotics league called SeaPerch. Two Magnolia students even went to Romania to compete in a Sumo Robot competition.

This year, the MSA Machines team brought home the First Place Robot Performance award in the FLL Cup held on Jan. 23 at Legoland. There were 66 teams from Southern California in the competition.

Magnolia's other team, the MagnoBricks, won the FLL Cup's First Place Robot Performance award at the Jan. 24 competition and also took home the First Place Core Values Inspirational Award at the Southern California FLL Championship Tournament held in Chula Vista on Dec. 6.

Coach Kocoglu is especially proud of winning the Core Values award.

"It is related to being a good team, to have good spirit, to show professionalism and at the same time show you are working with other students and communities," he said.

The idea of teamwork is so important to the competition that there are special core values managers in every team.

"The core values position is to make sure everybody is being a team, cooperating together and making decisions together, basically make sure everyone is on task and doing what they're supposed to do," eighth-grader Eric Thomas said.

Fostering cooperation was one of the team's biggest challenges, seventh-grader Quincy Puffer said.

"In general, a problem with our team was getting everyone's ideas to fit into the robot — considering everyone's ideas," he said.

Another major challenge for the team happened during the competition when the robot's color sensors mysteriously stopped working.

"It's kind of unexplained as of yet," seventh-grader Gabriel Reed said. "We think they might have been a little too close to the table but when we got to the competition they either broke or stopped working so our robot was pretty much blind."

FLL robots are autonomous during the competition. Once they are set to do their task, they are not remote-controlled and the team can only hope that all the mechanisms work and all the programming is accurate enough for it to do its tasks.

"When you first start the robot and it goes out, you get that feeling that you have to trust the robot no matter what and then when it doesn't [do what it should] you get the feeling that you want to flip over the table," said Miguel Talamantez, another seventh-grader on the robotics team, adding "seeing the robot actually work" is his favorite part of competitions.

Now that the FLL competitions are done, the robotics club will begin forming teams to compete in the underwater SeaPerch league "which involves building a robot out of [PVC] pipes, installing motors, and then building the motor control and then controlling the robot under the water to fulfill certain missions," Coach Kocoglu said.

Preparing for the underwater competition is a challenge for the Magnolia team because the school does not have permanent pool. Last year, the team used a portable pool which was set up in the auditorium.

However, the Magnolia robotics team is confident it has the winning formula to overcome the challenge.

"You basically focus as a team and work together to create a robot, a project, and be the best for the school," eighth-grader Diane Cao said. "But not only that, you have to have fun with your team. And the best part is when your robot works."

—Write to Jeff Clemetson at [jeff@sdenn.com](mailto:jeff@sdenn.com).■

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## WHAT'S UP AT ASCENSION

New things are happening at Ascension Lutheran Church and we are reaching out to our neighbors to give you an overview of 2016.

Sunday Worship service begins at 9:15 am. Children's Sunday School is held at the same time. (The children love this time and their programs & events are amazing!!) Following 9:15 worship, the Adult Bible Study group meets.

Our Children's Center is open for pre-school children ages 2 - 5 and for before and after school youngsters ages 6-12. Hours are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Five Wednesday night Lenten Services begin with soup supper at 6:15 followed by a time of singing, scripture and prayer for each other, the needs of the church and the world.

Easter Sunday worship is scheduled for 10 am. Join us for a pancake breakfast at 9 am and an Easter Egg Hunt for the children immediately following worship.

Two free community dinners are scheduled each year at Ascension. The Easter Dinner is April 3, and the Christmas Holiday Dinner is December 4. Reservations are appreciated.

Men's Bible Study and Breakfast at 7:00 am the 4th Saturday of each month. Join us when you can, there's always enough food!

Our music program, "Sounds of Ascension", is directed by Robert Plimpton. Our choir and bell choir are exceptional. Concerts and guest musicians are scheduled throughout the year.

We are a distribution site for the Food Assistance Program (EFAP) on the first Friday of the month, 9:00-11:00 am. We have a small Food Pantry for emergency needs. Hours are 8:30-12:30, Monday-Friday.

Continuing Organizations: Gambler's Anonymous and Gamanon, programs for compulsive gamblers and their families on Thursdays, and Toastmasters "Saturday Savants" meet Saturdays 8:30-10:00 am.

The Allied Gardens Community Council Board meets the 1st Monday night each month; Town Hall Meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of odd months.


New organizations at Ascension include the San Diego Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, established in 1951 by a group of WWII Latvian refugees. Their worship services, in Latvian, are scheduled for one Saturday a month, followed by a social hour and lunch. Their Website is: [www.sandiegodraudz.com](http://www.sandiegodraudz.com)

The Norwegian Seamen's Church will begin quarterly worship services (in Norwegian) this year.

The Sons of Norway will have monthly meetings and social events here, beginning February 20th with their Annual Salmon Dinner. For reservations call 619-993-9113.

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► **Aquaponics**, from page 1

from three classes — environmental science, engineering and marine science. As the project moved along, more students got involved. Ceramics students made decorations for the garden; even a student band called Spa Fish was recruited to play at the kickoff party on Jan. 28.

“I don’t even know all the people who worked on this together,” Pinto said. “It’s really been a big group effort.”

That group effort included the faculty as well. AP environmental science teacher Lara Dickens, who is the student advisor to the Aquaponics Club, organized other faculty to get involved in the program after she first learned of the ECOLIFE grant.

“I did write the grant, but I think the reason we were awarded the grant is because everybody wanted to be involved,” she said. “Once it gets going, we’re going to have lots of different groups in here.”

The aquaponics garden is already a part of the curriculum for environmental science, marine biology, engineering and ceramics classes, but even more are planning to use it as a resource now that it is operational.

“The art teachers are going to show how to draw plants as if you were observing wildlife, like the old wildlife sketchbooks,” Dickens said. Even the Patriots Pups preschool attached to Patrick Henry plans on bringing its children to visit.

Dickens’ excitement about the aquaponics garden is one of the reasons why it was the first of five schools in San Diego County to be awarded a grant to build one, ECOLIFE educational manager Kait Cole said.

“What I am looking for is a passionate teacher who wants to spearhead this program,” she said. Other requirements for the



Back row, standing: (l to r) Vice Principal Jennifer Pacofsky, Bill Toone of ECOLIFE; Conny Jamison of San Diego Kiwanis, Kurt Carroll, Andrew Constantini, Brianna Pinto, Sabrina Ortega, Brenden Hawk, Roger Fox-Starkey, Olivia Young, environmental science teacher Lara Dickens; Front row: (l to r) engineering teacher Adria Van Loan-Poselli, marine science teacher Ann Wegmann, Kait Cole of ECOLIFE (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

grant include access to water and electricity or water and solar; a protected space for the system to be in; and support of school administration.

The aquaponics school program is part of ECOLIFE’s overall focus of integrating community health with environmental sustainability using “simple adaptive approaches,” Cole said.

In addition to the outdoor system, a smaller, indoor aquaponics system is used at elementary schools. The grants for both programs were funded with \$20,000 given by Kiwanis San Diego. In addition to the money, ECOLIFE helps the schools with developing STEM-based curriculum.

“These eco-gardens are an educational tool to teach our future farmers the importance of sustainable agriculture and to get them thinking about conservation,” Cole said.

For the Patrick Henry stu-

dents, thinking about cost and logistics also played into the school project.

“First we had to find [a system] that would fit inside the budget,” said student Kurt Carroll, who was the lead engineer for the project. “It’s a double-grow-bed, ebb-and-flow system. It’s a system that supports both the plants and the fish and it works really well and it ended up being in our budget, which was perfect.”

Although the aquaponics system came from ECOLIFE as a kit, Carroll said adjustments needed to be made to it to fit the school’s needs.

“We had to cut the PVC pipe, place the beds in advantageous positions where the sun would hit it all the time, position the filter so the fish wouldn’t run into it a lot — we had all the parts there, but we had to put it together,” he said.

The system uses 10 catfish that feed the plants through the waste they produce. The ammonia in their waste goes up to the plants through pipes and bacteria take the ammonia and convert it into nitrogen, which is what the plants use to grow. In return, the plants filter the water for the fish.

“It’s a really cool cycle, really efficient,” Pinto said.

Marine science teacher Anne Wegmann involved all of her students in the program researching different aquaponics systems and what types of fish and plants would work best together. That research led to the conclusion that catfish were the best choice for the school aquaponics program, though not for the reason you might think.

“Catfish are cheaper,” she said. “They are pretty hardy — we don’t have to have a heater in there for them. Some of the other fish we were looking at that were also inexpensive would not be able to survive without that extra heat.”

Adria Van Loan-Polselli, who teaches engineering classes at Patrick Henry, said three students from her senior class chose aquaponics as their year-long project.

“It was an entire project,” she said. “From finding a problem — we can’t water our plants on campus — to, ‘How are we going to fix this? How have other people fixed it?’”

Her students conducted patent searches of the different aquaponics systems. They looked at ebb-and-flow systems, which they eventually chose, as well as Nutrient Film Transfer (NFT) systems. The students laid out how everything was going to work by making blueprints and schematics, first on paper then with a computer using a program called Inventor and another called SolidWorks. The students are also going to print a 3D model using the school’s 3D printers, she said.

Through the school’s engineering classes, the aquaponics program will soon expand even further, Van Loan-Poselli said. California Career Technical Education (CCTE), which also funds the engineering teaching position at Patrick Henry, offered grant money for the school to buy an NFT aquaponics system. That system will be put in sometime between March and May. “So we will have two full running systems by the end of the year,” she said.

Student Olivia Young is planning an expansion of her own. She is taking what she learned about aquaponics and applying it towards her Girl Scout Gold Award project.

“ECOLIFE, Price Charities and the community garden (in City Heights) I am doing it in are all helping me establish the project,” she said. “They don’t have organic produce at affordable prices there.”

Her project still needs funding, but she is submitting proposals and hopes to break ground soon.

President and founder of the Aquaponics Club, Sabrina Ortega, who is a senior this year, said she hopes that the excitement about the aquaponics garden will carry on for future classes at Patrick Henry. Getting different students together to be involved was one of the reasons she formed the club in the first place.

“I decided that making a club would be the best opportunity for us to all group up and have all our opinions heard,” she said. “We all got to play our part and it was something we were all very passionate about.”

—Write to Jeff Clemetson at [jeff@sdenn.com](mailto:jeff@sdenn.com).■

► **NVPI Vote**, from page 1

has been a California Real Estate Broker for 35 years and has lived in her San Carlos home for 28 years. She worked for Kaiser as Human Resources Director and administrator for the Pediatrics Department, managing seven clinics. Maggie was a representative for an elected council member facilitating the community to create the first Citizen’s Patrol and the City Heights Crime and Economic Summit in 1994. Last year, she co-founded the B2B group, GADS, that serves our communities. As a business broker at First Choice, she leverages her business skills as an intermediary in business sales and acquisitions.

Tim Flodin, San Carlos, is seeking reelection after two years of serving on the board. He intends to continue his involvement on land use-based community goals and development proposals in Allied Gardens, Del Cerro, Grantville and San Carlos. Flodin has been a resident in the San Carlos community since 2012 and has a background in transportation and logistics, specializing in global trade risk as a licensed property and casualty insurance broker.

Douglas Livingston, Del Cerro, is a landscape architect and has been running his own business for the past 30 years in San Diego area. He has been a member of the board since 2010 and has experience with landscape and outdoor space design on public, commercial, civic and residential projects throughout Southern California and Arizona.

Daniel Smith, Grantville, purchased his first home in Allied Gardens in 1978 and his first commercial property in Grantville in 1981. He is a real estate broker and has experience doing property management, sales and leasing. He has served on the board for 20 years representing Grantville and has participated in many subcommittees involving land-use issues in the Navajo communities.

Dan Northcutt, San Carlos, lived in the community for 18 years and has a background in real estate, specifically in the title industry where he was a researcher of properties dating back to the 1800s. He has been selling real estate in the community since obtaining his real estate and broker’s licenses. He has been actively involved in the community and has raised money for the local parks.

Eric Aguilera, Grantville, has been a business owner for eight years and got involved to go over the focus plan amendment with local business owners in order to develop new homes, apartments and new roads.

David Hardy, Allied Gardens, has lived in Allied Gardens for three years and is an SDSU graduate with a master’s in City Planning. He has worked in planning for El Cajon and is now working as a project manager for land development.

Mike McSweeney, Del Cerro, has been on and off the board since 1995 and has lived in Del Cerro for 23 years. He is a licensed general contractor and a policy advisor for the trade association.

—Joseph Ciolino is an editorial intern for San Diego Community Newspaper Network, the parent company of the Mission Times Courier. Reach him at [josephciolino@hotmail.com](mailto:josephciolino@hotmail.com).■

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# Authors, art, events and more at San Carlos Library

Sue Hotz



Our new managing librarian, David Ege, has had the opportunity to meet many of our San Carlos Branch patrons. He is awesome! If you haven't yet met Ege, please stop by and share with him your ideas for programs you would like to see offered at our branch. Friday SCFOL Members-Only Pre-Book Sales from 2 — 4 p.m. and our First Saturday Used Book Sales from 9:30 a.m. — 3 p.m. are good times to catch Ege or youth services librarian Erin Moore. The next book sales are March 4 and 5.

## Black History Month

February is a busy month. We welcome in the Chinese New Year — the Year of the Monkey; celebrate Heart Month and Valentine's Day; and enjoy a four-day Presidents Day weekend. Now we invite you to join us in honoring Black History Month with a special event that the whole family can enjoy: the music of Slap Jazz Danny on Saturday, Feb. 27 from 1 — 2 p.m. Danny Barber is a master representative of traditional Hambone, an African-American rhythm technique that uses the whole body as a "drum set." See how this ancient art form is being preserved for today's audiences and learn about Hambone's historical origins. Barber will also play the jaw-harp and box-drum. Feel the rhythm!



"Lighthouses of San Diego" authors Kim Fahlen and Karen Scanlon (Courtesy of San Carlos Friends of the Library)

## New youth programs

Please note: Starting on March 2, our Wednesday after-school special events for ages 5-9 (K-4) will run from 2:30 — 3:30 p.m. instead of starting at 2 p.m. Odd-week Wednesdays focus on stories and creative arts while the even weeks focus on stories and science (STEAM). Starting on March 9, from 4 — 5 p.m., we have a new science program for ages 8 and up presented by Challenge Island. This group encourages kids to take on exciting challenges that promote creativity, critical thinking and social skills while instilling a love of science and engineering. March's topic is "Roller Coaster Ridge." Kids will design a roller coaster using household items, learn about the physics of roller coasters, and send marbles down the roller coasters to fly as far as they can. Space is limited. Call or come in to sign up. All storytimes, kids' yoga, learn to play chess, and process art programs continue at their regularly scheduled times. Go to sancarlos-friendsofthelibrary.org for more information.

## Artists

Meet Del Cerro artist Tina Fries-Miller at her reception in the Winer Family Community Room & Art Gallery on Saturday, Feb. 20 from noon — 2 p.m.

# COMMUNITY

a project." They work to nurture originality and confidence in every student. The ArtReach artist reception will be held on March 19 from noon — 2 p.m. As you enjoy the students' art, ArtReach artist/teachers will be available to explain the program and how you can start this K-6 after school program at your school.

## OASIS

On March 18 from 1 — 3 p.m., master storyteller Marilyn McPhie will entertain us with "Celtic Tales: Love, War and Much More." This is a free event. Please sign up at the library.

## Authors/speakers

Kim Fahlen and Karen Scanlon will speak on Friday, Feb. 26 at 2 p.m. They have co-authored the book, "Lighthouses of San Diego." These identical twin sisters volunteer at the Cabrillo National Monument tending its lighthouse lenses. Yes, these ladies "do windows." They will be giving us a look at some of the behind the scenes activities and not-so-well-known tales about the history of San Diego lighthouses, the men and their families who maintained them, and what it took to keep the beacons shining. They also have some great pictures to share of the Point Loma and other lighthouses. These ladies are great speakers and should not be missed.

For March 10 from 12:30 — 2 p.m., our book club will be reading "Go Set a Watchman" by Harper Lee, author of "To Kill a Mocking Bird." Copies are available at the library.

## Adult fun

Our adult exercise lineup includes Monday Tai Chi at 9:30 a.m., Tuesday Chair Yoga at 2:30 p.m. and Saturday Meditation at 9:30 a.m. Craft Circle continues on Mondays from 1 — 5 p.m.; Spanish Conversation Café on Wednesdays from noon — 2 p.m.; eReader Clinics on Thursdays from 10 — 11 a.m.; and English Conversation Café on Thursdays from 2 — 4 p.m.

## In memoriam

On Jan. 9, I lost a great friend and the San Carlos community lost a great lady, teacher and volunteer with the passing of Sally Kotnik. Since 1965, Sally and her husband Dave made their home and raised their four children in San Carlos. Multi-talented, Kotnik was a Life Member of San Carlos Friends of the Library; taught college-level calculus for 41 years at PHHS; was a trial guide at Mission Trails Regional Park; a Girl and Boy Scout leader; PTA and sport team volunteer; chairwoman of the American Association of University Women-UCSD Tech Trek science camp for eighth-grade girls; and a member of Bell Choir at San Carlos United Methodist Church. Kotnik's love of learning and enthusiasm for life will be missed by all who knew her.

—Sue Hotz is board member and publicity chair for the San Carlos Friends of the Library. Write to her at [publicity@sancarlosfriendsofthelibrary.org](mailto:publicity@sancarlosfriendsofthelibrary.org).■

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# Nature beckons at Mission Trails Regional Park

Audrey F. Baker  
Trail Guide

As Mission Trails Regional Park transitions into spring, the search is on for early-blooming favorites. Some evoke long-cherished memories. Others represent new finds. All exhibit variation as colorful as a painter's palette.

Sticky Monkey Flower makes its statement. Its trumpet-shaped florals cleverly house nectar guidelines to assist its pollinators. Resinous leaves and a lipped corolla bearing the face of a smiling monkey define its name.

Rivaling the Monkey's show, California Sun Cups, with arrowhead-shaped leaves, and sunshine petals dabbled with red markers at their base add to the celebration of color.

The slender arced branches, puckered leaves and compact flowers of Winter Currant demonstrate the benefits of winter's rains.

Bicolor Everlasting, with dense, papery-scaled flower clusters, stands prepared for visiting American Painted Lady butterflies.

In delicate contrast, Nuttall's Snapdragon offers diminutive, short-lived lavender-blue presentations that feature a handy platform for bees to land upon.

Discover our smart and colorful plants!



Sticky Monkey (top) and California Sun Cup bloom in Mission Trails Regional Park. (Photos by Audrey F. Baker and J.D. Swanstrom)

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

Morning walks are offered every Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday, from 9:30 — 11 a.m. You'll start from the park's Visitor and Interpretive Center, 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos. The walk beginning from the Kumeyaay Lake Campground Entry Station, 2 Father Junipero Serra Trail, at the San Carlos-Santee border, gives a different

perspective of the park and its diverse habitats. These walks are offered from 8:30 — 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month and take in historic Old Mission Dam. We meet by the flag poles.

Wildlife Tracking reveals the presence of lesser-seen animals inhabiting the park. MTRP Tracking Team Guides identify, examine and interpret critter evidence and bring insight into their survival techniques and habits. Join us at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 5 in front of the Visitor Center for a two-hour tracking adventure.

Discovery Table: Animal Tracks presented by MTRP Trail Guides combines hands-on-science fun with learning about local wildlife by examining paw prints. You'll learn to identify "the baby's hand," the top predator of chaparral and more. See you Saturday, March 12 at 10 a.m. — 1 p.m. inside the Visitor Center.

Star Party Marvels is a sparkling evening of solar exploration with MTRP Resident Star Gazer George Varga. We'll be focusing on the Little Beehive Cluster (M44), Open Clusters in Auriga (M36-38), the Crab Nebula (M1) which is a remnant of a supernova explosion, and more! Saturday, March 12, from 6 — 9 p.m. (Rain/cloud cover cancel.) Meet at the far end of the

Kumeyaay Campground Day Use Parking Lot.

La Mesa Walk 'n Talk invites you to experience early spring at Lake Murray. After a brief discussion on plants presented by MTRP Trail Guides, were off to share in the invigorating effect of new growth on birds, animals and pollinators. On Tuesday, March 15 join us from 9 — 10:30 a.m. We start from the boat docks, Lake Murray, 5540 Kiowa Drive, La Mesa.

Bird Lake Murray with MTRP Birding Guides Jeanne Raimond and Millie Basden and observe the antics of migratory and local species. Binoculars and bird book are recommended. See you Saturday, March 19, 8 — 10 a.m. on the north side of the lake at Murray Park Drive and Belle Glade Ave. Park in dirt lot by baseball fields.

Birding Basics enhances your nature experience by identifying birds "at a glance!" MTRP Bird Guide Winona Sollock's class explains five simple techniques and gives tips on field guide use. Bring yours along if you like. Join us Saturday, March 26 from 1 — 2:30 p.m. inside the Visitor Center, Classroom A.

Family Discovery Walk examines the magic of spring in nature as a family experience. Our interactive outing for parents and their children focuses on memorable moments in nature, fun and childhood enrichment as we explore spring-time regeneration. Meet inside the Visitor Center on Sunday, March 27, 3 — 4:30 p.m.

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

—Audrey F. Baker is a trail guide at Mission Trails Regional Park. Reach her at [aud1baker@gmail.com](mailto:aud1baker@gmail.com). ■





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# SDSU profs bring Broadway to create 'Broadway West'

Tori Hahn

SDCNN Intern

For 14 years, Stephen Brotebeck lived the musical theater dream – directing and choreographing on Broadway and around the country.

His career has taken him from performing on cruise ships around the world to teaching theater to elementary school children in China. Now, the Michigan-born theater professional has settled in to San Diego to teach at San Diego State University.

“When this position became available and it was teaching graduate students, which I love ... It seemed like a no-brainer sort of situation,” he said.

Brotebeck joined the SDSU Master of Fine Arts Musical Theatre Program in the fall of last year, making him the second professor in the department with a background in Broadway. The esteemed SDSU program is only one of a few MFA Musical Theatre programs for graduate students in the nation.

Brotebeck’s resume is stacked with accomplishments, including working as movement associate on the Tony Award-winning “Peter and the Starcatcher” and as assistant director of “Ghost the Musical,” both of which were performed on Broadway. He was also nominated for a 2015 Wilde Award for his choreography and directing in “And the World Goes ‘Round.”

He is excited to carry on the legacy of SDSU’s program in what he describes as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in San Diego, which many call “Broadway West.”

“It’s sort of an embarrassment of riches I feel like we have in San Diego,” he said. “The high-quality professional theater that is here for a city of this size is really outstanding.”

Brotebeck works with both graduate and undergraduate students in SDSU’s musical theater department. He prepares his undergraduates for the professional world with audition techniques, how to find the right jobs, capturing headshots and perfecting resumes. In his MFA musical theatre studio course, he works with graduate students on coaching each other to get practical training in the class.

He encourages his students to be disciplined and most importantly to “stay true to yourself” in an industry where many can get lost.

In addition to teaching, Brotebeck continues his theater career by choreographing shows professionally across the nation. Throughout the semester he finds the time – and the coverage for his classes – to travel and work.

“I’ve always been an avid traveler,” he said. “That’s why it doesn’t bother me that I travel a lot for work, because I love to do it.”

Currently, Brotebeck is collaborating with writers in New York and planning to visit District of



Stephen Brotebeck (top) and Rob Meffe come to SDSU via Broadway in New York. (Courtesy of SDSU)

Columbia in the spring and Iowa and Michigan in the summer, all to work on various shows.

Brotebeck followed a similar path to Rob Meffe, who also left New York and Broadway to teach at SDSU. Meffe now works his “dream job” as a professor and head of the MFA Musical Theatre Program.

Brotebeck and Meffe had never met before teaching at SDSU, but discovered they were neighbors for three years in New York without ever knowing it. The two now work closely together on the program’s spring play, “The Drowsy Chaperone,” in which Brotebeck is director and choreographer and Meffe is musical director.

As a musical director and pianist in New York, Meffe conducted nine different Broadway shows and contributed to several national tours and regional theaters. On Broadway, he was the associate conductor for “Little Women” and for six years of “Les Misérables.”

Meffe worked hard to earn his master’s degree early in his career so he could ultimately come back and teach as a musical theater professor.

“I wanted to be the kind of professor that taught only because they were out there doing it, rather than having read a book

about it and then reporting on the research,” he said.

Meffe loves working with his graduate students, whom he admires for having great passion for theater. He takes pride in the camaraderie of the program, in which the graduate students and the undergraduate students often work together.

In his free time, Meffe takes his passion outdoors. He often camps with his 8-year-old daughter and discovers new hikes when he isn’t teaching or working in local theaters.

“I was the guy who sat in the pit of ‘Phantom of the Opera,’ in all black, with smoke pouring into the pit, and then I was reading Outside Magazine about what hike I was going to go on,” he said.

After 20 years on Broadway and three years teaching at SDSU, Meffe’s next move is retirement.

“You ever feel like you’re at the right place at the right time? That’s how I feel here at San Diego State,” he said.

The SDSU Musical Theatre Program’s production of “The Drowsy Chaperone” will show March 4-13 in the Don Powell Theatre on SDSU’s campus.

—Tori Hahn is an editorial intern for SDCNN. Write to her at torihahn@cox.net.■

## Awards, music and classes at MTRP

Jay Wilson



Each February, awards are given to the top volunteers for the previous year. Those honored for 2015 are:

- **Trail Restoration:** Roy DeRego
- **Habitat Restoration:** Chad MacDonald
- **Park Beautification:** Terry Gaughen
- **Park Patrol:** Marty Fink
- **Trail Guide:** Marcia Stoner
- **Gift Shop:** Gary Jensen
- **Visitor Center:** Silvie Plesim
- **Volunteer of the Year:** Robert Graham

Each winner received certificates of appreciation from the Park and Recreation Department, Councilmember Scott Sherman, state Sen. Joel Anderson, and U.S. Rep. Scott Peters, along with a \$50 gift certificate from the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation. Thank you to GR Catering and Olive Garden for the great food, and to Adventure-16, Lightspeed Outdoor, Windmill Farms, Cheers Deli & Liquor, Golden Bagel and Rita’s of Del Cerro for the door prizes.

“Volunteers are the life blood of the park,” Senior Ranger Andy Quinn said. “We could not accomplish all that we do without our dedicated volunteers.”

In the coming weeks, an outstanding array of music will be performed in the Visitor Center Theater at 3 p.m. Sundays. On Feb. 23, the Navy Band Southwest SeaBreeze Jazz Combo will perform. On March 6, Many Strings returns featuring the hammered dulcimer and guitar.

Naturalist Cindy Christ presents “Natures Tales and Trails.” For two hours, children ages 4 and up will blend art and science with guided nature walks and classroom activities to discover nature’s wonders. Check our website for information and registration forms. Classes are held with a minimum of five registered children. Each class is \$10

per child. Accompanying adults are free. The next classes are:

Creep, Crawl and Flutterby, Feb. 23: Insects are important to the web of life. Inspect the structure of an insect and arrange the various stages of an insect’s life cycle. Stroll the trails and enjoy a flutterby craft. Slithering Snakes and Rattletails, March 8: Cold blooded creatures slither the trails. Some of these snakes have rattling tails. Hike a trail and become aware of safe exploration practices. Craft a slithery snake as a reminder of snake safety.

Art Smarts classes are for for students ages 7 and up, and adults who are looking to experience a variety of media to explore and express their creative process while having fun investigating different techniques and approaches.

“We engage with the gorgeous landscape outside our doors for inspiration and at times subject matter,” artist and teacher BetteAnn said. Classes are held on Saturday afternoons from 1 — 4 p.m. The next classes are as follows: Painting Clouds in Acrylics, March 12: Leaning techniques for painting clouds is a wonderful way to be introduced to acrylic painting. Dogs and Puppies in Mixed Media, March 26: We will explore making portraits of dogs and puppies. You can even bring pictures of your own dog or puppy for this class.

The second Saturday of each month, from 10 a.m. — 1 p.m., Trail Guide Volunteers will have an interactive display in the Discovery Station in the Visitor Center lobby. On March 11, learn all about animal tracks.

Improve your mountain bike skills on the first Saturday of the month at different locations in Mission Trails Regional Park. Join ranger Araceli Dominguez for this fun and progressive beginner skills series of rides. On March 5 at 9 a.m., meet at the West Fortuna Staging Area dirt lot at the east end of Clairemont Mesa Blvd. Test your skills in this area of coastal sage with views of the ocean. We’ll ride steeper fire roads and singletrack. This will be a ride for advanced beginners. Be prepared for at least 10 miles of up and down riding.

Take a hike! The 5-Peak Challenge is going strong. Over 1,300 people are already registered as having completed the challenge.

—Jay Wilson is executive director of Mission Trails Regional Park. Reach him at jwilson@mtrp.org.■

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AREA WORSHIP DIRECTORY

**St. Andrew’s Lutheran** 8350 Lake Murray Blvd, La Mesa, CA 91941  
Sun: 8am, 9:30am, 11am; Sat: 5pm (619) 464-4211 Andy Taylor

**St. Dunstan’s Episcopal** 6556 Park Ridge Blvd, San Diego, CA 92120  
Sun: 8am, 10am; Wed: 10am, Thurs: 7am (619) 460-6442 Father Robert Eaton

**San Carlos United Methodist** 6554 Cowles Mountain Blvd, San Diego, CA 92119  
Sun: 8:30am, 10am (619) 464-4331 Martha T. Wingfield

**Community Church of San Diego** 7811 Mission Gorge Rd, San Diego, CA 9210 Sun: 9:30am. 1st Sun is Communion at 9:30am (619) 583-8200 John C. Clements

**Mission Valley Christian Fellowship** 6536 Estrella Ave, San Diego, CA 92120 Sun: 7:45am, 9:30am, 11:15am (619) 683-7729 Leo Giovineti

**Tabernacle Church & Kingdom House of Prayer** 5310 Prosperity Ln, San Diego, CA 92115 Sun: 6:30pm; Wed: 12pm worship at SDSU (619) 788-3934 Darren Hall

**Blessed Sacrament Church** 4540 El Cerrito Dr, San Diego, CA 92115 Sun: 8am, 10am, 6pm; Sat: 5pm (619) 582-5722 Bruce Orsborn

**All Peoples Church** 4345 54th St, San Diego, CA 92115 Sun: 9am and 11am (619) 286-3251 Robert Herber

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** 6767 51st Street, San Diego, CA 92120 (619) 287-3970

**Wesley United Methodist** 5380 El Cajon Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92115 Sun: Youth worship 11am; Sat: YAY at 7:30pm (619) 326-7202 Dr. Cuong Nguyen

**Mission Church of the Nazarene** 4750 Mission Gorge Pl, San Diego, CA 92120 Sun: 9am and 10:30am (619) 287-3211 Dr. David Runion

**Salvation Army Kroc Center Church** 6611 University Ave, San Diego, CA 92115 Sundays at 10:30am (619) 287-5762 Bryan Cook

**Prince of Peace Lutheran** 6801 Easton Court, San Diego, CA 92120 Sundays at 9am (619) 583-1436 Paul L. Willweber

**Zion Avenue Baptist** 4880 Zion Ave, San Diego, CA 92120 (619) 582-2033

**St. Therese Catholic Church** 6016 Camino Rico, San Diego, CA 92120 Sun: 7am, 9am, 11am; Mon: 6:20am, 7:30am; Sat: 5pm (619) 286-4605 Fr. Michael M. Pham

**Masjid al-Rribat** 7173 Saranac St., San Diego (619) 589-6200 Imam Mohamed Gebaly

**Temple Emanu-El** 6299 Capri Dr., San Diego 92120 Fridays 6:00 p.m., Saturdays 10:30 a.m. (619) 286-2555 Rabbi Devorah Marcus

**Holy Spirit Anglican Church** 6116 Arosta St., San Diego 92115 Sunday, 9:30 a.m. (619) 324-9171 Father David Montzingo

**Palisades Presbyterian Church** 6301 Birchwood St., San Diego 92120 Sunday 9:30 a.m. (619) 582-0852 Rev. Daniel Hagmaier

**Ascension Lutheran Church** 5106 Zion Ave., San Diego 92120 Sundays 9:15 a.m. (619) 582-2636 Interim Pastor Karin Boye

**Mission Trails Church** 4880 Zion Ave., San Diego 92120 9:00 am and 10:30 am Pastor Kyle Walters

**The Grove Church** 4562 Alvarado Cyn. Rd., San Diego 92120 Sundays 9:30 a.m. Pastor John Hoffman

**Tifereth Israel Synagogue** 6660 Cowles Mountain Blvd., San Diego 92119 (619) 697-1102 Rabbi Leonard Rosenthal

**Chabad of East County (Jewish)** jewishec.com (619) 647-7042 Rabbi Rafi Andrusier

**Del Cerro Baptist Church** 5512 Pennsylvania Lane, La Mesa, 91942 Sunday Traditional Service 8:30 a.m. Contemporary Service 11:00 a.m.(619) 460-2210 Web Site www.dcbc.org Pastor Dr. Mark S. Milwee

**Fletcher Hills Presbyterian Church** 455 Church Way, El Cajon 92020 8:30 a.m. 10:00 a.m. Rev. Dr. Kevin Womack

**Young Israel of San Diego** 7289 Navajo Road, San Diego, CA 92119 619-589-1447 Rabbi Chaim Hollander

**Lake Murray Community Church** 5777 Lake Murray Blvd., La Mesa, CA 91941 9:00 a.m. 10:50 a.m. Pastor Nathan Hogan

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Allied Gardens Benjamin Branch Library branch manager Kathryn Johnson  
(Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

# Library branch manager returns

Kathryn Johnson

I am so happy to return to the Allied Gardens/Benjamin Library, a branch of the San Diego Public Library. When I previously managed the branch, I enjoyed working with this wonderful community and am eager and excited to reacquaint myself with it. In the almost two years since I have been away, it seems quite a bit has changed. The little tots I once hosted in story times are now reading on their own, the middle school students who attended the weekly teen program are now in high school and worrying about college, but the Albertsons has disappeared!

As you may have noticed, several things have changed recently for the San Diego Public Library system, as well. We have increased our hours, our branch will be having some work done, and we are making a concerted effort to put together meaningful programming and services in response to patron needs. Some examples of such can be seen at the North Park Library where patrons can check out toys, or at the Central library where they will host a series of fix-it clinics (a program for patrons to get help from experts in fixing everything from clothes to toasters), and at the Tierrasanta library where they host an adult coloring program. In my opinion, libraries are becoming more dynamic, respon-

sive to community needs and outright fun!

Contrary to this, I do occasionally hear from people who are surprised that libraries still exist. Many times people think that because of electronic books and easy access to the Internet, there is no longer a need for libraries. To these people I would like to point out that ebooks and Internet are just a small portion of what we offer. Even some of our most diehard patrons might be surprised to learn that, with your library card, you can: learn beginning Urdu or 29 other languages; get help with preparing for tests such as the SAT, GED and ASVAB; build a resume; get online homework help from a tutor; read New York Times articles from 1851-2010 or take an online course in using humor to increase your popularity.

As I get out into the community over these next few weeks, I ask that you feel free to send along any suggestions or ideas you may have. I welcome everyone's input so that we can make your library what you would like it to be. (Oh, I did hear a lot of folks asking for the return of Baby Story Time so keep an eye out for our April calendar.)

That being said, please note that we will be closing temporarily to have a new ADA compliant and ergonomic circulation desk installed as well as some new flooring. We will be closed on March 1 and reopen April 11. Thank you for your patience and understanding during our transition and we look forward to seeing you at your new and improved library.

—Kathryn Johnson is managing librarian at the Allied Gardens/Benjamin Library. Reach her at johnsonKA@sandiego.gov.■

## PUZZLES

ANSWERS ON PAGE 22

### CROSSWORD From the Neck Up

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

#### ACROSS

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- Weill/Brecht opus, with The
- Ten or pen followers
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- Certain Chopin works
- Velocity
- Deed: Sp.
- His cookies are famous!
- Fine fiddle
- Cornettist Red Nichols' story
- Antofagasta announcement
- Small-stakes school
- Di Laurentis, and namesakes
- "... we forget . . ."
- Laundry
- Line from Lod
- the ocean

- Violinist Oliveira
- Suitable
- Garde starter
- Somerset Maugham tale, with The
- Deviate
- Oyster, for example
- EC member
- Functional or peptic beginning
- Modern sculptor Jacob
- Palm Sunday mount

#### DOWN

- Roastee's place
- Let go
- Send a different way
- Canadian flyers
- Jungfrau or Eiger
- Great Barrier, e.g.
- Pretoria specie
- Sicilian resort
- FAO Schwartz product
- Theater sign message: pl.
- Get ready
- Roman kindness
- Dug
- "... the ... the beginning": Churchill
- Quebecois
- London theater or cabbage
- Musically, this can be heavy
- Have a view
- Shiites and Shakers
- ! crackle! pop!
- London's ... of Court
- Negatives from Nikita: var.
- Hold up to ridicule
- Charms
- Pitcher Ryan
- Branch or oil
- Shaba, once
- Displays
- Lessees
- Considered
- Von
- Broccoli
- Selling letters
- Early college entrance exam.
- Bathroom wall-covering, often
- Chill
- Sweet age, in old Roma?

## 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.

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

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## News from the Allied Gardens-Grantville Community Council

Shain Haug

Our thanks to the Mission Times Courier for posting the articles by which the Allied Gardens-Grantville Community Council communicates with our neighborhood. As evidence of how important these articles are, in response to our January guest editorial we welcomed four new members to the AGGCC board of directors: Ryan Ruff, Colin Truex, David Peterson and Brian Pearson. Their talents will be much appreciated.

In our last posting, I addressed some of the events and activities that the Council supports such as the Summer First Friday Concerts at the Park and the holiday lights on the flyover bridge. More on those matters in due course, but this month I will give you a more complete look at the Holiday Festival.

For 18 years, the Council and the Grantville-Allied Gardens Kiwanis Club have supported Bette Torre in her production of the Holiday Festival. On the Friday evening at the end of the second week of December, the festival brings children from Foster and Marvin elementary schools, their families, and members of the community to Lewis Middle School for choral presentations by the children from those schools; for dramatic Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanza readings; and for a raffle of Barnes and Noble gift certificates for the elementary students. These activities are accompanied by and centered around a concert performance by the Lewis Middle School Orchestra. The concert is followed by a reception at

the school cafeteria where the orchestra members can meet the community.

The Holiday Festival is a great chance for our families to begin their celebration of the holidays, but Bette has given the festival a deeper purpose and a more important meaning: the opportunity for the youngsters from Marvin and Foster to see the Lewis Middle School orchestra members, all decked out in formal dress, with nothing more on the minds of the young musicians than the performance of beautiful music. The most important function of the festival is the opportunity for orchestra members to encourage the elementary students to join the Lewis music program and to make music a fundamental part of their lives.

Our most sincere thanks to Bette for the festival and for her devotion to the welfare of our community.

Writing this monthly missive about the events of our community is a new experience for me and I am not at all sure where it will take us. I would love to hear from you with your ideas, events of note, and matters around the neighborhood that you think will be of interest — things that will not otherwise get to the mainstream media. Along with those matters to which you may direct me, I hope each month to talk a little about one of the privately-owned local businesses — restaurants, dry cleaners, convenience stores, and the like — that are so very important to our daily lives (and that are generally not much further away than a brisk walk).

—Shain Haug is vice president of the Allied Gardens-Grantville Community Council. Reach him at shainh\_2000@yahoo.com.■

## News from the San Carlos Area Council

John F. Pilch

The next meeting of the San Carlos Area Council (SCAC) is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2, at 6 p.m. in the Winer Family Community Room at the San Carlos Branch Library, 7265 Jackson Drive.

We spoke with our guest speaker and he agreed to address the SCAC on March 6. His identity will be revealed at the meeting, at the speaker's request. Hint: The speaker is quite familiar with one of the three jewels in San Carlos. Please plan to attend. We think you'll agree it will be educational and time well-spent. We will also have reports from the San Diego Police Department and Fire-Rescue as well as representatives of elected officials.

We welcome our new library manager, David Ege, who comes to us from the Serra Mesa branch, where he was the branch manager. If you visit the library, please take the time to welcome him to our neighborhood.

The Navajo Community Planners, Inc. (NCPI) board met Feb. 10 and unanimously (14-0) opposed the Verizon Wireless "architectural element" on the roof of the Masonic Lodge building. This would be the fourth site on that property, which has turned into an antenna farm for the carriers. Nearby residents are opposed to this site and voiced their opinion at this meeting and prevailed. The Masonic Lodge property owners were chided for the poor maintenance of the landscaping that was installed as part of the approval of the AT&T architectural element on the roof several years ago. Congratulations to the residents, who spoke in opposition, and a thanks to the NCPI board for their recommendation to oppose the application. More information and NCPI agendas are available online at navajoplanners.org.

We will continue to work the District 7 office to determine what can be done to make the intersection of Navajo Road, and Golfcrest safer for pedestrians. This follows a fatality in August, when a drunk driver ran a red light and struck and killed a female pedestrian, who was headed to the Cowles Mountain trail. A traffic study is continuing and more information will be reported as it's made known to us. In the interim, please be extra careful in this area. We'll await the results of the traffic study before making specific recommendations.

We pleased to report that the San Carlos Community Garden continues to flourish, in spite of the recent heat. If you're interested in raising your own plot of fruits and vegetables in this garden, please visit their website at sancarloscommunitygarden.com for details. The community garden is located at the corner of Lake Adlon and Boulder Lake Avenue, adjacent to Springall Academy, 6440 Boulder Lake Drive.

We have resumed the collection of dues, to become more actively involved in community events and activities. Dues are \$7 per household and \$15 for a business. We'd like previous members to return and are soliciting new members in this article. Please send your check to SCAC, P.O. Box 19246, San Diego, CA 92159-0246. Many thanks to those who have already sent in their checks.

For information about speakers, meeting reminders and agendas and other local news; if you have an issue you wish us to consider; or just have a question about the community, please contact me at 619-462-1408 or by e-mail at jfpilch@hotmail.com. Thank you.

—John F. Pilch is president of the San Carlos Area Council. Reach him at jfpilch@hotmail.com.■



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# News from Del Cerro Action Council



Jay Wilson

The Del Cerro Action Council quarterly meeting in January was lively as the program featured San Diego County Treasurer/Tax Collector Dan McAllister. His presentation was informative and entertaining, covering the duties of his job and how he and his staff serve the public.

McAllister provided an insightful overview of his department's responsibilities, how it operates, where our taxes go, and how his office is keeping pace with technology. He emphasized that more and more property owners are paying online. The department's website, sdtreastax.com, is full of helpful information. McAllister discussed how our tax bill document has been improved to make it easier to read and understand. Many of the improvements have come from taxpayers' suggestions.

We also had the pleasure of meeting David Ege, the new, enthusiastic and energetic branch manager of the San Carlos Library. Ege is interested in hearing from everyone who uses the San Carlos Library to let him know what he can do to improve the library. He is already contributing to the New San Carlos Library Committee.

Yes, there is a New San Carlos Library Committee. City staff is waiting on a report from the county which, it is hoped, will give a clean bill of environmental health to the property on the corner of Golfcrest and Jackson Drive. The city has signed a contract with Domus Studio Architects to begin working on the final design of the new library.

We were pleased to have a strong contingent from the Eastern Division Police Department, with Capt. Bernie Colon, Lt. Mike Swanson, and our Police Community Relations Officer, Adam McElroy, in attendance.

"We have a fulltime Quality of Life Team that will be dealing with transients and all quality-of-life crimes. The team will also be active in the Adobe Falls area," Lt. Swanson said. "The team will be going out into the community. Keep us in the loop regarding community concerns. We need intelligence on what is happening in your community that may be crime related. The team is comprised of two officers, who are primarily active in mornings. The two officers have been at Eastern Division for 10-12 years so they know your community."

Contact CRO Adam McElroy

at AMmelroy@pd.sandiego.gov or 858-495-7971 to report homeless activity.

Cpl. Mark Peterson, the Community Resource Officer for the SDSU Police Department, and Nicole Borunda, the Community Relations Manager for SDSU, addressed the DCAC regarding the ongoing issue of Adobe Falls and the negative impact that increased activity at Adobe Falls is having on the residents adjacent to the area. Borunda emphasized that she is working with the neighbors adjacent to Mill Peak to fence off the area to deter anyone entering Adobe Falls from that location.

Mark Rawlins, chair of DCAC, commented that he is interested in discussing a maintenance-assessment district (MAD) and will provide an update on this matter at the April 28 meeting of the DCAC. If you are interested in helping, contact Mark by posting an item on the DCAC website: delcerroactioncouncil.org.

Del Cerro resident David Morrison commented on Neighborhoods for Clean Elections, a group working to promote public funding for local candidates. For more information, go to sdcleanelections.com.

Sharmaine Moseley, executive director of the San Diego Police Citizens Review Board, will be our guest speaker for the April 28 Del Cerro Action Council. At police Capt. Colon's Eastern Division Community Advisory Committee meeting, Moseley made an impressive presentation. The purpose of the board is to review and evaluate complaints brought by members of the public against SDPD officers, and to review and evaluate the administration of discipline arising from sustained complaints. The board also reviews and evaluates officer-involved shootings, all in-custody deaths, and all police actions that result in the death of a person. Because of the significance of this board, Councilmember Scott Sherman will also be inviting members of the Navajo community to attend.

—Jay Wilson is secretary of the Del Cerro Action Council. Reach him at jwilson@mtrp.org.■

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FEATURED EVENTS

**MAR 16** **'Soup Suppers'**  
Wednesdays through March 16

On Wednesdays during Lent, Ascension Lutheran Church (5106 Zion Ave., Allied Gardens) will host a "Soup Supper" at 6:15 p.m. providing "a time to be together in the presence of God." All are invited to sing, reflect on and discuss Scripture, and then pray together for each other and for the needs of the church and the world. Call 619-582-2636 for more information.

**FEB 20** **Fire Station 45 open house**  
Saturday, Feb. 20

This family-friendly event at the new Mission Valley Fire Station (9366 Friars Road) will be held from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. There will be tours of the station, free medical training from Project Heart Beat, an appearance by Sparky the Fire Dog, inflatable play structures, catering by Lynx Grill and more. RSVP to wkinser@sandiego.gov or 619-236-6760.

**FEB 20** **'Creating a fairy garden' class**  
Saturday, Feb. 20

For this free gardening class, Armstrong Garden Centers will teach you how to make a "small fantasy world" using miniature plants and figurines. The Mission Valley/Grantville store is located at 10320 Friars Road; there are several other San Diego Armstrong locations. This session starts at 9 a.m. Visit ArmstrongGarden.com for more information.

**FEB 24** **'Making Your Wishes Known' seminar**  
Wednesday, Feb. 24

This free program will be held at Grossmont Healthcare District's Dr. William C. Herrick Community Health Library (9001 Wakarusa St., La Mesa) from 10 - 11 a.m. This is part of the library's "Wellness Wednesday" series typically held the fourth Wednesday of every month. The speaker for this event will be Sharp HealthCare Advance Care Planning Department business development specialist Janine Lortscher. She will discuss advance care planning, future healthcare planning and tips and tools to receive the medical care you want. An advance health care directive will be reviewed along with a POLST (Physicians Order for Life Sustaining Treatment) form. Visit herricklibrary.org for more information.

**FEB 25** **'Fascinating facts about our Presidents'**  
Thursday, Feb. 25

Author, radio personality and wordsmith Richard Dederer will lead this talk about U.S.



(Photo by Ken Jaques, courtesy of SDSU)

**MAR 4 - MAR 13** **'The Drowsy Chaperone'**  
Friday, March 4 - Sunday, March 13

A Tony Award-winning musical in which an eccentric musical theater lover guides you back in time to the 1920s on the uproarious wedding day of a glamorous bride. The musical will be performed at SDSU's Don Powell Theatre, located at 5500 Campanile Drive on campus. Performance times vary. Tickets are \$17 for general admission, \$15 for students. Visit theatre.sdsu.edu.

Presidents at the College Avenue Center (6299 Capri Drive, Del Cerro). The event will be at 12:45 p.m. Visit jfssd.org/cac for more information.

**FEB 27** **Organic gardening for beginners class**  
Saturday, Feb. 27

For this free gardening class, Armstrong Garden Centers will teach you about starting your own organic garden. The focus will be on building soil health and problem solving using organic products and techniques. The Mission Valley/Grantville store is located at 10320 Friars Road; there are several other San Diego Armstrong locations. This session starts at 9 a.m. Visit ArmstrongGarden.com for more information.

**MAR 7** **'Smartphones: Which One Should You Buy?' class**  
Monday, March 7

This class at College Avenue Center (6299 Capri Drive, Del Cerro) will help you decide which smartphone to buy and why. It will explore the pros and cons of different plans and new phones. With this class, you can find the perfect phone and phone plan. Class is from 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. Visit jfssd.org/cac for more information.

RECURRING EVENTS

**Mondays:**  
**Rock Star Karaoke with Jae:** 9 p.m. Let your inner rock star shine. Pal Joey's, 5147 Waring Road, Allied Gardens. Paljoeysonline.com.

**Tuesdays:**  
**Feeling Fit Club:** 8:30-9:30 a.m., free class for seniors 60 years and older to improve balance, strength and flexibility. Cohen Social Hall at Tifereth Israel Synagogue, 6660 Cowles Mountain Blvd., San Carlos. Tiferethisrael.com.

**Brilliant Babies Storytime:** Noon, recommended for pre-walkers. Allied Gardens/Benjamin Branch Library, 5188 Zion Ave., Allied Gardens.

**Chair Yoga:** 2:30-3:30 p.m., free class where yoga stretches are performed sitting on a chair. No mats needed. San Carlos Branch Library, 7265 Jackson Drive, San Carlos. Sancarlosfrie

ndsofthelibrary.org.  
**Mission Valley Persuasive Speakers meeting:** 6:30-8 p.m., toastmasters club weekly meetings. 4444 Zion Ave., Grantville. Visit 701611.toastmastersclub.org.

**Wednesdays:**  
**Silver Sneakers yoga:** 9:30 a.m. (starting March 2), free class for all levels and abilities. Bring water, wear comfortable clothes, no mat required. Tifereth Israel Synagogue, 6660 Cowles Mountain Blvd., San Carlos. Email byomyoga@gmail.com.

**Feeling Fit Club:** 1-2 p.m., free class for seniors 60 years and older to improve balance, strength and flexibility. Wesley United Methodist Church, 5380 El Cajon Blvd., College Area. Call 858-495-5500 ext. 3.

**Locals Night:** 3-8 p.m., residents of ZIP codes 92120, 92115, 92116, 92123 and 92108 are eligible for \$2 pours of the brewery's "beer of the day." Benchmark Brewing, 6190 Fairmount Ave., Suite G, Grantville. Benchmarkbrewing.com.

**Game Night:** 6-9:30 p.m., bring your own or play what's available while enjoying traditional and vegan donuts. Donut Panic, 6171 Mission Gorge Road #113, Grantville. Facebook.com/DonutpanicSD.

**Thursdays:**  
**Karaoke:** 9 p.m., hosted by Erica at your favorite neighborhood haunt. Pal Joey's, 5147 Waring Road, Allied Gardens. Paljoeysonline.com.

**Fridays:**  
**Curbside Bites:** 5-9 p.m., gathering of gourmet food trucks at Westfield Mission Valley mall, 1640 Camino Del Rio N., Mission Valley. Curbsidebites.com.

**Saturdays:**  
**Lake Murray walking trail:** 8:30 a.m., led by the Widows or Widowers (WOW) Club of San Diego. Call for directions to the meeting locations. 619-448-6088 or wowsd.org.

**Sundays:**  
**Karaoke:** 9 p.m., karaoke to close out your weekend. Camel's Breath Inn, 10330 Friars Road Suite 106, Grantville. Camelsbreathinnsd.com.

—Want to see your event listed on our community calendar? Send event details to jeff@sdccn.com.■

MUSIC NOTES

**FEB 24** **'Jazz Kitchen'**  
Wednesday, Feb. 24

Musical performance led by Grossmont College's Music Department chair Derek Cannon. "Jazz Kitchen" features jazz studies student performers. Performance will be during lunchtime at the Griffin Center at Grossmont College, located at 8800 Grossmont College Drive in El Cajon, bordering La Mesa. Visit grossmont.edu.

**FEB 28** **Point Loma Singers concert**  
Sunday, Feb. 28

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

**MAR 6** **Many Strings concert**  
Sunday, March 6

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

STAGE CUES

**MAR 10 - MAR 12** **'Lucky Stiff'**  
Thursday, March 10 - Saturday March 12; and  
**MAR 17 - MAR 19** Thursday, March 17 - Saturday, March 19

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

ON FILM

**FEB 23** **'Daisy Bates: The First Lady of Little Rock'**  
Tuesday, Feb. 23

This screening and discussion in honor of Black History Month will be led by Grossmont College history professor Adisa Alkebulan. The film tells the story of Daisy Bates, a forgotten civil-rights leader who helped organize the integration of nine black students into Central High School. The screening will start at 4:30 p.m. at the Griffin Center at Grossmont College, located at 8800 Grossmont College Drive in El Cajon, bordering La Mesa. Visit grossmont.edu.

**MAR 4** **Film Forum screening of 'The Lady Vanishes'**  
Monday, March 4

Ralph De Laurio hosts these monthly film presentations. This edition features "The Lady Vanishes" starring Margaret Lockwood and Michael Redgrave. The film from 1938 is 96 minutes long. The event is from 1 - 3 p.m. at College Avenue Center, located at 6299 Capri Drive in Del Cerro. Visit jfssd.org/cac.



GALLERY VIEW

**MAR 3** **'Contemporary Crafts'**  
Through Thursday, March 3

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

SUDOKU & CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FROM P. 19

9	6	5	1	2	7	4	8	3
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3	5	2	8	1	6	7	4	9
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► CalEITC, from page 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"This tax season, nearly \$600 million is available between the state and federal EITCs for San Diego's working families," Assemblymember Shirley Weber said in a press release. "That's an

estimated 50,000 filers who are eligible for CalEITC in San Diego County, benefiting up to 120,000 people."

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

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

The neighborhoods covered by the Mission Times Courier have comparatively better earnings than other parts of the county, but there are still hundreds of filers that qualify for the CalEITC and thousands who qualify for the federal program. In the 92120 ZIP code, which covers Allied Gardens, Del Cerro and part of Grantville, the CalEITC4Me Campaign esti-

mates that between 200 and 299 people qualify for the state credit and approximately 1,130 qualify for the federal. In

92124, which covers Tierrasanta and part of Grantville, an estimated 100 to 199 people qualify for the state and 2,015 for the federal. In 92108, Mission Valley and Grantville, an estimated 300 to 399 qualify for state and 1,990 for federal. And in 92119, San Carlos, an estimated 100 to 199 qualify for state and 985 for federal credits.

For a more detailed examination of where potential EITC filers live, visit the CalEITC4Me Campaign's heat map at [caleitc4me.org/caleitc-heatmap/](http://caleitc4me.org/caleitc-heatmap/).

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

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

According to the IRS, VITA generally helps people who make less than \$53,000 annu-

ally, people with disabilities, the elderly, and people with limited English. All volunteers are IRS-certified and provide basic income tax preparation and help with electronic filing.

Other requirements for VITA eligibility are:

- You must have a valid Social Security Number (SSN)
- You cannot file separately if you are married
- You must have been a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year
- You cannot file Form 2555 or Form 2555-EZ
- Your investment income must be \$3,400 or less
- You must have earned income. If you have a qualified child, you must meet the relationship, age, residency, and joint return tests
- Qualifying children cannot be used by more than one person to claim the EITC
- If you do not have a qualifying child you: must be at least age 25 but under age 65; cannot be the dependent of another person; cannot be the qualifying child of another person; and must have lived in the U.S. more than half of the year.

For those whose incomes qualify for VITA, reserving a spot online is recommended. Each VITA location will have its own website or phone number where reservations can be made. If you are unable to reserve a time, walk-ins are welcome but times vary at each site.

Filers must also bring the following to the VITA appointment:

- Proof of identification — pic-

ture ID

- Social Security Cards for you, your spouse and dependents, or a Social Security Number (SSN) verification letter issued by the Social Security Administration or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) assignment letter for you, your spouse and dependents
  - Proof of foreign status, if applying for an ITIN
  - Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents on the tax return
  - Wage and earning statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, 1099-Misc from all employers
  - Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
  - A copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
  - Proof of bank account routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit, such as a blank check
  - Total paid to a daycare provider and the provider's tax identifying number (their SSN or the provider's business Employer Identification Number)
  - Forms 1095-A, B or C, affordable health care statements
  - To file taxes electronically on a married-filing-joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms
- For a complete list of VITA sites throughout San Diego County, use the Tax Prep Finder Tool at [caleitc4me.org/get-it/](http://caleitc4me.org/get-it/).

—Write to Jeff Clemetson at [jeff@sdenn.com](mailto:jeff@sdenn.com).■



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## Is it Time to Replace Your Water Heater?

A water heater is one of those home-appliances that many of us take for granted – until something goes wrong. From taking showers to cleaning loads of laundry, we rely on our water heaters to help us with crucial tasks and conveniences every day. Review the following questions to help determine if it may be time to replace your water heater. **When in doubt, call your Ideal Service Experts! (619) 583-7963**

### How Old is your Tank?

You can find the age of your water heater by searching for the manufacturer's sticker on the water heater, and writing down the serial number. Most water heater manufacturer websites have a reference to help decode your serial number to determine the age of the tank. In general, manufacturers recommend anyone with a water heater more than ten years old should consider replacing it.

### How Does the Water Look & Sound?

As time passes, you may begin to notice a strange discoloration within your water, or hot water that appears to be particularly "rusty" in smell and hue. Though rusty water isn't always an indication that your water heater is failing, it can be a sign that the tank could begin to leak soon. If you hear creaking, banging, or knocking - you may need your water heater inspected. Most of the time, these noise related issues are a result of sediment build up in the tank. As the scale comes in contact with the heating source it creates noise.

### Is there Evidence of Leaking?

If you begin to notice water around your tank, then chances are you're dealing with a small pinhole leak in the tank. Unfortunately, there isn't any simple way to fix a leaking hot water tank, meaning that your only solution will be to replace it as quickly as possible in order to avoid the threat of flooding. Before replacing your water heater, you'll want a professional to check that there are no other leaks coming from fittings or connections to the tank.

## A Few Key Elements in a Water Heater Installation

### Water Heater Drain Pan & Pressure Relief Drain Line:

Damage from a leaky water heater can cause significant additional expenses when you have to address wet walls or even dry out the structure. Protect your property with a water heater drain pan and pressure relief drain lines, both of which should be ran to the exterior whenever possible.

### Gas Shut Off and Gas Flex Connection:

Shut off should be a new, easy turn ball valve style with yellow coated stainless steel flex line.

### Water Shut Off Valve:

While you may have a working valve now, we always replace the shut off valve because 10 years from now, you will want a working valve. Many times we see original valves and they don't work because they are so old and corroded.

### Hard Piping:

Ideal does not recommend flexible connections on water lines, as they often times leak, causing water damage to the water heater and/or surrounding area. Instead we use all brass unions and weld pipes together.



Installation by Ideal

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