



MISSION VALLEY News

Volume 9, Issue 8 Aug. 14 - Sept. 10, 2015

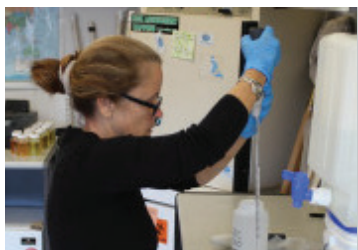
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Protecting our river



San Diego Coastkeeper advocates for clean water. **Page 3**

DINING & DRINKS

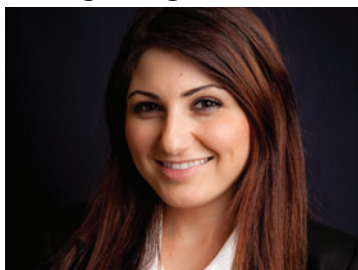
Some like it hot



Mr. Spicy restaurant lives up to its name. **Page 9**

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Making the right choice



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The Library and the homeless:

Finding common ground

Mission Valley Library has a number of patrons who are homeless. (Photo by Gina McGalliard)

Gina McGalliard

The Mission Valley Library is a public resource available to all people — including the homeless. But because of the unique needs of the homeless population, occasional friction has flared between the library's

staff, homeless patrons and other regular visitors.

Homeless people utilize the library for a variety of purposes, including using the restrooms and the public computers to look for employment or to keep in touch with family and friends. Also, the library is one of the few public spaces where the homeless feel welcome, officials say.

"We are inclusive of everybody who comes into the library," said Marion Hubbard, San Diego Library's senior public information officer who pointed out that it is not always obvious by someone's appearance if they are homeless.

"We serve all user groups,

See **LIBRARY** page 19

11 chosen by lottery to fill Community Plan Update seats

Ken Williams
Editor

Eleven people have been chosen by lottery to fill the remaining seats on a subcommittee that will help shape Mission Valley's future for the next 25 years.

The Community Plan Update Subcommittee will have its first meeting from 3 – 4:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 14 in the Community Room at the Mission Valley Library. The inaugural topic will focus on traffic concerns, subcommittee chair John Nugent said.

In the next 10 to 15 years, Mission Valley's population is expected to more than double in size. The Mission Valley Plan-

ning Group has been tasked by the City Council to update the Mission Valley Community Plan, a major undertaking to modernize the long-range land-use plan for the sprawling neighborhood that is home to

numerous hotels, major shopping centers and the aging Qualcomm Stadium. The City Council will eventually have the final say on the updated plan.

See **LOTTERY** page 18



Mission Valley News switches to direct-mail delivery

Ken Williams
Editor

For the first time in its history, Mission Valley News is being delivered by direct mail, starting with the August issue.

"Mission Valley News is now being mailed to every household and business in Mission Valley within the 92108 ZIP code," said David Mannis, publisher of the paper's parent company, San Diego Community Newspaper Network (SDCNN).

The monthly newspaper is delivered to local newsstands on the second Friday of the month, but Mannis said that most mailings and deliveries to homes and businesses will be received on Saturday or Monday.

Mission Valley News now has 17,000 copies delivered monthly by mail to every home and business, including many pickup points in high-traffic locations throughout the community. This includes news-

See **MAIL** page 14



FYI MARK YOUR CALENDARS

• **Mission Valley Planning Group** meets at noon on the first Wednesday of the month: Community Room, Mission Valley Library, 2123 Fenton Parkway. City staff will discuss the stadium environmental impact report.

• **Mission Valley Community Update Plan Subcommittee** meets at 3 p.m. on the second Friday of the month: Community Room, Mission Valley Library. Topic is traffic concerns.

SATURATION COVERAGE

Over 14,000 direct mail

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Kiehl's president Chris Salgado is leading LifeRide, a fundraiser that ends Aug. 15 at Fashion Valley Mall. (Courtesy of Kiehl's)

Riding for a cure for AIDS

Kiehl's LifeRide to benefit amfAR to end at Fashion Valley Mall

Catherine Spearnak

More than a dozen Harley-Davidson motorcycles will roar into Fashion Valley Mall at noon on Saturday, Aug. 15 when riders in Kiehl's LifeRide complete their sixth annual journey benefitting The Foundation for AIDS Research, or amfAR.

"Kiehl's has supported HIV/AIDS organizations since the

epidemic came to light, and we've had a long and wonderful relationship with amfAR," said Kiehl's president Chris Salgado, who is leading LifeRide. "At the conclusion of this year's ride, Kiehl's will have raised \$1.27 million for amfAR since 2010, funding seven cure-related research projects."

amfAR has just launched "Countdown to a Cure for AIDS," initiative, with the goal to find a cure by 2020.

"I know they'll be successful," Salgado said. "It's an incredible thing to be involved in research to find a cure, and we will ride until the cure is found."

Kiehl's was founded as an old-world apothecary in New York's East Village neighborhood, said Kate Smyth, a media representative for Kiehl's. It sells fine lotions and salves.

"Kiehl's represents a blend of cosmetic, pharmaceutical, herbal and medicinal knowledge developed and advanced through the generations," she said.

The event at Kiehl's in Fash-

ion Valley on Saturday will feature a chance to meet several celebrities who participated in the LifeRide including actors Vanessa Marcil ("90210" and "Las Vegas") and Gilles Marini ("Sex & The City" and "Brothers & Sisters"), and musician Chris Kael.

The 12-day ride for HIV/AIDS research began Aug. 4 in Denver, winding through Colorado, Utah, southern Nevada including Las Vegas, and Southern California. The Kiehl's stores in Santa Monica, Costa Mesa and in San Diego at University Towne Center were stopping spots during the ride.

"Kiehl's LifeRide for amfAR is about making noise to keep HIV/AIDS awareness in the forefront of the public consciousness. We make noise on our motorcycles, we make noise in the media, we make noise at our stores, all to ensure that the public is aware of amfAR's goals, and hopefully, to encourage them to contribute to those goals," Salgado said.

"This year, for the first time on LifeRide, we've launched a partnership with CrowdRise.com, so our supporters can easily donate to amfAR by visiting CrowdRise.com/LifeRide2015. At the end of this year's ride, Kiehl's alone will be donating \$150,000 to amfAR, and through CrowdRise, we hope to raise even more from our supporters. Every mile on these Harley-Davidsons is a mile closer to finding that cure."

The Kiehl's LifeRide event started in San Diego in 2010, and the sixth ride is ending on Harley-Davidsons in America's

Finest City, including a stop at San Diego Harley-Davidson on Morena Boulevard.

"Motorcycles have been part of Kiehl's history since our earliest days, when one of the Kiehl's founding family members displayed his personal motorcycle collection in the Kiehl's flagship store in New York's East Village," Salgado said. "Myself, I've been riding motorcycles since I was 13, and about seven years ago, we started talking about how we could take the motorcycles out of the stores, and put them to work in support of one of our charitable pillars. That's where Kiehl's LifeRide for amfAR began."

In celebration of LifeRide, every customer who visits one of these stores on the event day will receive a 15 percent discount on all purchases. Kiehl's will donate that 15 percent to amfAR.

Kiehl's customers nationwide can join the fight against HIV/AIDS through the purchase of Kiehl's Limited Edition Ultimate Strength Hand Salve, a jumbo-size of the brand's classic formula. One hundred percent of net profits from the sale of this product, up to \$25,000, will benefit amfAR. The Limited Edition Ultimate Strength Hand Salve is adorned with a red cap and will be available for \$28.50 at all Kiehl's retail stores, Kiehls.com and specialty store partners nationwide.

—Catherine Spearnak is a San Diego-based freelance writer. She can be reached at catherine.spearnak1@gmail.com. ■

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San Diego Coastkeeper celebrates 20 years of clean water advocacy

Jeremy Ogul
Contributing Editor

Mostly hidden behind condominiums and office buildings, especially through Mission Valley, the San Diego River gets little attention from most residents. But every month, a group of passionate volunteers spends a Saturday morning venturing out with scientific equipment to gather samples and measurements from the river.

The volunteers are part of San Diego Coastkeeper, a non-profit organization that uses the data to track the health of 11 of the county's 13 watersheds. Coastkeeper, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, shares its data with other non-profit organizations and government agencies in an effort to advocate for policy changes and infrastructure investments. The program is one of the most extensive water quality monitoring programs in the region.

In the San Diego River watershed, Coastkeeper volunteers collect data from two sites: one near Fashion Valley Mall and the other near the Old Mission Dam at Mission Trails Regional Park.

Once the data gets back to the laboratory at the organization's Liberty Station headquarters, another group of volunteers trained in laboratory research procedures processes the samples for later analysis. The samples are measured for nutrients,



(l to r) Bryanna Paulson, Dana Tomasevic and Vicki Conlon test the electrical conductivity of the river near Old Mission Dam. (Photo by Jeremy Ogul)

bacteria, nitrates, phosphorus, phosphates and turbidity.

The San Diego River watershed was one of two that saw a decline in water quality last year, according to Coastkeeper data. Researchers recorded a significant increase in nutrients, particularly phosphorus, which promotes algae growth. While it may seem harmless to humans, algae is problematic because it blocks sunlight, and when it dies, the bacteria that feast on it suck up the available oxygen in the water, suffocating fish and other forms of aquatic life.

Nutrient levels in the river are probably elevated because the drought has reduced the flow

of water that normally flushes the nutrients out to sea, said Meredith Meyer, Coastkeeper's lab coordinator.

Though we can't control the weather, we can control how much lawn fertilizer and detergent (think soap from home car washes) enters the watershed, Meyer said.

In June, the San Diego River watershed team consisted of three volunteers: Bryanna Paulson, an Encinitas resident who recently earned a degree in biology from St. Mary's College California; Dana Tomasevic, a Hillcrest resident and student at California Western School of Law; and Vicki Conlon, a Mis-

sion Bay resident who leads science workshops for kids at Jerabek Elementary School in Scripps Ranch.

After gathering supplies, the trio headed to Mission Trails. The long drive gave the volunteers some time to reflect on why they were doing this.

"My kids grew up surfing at the beach," Conlon said. "They were in the water constantly. I swim in the bay every day. I want clean water."

Conlon said she's old enough to remember when sewer spills were a common occurrence in San Diego.

"It's definitely improved, and I'm sure it's partly because of

Coastkeeper and organizations like them."

Coastkeeper volunteers discovered one of the largest sewage spills in San Diego history at the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon in 2011. Approximately 1.9 million gallons of sewage spilled into the lagoon before the spill was stopped.

More recently, when the county of San Diego discovered sewage leaking into the San Diego River near Interstate 15 in Mission Valley, county officials used Coastkeeper's data as a reference point to determine how much remediation was necessary.

The organization has about 400 active volunteers, of which 250 to 300 are trained to comply with state guidelines on water quality monitoring, said Kristin Kuhn, Coastkeeper's community engagement coordinator. The volunteers span a diverse range of identities, from high school students to professional marine biologists.

"An abnormally high percentage of our volunteers have some experience in science or research, but we get the occasional poet," Kuhn said.

The organization trains about 100 new water quality monitoring volunteers each year, and to date it has trained more than 1,000.

For information on how to get involved with Coastkeeper, visit sdcoastkeeper.org or call 619-758-7743.

—Write to Jeremy Ogul at jeremy@sdcnn.com.■



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Congressional Watch

Andy **Cohen**

Welcome to the August 2015 edition of the San Diego Congressional Watch. First, a bit of housekeeping: Last month I noted that Rep. Juan Vargas (D-51) skipped high profile, contentious votes on trade adjustment assistance (TAA) and trade promotion authority (TPA), a policy that once passed, frees President Obama to complete negotiations on the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), a free-trade pact between the United States and 11 other Pacific Rim nations.

As you will recall from last month's edition, TPA finally passed through some legislative maneuvering and a whole lot of cooperation between congressional Republicans and Obama.

Vargas, it turns out, was unable to participate in the vote, as he was attending his daughter's graduation.

"I remain firmly opposed to Trade Promotion Authority (TPA). Unfortunately, I was forced to miss the TPA vote today in order to attend my daughter's graduation ceremony, which was planned months in advance. From time to time my dual commitment as a father and member of Congress requires me to make hard choices."



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Rep. Juan Vargas, D-51

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vargas.house.gov

He gets a pass on this one. And congratulations to the Vargas family!

Vargas added his name last month to the list of members of Congress opposed to the Iran nuke deal negotiated by the Obama administration and representatives of England, France, Germany, Russia, and China.

"This deal is predicated on Iran's compliance. In exchange for phased and reversible sanctions relief — at approximately \$150 billion — the administration promised to cut off Iran's path to a nuclear bomb. Instead, this agreement gives Iran a rapid payday while legitimizing its path to nuclear-threshold status," Vargas wrote in an Op-Ed in the San Diego Union Tribune, echoing the arguments of his Republican colleagues who almost uniformly oppose any deal with Iran.

In early July, Congress passed the "21st Century Cures Act," a bill aimed at increasing funding to the National Institutes of Health for medical and scientific research, which has been grossly underfunded. According to an NBC News report, current NIH funding is 20 percent below what it was in 2003.

The bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, 344-77 in the House. Darrell Issa (R-49), was the lone 'no' vote among San Diego's five reps.

The bill is considered good news for San Diego's innovation economy.

Meanwhile, Issa cannot seem to let his crusade against the IRS

See **CONGRESS** page 5 —————>



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► Congress, from page 4

go, insisting that the targeting of Tea Party groups is still as rampant as ever. “This is becoming an old story,” Issa told Fox News’ Bill Hemmer, “and the president ... is actually trying to take back his words from 2013 when he admitted that it was illegal targeting. [Obama] wants to talk about how there is not enough money and blame a law passed before he was born that served us well, and from then until now, when it was suddenly broken.”

As the chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Issa oversaw several investigations into the IRS’ alleged targeting of conservative groups seeking tax-exempt status under the tax code. Although many of the groups received extra scrutiny, scant few applications were ever denied. Issa’s investigations failed to uncover any wrongdoing whatsoever, and failed to prove any connection between the White House and the IRS in any kind of cover up or scheme to target conservative groups. Despite a complete lack of evidence, Issa pushes on, insisting there’s a scandal there. Somewhere.

Issa may not have produced any results from the many investigations into the Obama Administration he oversaw between 2010, when he assumed the oversight chairmanship, and 2014, when his term on the committee ended, but there is

a bit of good news for Issa: His net worth grew up to \$768 million, making him the richest member of Congress.

Duncan Hunter (R-50) has placed sanctuary cities squarely in his crosshairs. Hunter has introduced his “Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act” in Congress, legislation aimed at forcing local law enforcement agencies to check the immigration status of all suspects and witnesses and report them to federal immigration officials. The act would essentially make all local agencies extensions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Officials at the local level — particularly law enforcement officials — support sanctuary cities because it allows them to more effectively protect their cities. Witnesses to crimes are far less likely to cooperate with police if they are concerned about local officials inquiring about their immigration status, which will make it all the more difficult to solve even the most violent of crimes.

Hunter’s legislation, which would cut off federal funding to all sanctuary cities, comes in response to the shooting death of Kathryn Steinle on San Francisco’s Embarcadero last month at the hands of a convicted felon, Francisco Lopez-Sanchez, who had been deported several times.

Susan Davis (D-53) announced in July a \$5.2 million federal grant from the Department of the Interior to expand the Sweetwater desalination facility. The grant will allow the facility to increase its production of potable water from 3,600-acre-feet per year to 8,000-acre-feet per year.

Scott Peters (D-52) took to the House floor to oppose an attempt by conservatives in Congress to rewrite California’s water policy. The GOP-led bill, subsequently passed in the House, seeks to provide more water to agricultural interests in the Central Valley. To do so, it calls on the construction of more dams and the release of more water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

“This bill does not make it rain — no one can do that,” said Peters in a statement. “It simply undermines the state of California’s water policies to move water away from one set of communities and into different ones.”

Peters also pointed to the urgency of maintaining adequate water supplies in non-agricultural areas to fight the rampant wildfires that have plagued much of the state in recent years, especially in Southern California.

“Two of the deadliest wildfires in California history, the Witch and Cedar fires, occurred in San Diego and killed 17 people,” Peters noted.

—Andy Cohen is a local freelance writer. Reach him at ac76@sbcglobal.net.■

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From left: Kelly Van Den Heuvel, MD; Anupam Garg, MD; and Kim Hui, MD



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IF DONALD TRUMP OWNED COCA-COLA...



EDITORIAL



(l to r) Councilmember Chris Cate, Mayor Kevin Faulconer, Councilmember Sherri Lightner and Mario Sierra, the city's environmental services director, at the Miramar Landfill. (Courtesy of sandiego.gov)

City Council adopts 'Zero Waste' plan to divert all waste by 2040

Scott Sherman



Last month, the City Council voted to approve an innovative plan that calls for reducing all of the city's trash to zero by the year 2040.

The plan, called "Zero Waste," lays out a list of strategies that will achieve a 75 percent trash diversion rate by 2020, a 90 percent rate by 2035, and zero waste by 2040. Our current rate of diversion stands at 67 percent.

Not only is this good for the environment but the plan is also a good deal for San Diego taxpayers.

The Zero Waste plan will help prolong the life of the Miramar Landfill. Instead of using taxpayer dollars to build a new landfill, we can instead reduce and reuse.

To reach the 75 percent diversion rate, the city would need to reduce, reuse, and

recycle an additional 332,000 tons of waste annually.

This will be done by:

- Diverting fibrous yard trimmings, 18,000 tons a year.

- Require franchise haulers to reach a 50 percent diversion rate by 2020, 94,000 tons per year.

- Organics diversion to comply with AB 1826, 120,000 tons per year.

- Revisions to the city's recycling ordinance, 13,000 tons per year.

- Creation of a Resource Recovery Center at Miramar Landfill to assist non-franchise haulers to divert much of their material for reuse, 80,000 tons per year.

I am very excited to see this plan implemented. As always, I would like to hear your feedback and ideas on how we can improve.

To continue reading the August e-newsletter, please visit bit.ly/1N1cktO.

—Scott Sherman represents District 7 on the San Diego City Council, which includes Mission Valley. ■

POLL

MISSION VALLEY News



Poll of the Month

Last Month's Question:

Which planning issue is most important to you?

- 50% Mobility and transportation
- 30% River, parks and recreation
- 20% Arts and culture
- 0% Conservation and sustainability
- 0% Urban design

This Month's Question:

If the Chargers leave town, will you stop rooting for the team?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Undecided

To cast your vote, visit missionvalleynews.com.

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(l to r) Marine Cpl. Evander Deocariza, Speaker Atkins and Bridget Wilson, local LGBT pioneer. (Courtesy of Office of Assembly Speaker Toni G. Atkins)

NOTES FROM TONI

Toni G. Atkins



Taxing road wear

Our state highways and bridges and our local streets and roads are in serious disrepair and it's impacting all of us, from how much we pay to maintain our cars and how much personal time we lose sitting in traffic, to how much our economy is losing every day to reduced productivity.

More than 40 percent of all state highway lanes are considered to be in less than good condition, and 16 percent — about 8,000 miles worth — are severely distressed and in need of major rehabilitation. As our economy continues to improve, more people are on the move, meaning more cars are on the roads, resulting in more wear-and-tear and more congestion.

Peak-commute motorists in San Diego waste 75 hours a year sitting in traffic, according to a TomTom study reported by NBC San Diego. And all that extra exhaust worsens air quality, which makes us less healthy and hastens the climate change that we're working so hard to fight.

Fixing it all now would cost far more than \$100 billion. The California Transportation Commission says the price tag will reach nearly \$300 billion over the next 10 years. Everyone — Democrats and Republicans alike — agree we have a big problem.

How has it gotten this way? Since the 1920s, we've mostly paid for transportation-system maintenance with taxes on gasoline. That used to work: People who used the road bought gas and paid for upkeep by paying federal and state taxes on a gallon of gas.

The state taxes on gasoline that pay for transportation haven't kept pace with inflation and because some are tied to the price of gasoline, they even went down this summer. As a result, projects up and down the state are at risk of delayed funding.

Furthermore, a tax on gas is a dwindling resource, thanks to our efforts to fight climate change. Our vehicles are becoming increasingly fuel-efficient and we're buying less gasoline. That means we're collecting less in gas taxes, which means the state will have less and less money for the upkeep of our streets and highways. As a group, we won't be driving less, so the need to maintain the infrastructure will increasingly outpace our ability to pay for it.

The method we're using to collect funds to rehabilitate our roads and highways can no longer keep up with the demand of our state's crumbling infrastructure. Instead, we need to modernize how we're collecting transportation funding in order to fix this 21st century issue.

The Legislature has convened a special session to tackle this problem. The task is to identify a logical source of funding for ongoing road and highway maintenance that is fair and sustainable. Everyone who drives a car will likely be asked to pay a little bit more, but it will be less than it costs to repair the damage done to our cars by our poor roadways.

It will also be good for the economy, because companies and workers will be more productive, and every dollar invested in transportation infrastructure produces \$5.20 in economic benefits, and every \$1 billion that gets spent on transportation infrastructure leads to roughly 18,000 additional jobs.

In more ways than one, fixing our roads and highways will help get San Diego and California moving. Around the District: After Pride did its part to fix the drought, I towed off and was happy to be part of the — thankfully dry — ceremony to welcome Panama City as San Diego's newest Sister City. While he was in San Diego, Mayor

Jose Isabel Blandón invited Mayor Kevin Faulconer and me to Panama City in the spring to help Panamanians celebrate the expansion of the Panama Canal. That project is expected to dramatically increase economic development in Panama — and possibly San Diego, too, as more products make their way through the canal and north into our port ... Proud to have met Cpl. Evander Deocariza at our very rainy Pride. The young Ma-



(l to r) Jim Mazza, Speaker Atkins and Marcellus Jones. Mazza and Jones are with the state Department of General Services and unfurled the rainbow flag at the state building. (Courtesy of Office of Assembly Speaker Toni G. Atkins)

rine carried the transgender flag for the military contingent and had just come out to his command that week. He told the Los Angeles Times he just wants to "set an example of what a transgender person can be like — a good Marine." I was impressed with him and he is well on his way ... Please mark Aug. 15 on your calendars. That's when animal shelters in San Diego and throughout our county will host "Clear the Shelters" day, with waived and reduced fees to find as many homes as possible for dogs, cats and all shelter animals. Watch NBC San Diego's Facebook page for more details.

—Toni G. Atkins is the Speaker of the California State Assembly. For more information, please visit her website, asmdc.org/speaker where you can sign up for her e-newsletter or get the latest news on legislation and other activities. You also may follow her on Twitter, @toniatkins.■

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Medical Minute
Weight-Loss Surgery

By Dr. Vadim Avulov

If you are considering gastric bypass surgery to lose weight, a therapeutic effect is often the reduction or elimination of type 2 diabetes. Gastric bypass reduces the amount of nutrients absorbed by the small intestine, which appears to result in metabolic changes that have a beneficial effect on diabetes.

If you are considering surgical weight loss, gastric bypass is a popular procedure because of its success rate. Even better, it can now be performed minimally invasively, which makes it much safer with quicker recovery.

Another option is gastric sleeve surgery, which makes up over 60% of all weight-loss surgery procedures performed in the U.S. 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.

Dr. Vadim Avulov

If you are thinking about surgical weight loss and would like to know more about bypass, banding and sleeve, plan to attend a free seminar on Sept. 17 at 6 p.m. at Alvarado Hospital. For more information, call (800) 258-2723.

Dr. Avulov specializes in bariatric surgery and completed a fellowship in advanced laparoscopic surgery at the Lahey Clinic of Tufts University School of Medicine in Massachusetts. He is part of Alvarado Physicians Medical Group.

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PUZZLE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 14

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DINING OUT IN SAN DIEGO

BITS OF FOOD NEWS FROM MISSION VALLEY AND BEYOND



Chicken challenge is Aug. 18 at Local Habit. (Courtesy of PlainClarity Communications)

Frank
Sabatini Jr.



America's favorite comfort food takes center stage at the upcoming Fried Chicken Challenge, to be held at 6 p.m. Aug. 18 at **Local Habit** in Hillcrest. The inaugural event is being presented by the Facebook network group, **Eating and Drinking in San Diego**, which has enlisted a total of six competitors such as Rich Sweeney of **Florent Restaurant & Lounge** (and of the former **R Gang Eatery**); Jason McLeod from **Ironside Fish & Oyster**; and others. Nate Soroko of **Toronado** will be curating beer for the tastings. A panel of judges, including Soroko, will evaluate the chicken based on juiciness, crunchiness and overall flavor. Tickets are \$45 per person, which includes samples from each chef, along with beer pairings and various side dishes. Seating is limited, and advanced reservations are required. 3827 Fifth Ave., 619-795-4770.



True North is taking biscuits to new heights. (Photo by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

After nailing down a secret solution that prevents drop biscuits from crumbling under the stress of hearty ingredients layered between them, the chef team at **True North Tavern** has introduced to the menu "bomb ass" sandwiches and sliders. Served with tater tots, their fillings include fried chicken with Serrano peppers; prime beef patties with bacon and bleu cheese; and grilled portobellos with goat cheese. The trio of chefs involved in perfecting the buttery beauties included Andrew James Reyes, who was a finalist on Food Network's "Guy's Grocery Games" (Season 5). 3815 30th St., 619-291-3815.



The Canadian-founded **Pita Pit** is opening a Linda Vista outpost in early fall, close to the University of San Diego. With locations in 11 countries, the chain is known for its fast-casual pita sandwiches stuffed with grilled meats, fresh veggies and various legumes. This is the second time around for Pita Pit in San Diego after operating a shop in the College Area for nine years before suddenly closing in the winter. 5175 Linda Vista Road; pitapitusa.com.

A fourth San Diego location of **Tender Greens** is coming to Westfield Mission Valley Mall in the next couple of months. The company, which specializes in "slow food done fast," launched originally in Culver City before branching into Liberty Station, and then Downtown and La Jolla. Its newest location will stick to the core menu of salads, sandwiches and meal plates using fresh ingredients supplied by regional farmers and ranchers. The yet-to-be-named chef for this outlet, however, will be free to create daily specials based on seasonal bounties. 1640 Camino del Rio North, tendergreens.com.

Technology and confections combine at the new **iDessert by Jean-Philippe** in Little Italy, where visitors select from a number of cakes, crusts, sauces, fruits and more at iPad stations for customizing their sweet creations. The colorful shop was launched recently by renowned pastry chef Jean-Philippe Maury, a native of southern France who hails from **The Bellagio** and **ARIA Resort & Casino** in Las Vegas. 1608 India St., Suite 104, 619-544-1033.

Several design changes were made at **The Red Door** in Mission Hills, which recently reopened to unveil a new mid-century, modern look that includes new seating, a fresh paint job and exterior awnings constructed of natural wood. In addition, the front door has been given a new shade of red, and newly planted drought-resistant ivy will soon begin cascading from the roof.

Old Town's only Thai kitchen, **D'O Thai Cottage**, has closed after operating on a high-traffic block of San Diego Avenue for the past three years. The restaurant was sporadically dark since May, and just recently took down its website and permanently shut its doors. Prior to the Cottage, the space was home to **Café Pacifico**. There's no word yet on who will take over next. 2414 San Diego Ave.

Some of the vendors slated to take up initial residence at the upcoming Liberty Public Market in Point Loma include a couple of familiar names to the Downtown food scene. Already on board are **The West Bean Coffee Roasters** and **Venissimo Cheese**. The project, spearheaded by Coronado restaurateur David Spatafore of Bluebridge Hospitality, will spotlight 30-plus artisan vendors in a circa-1920 warehouse in Liberty Station. Others from the San Diego area include **Wicked Maine Lobster** seen at various farmers markets, **Moo Time Creamery from Coronado**, and **Cane Patch Pies** entering into its first brick-and-mortar location. The market is due to open in late October.

A second and slightly larger location of **Lucha Libre Gourmet Taco Shop** is now open in North Park in the space where **Marie's Café** formerly operated. The offshoot arrives several months later than originally planned. Jose Luis Rojano, who owns the business with his two brothers, said their second venture is "the same fun and unique concept" as the original shop in Mission Hills. 3016 University Ave., 619-296-8226.



Ceviche Showdown is Aug. 23 at 57 Degrees. (Photo by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

Chefs from nearly a dozen San Diego restaurants will take part in the second annual Ceviche Showdown, from 2 to 5 p.m. Aug. 23, at **57 Degrees** in Middletown. Recipes ranging from citrusy to sweet will enter the ring as visitors get to taste the entries and vote on their favorites. Among the establishments taking part are **Puesto**; **Bernini's Bistro of La Jolla**; **Sirena Gourmet Latin Seafood Restaurant**; **George's at the Cove**; and more. Tickets are \$24 in advance, and \$35 at the door. 1735 Hancock St., 619-234-5757, fiftysevendegrees.com.

The owner of **City Tacos** in North Park is taking his passion for south-of-the-border fare another step further with his upcoming **Tostadas**, due to open by late August in the space that formerly housed **Swoon Dessert Bar**. "Mexican food is a thing of beauty," professed Gerry Torres, who also owns **IB Street Tacos** in Imperial Beach. For his newest venture, look for crafty combinations of seafood, seasonal produce and zippy house-made sauces set atop fresh tortillas. 3139 University Ave.

The much-anticipated **Lemonade** out of Los Angeles made its San Diego debut in Hillcrest on Aug. 3. It will be followed by a second opening in Westfield UTC La Jolla later in August. Its Fifth Avenue location moves into the modern, 2,500-square-foot space left vacant earlier this year by **Amici's East Coast Pizzeria**. Touted for its chic, cafeteria-style concept, customers are offered a cornucopia of mix-and-match vegetables, brick-oven flat breads, braised meats, and of course, several varieties of gourmet lemonades. 3958 Fifth Ave., lemonadela.com.

Purchase a fresh catch from **Tuna Harbor Dockside Market** (598 Harbor Lane) and then bring it to **Sally's Seafood on the Water** for dinner. Chefs at the bay front restaurant, located at **Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego**, will prepare the fish to your liking under a new program called Ocean 2 Table, which also allows guests to choose from a variety of sauces and side dishes. The custom cooking is available on Saturdays only. The fish must weight 5 pounds or less and brought to Sally's by 2 p.m. for same-day consumption. Preparation cost is \$2 per ounce. Reservations are required. One Market Place, 619-358-6740.

—Frank Sabatini Jr. can be reached at fsabatini@san.rr.com. ■



A dry pot (above), a pork entrée (below) and crispy egg rolls (far right). (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

Pumped with peppers

Frank Sabatini Jr.



Our faces grew long when arriving at the doors of Szechuan Mandarin on Mission Gorge Road, an old-school Chinese restaurant that has long quelled our hankering for zesty pork dumplings and chili-laced stir-fries. It was closed for remodeling and still is. So with a maniacal desire to find something similar, we drove north on the street and discovered a more powerful mouth burn at Mr. Spicy in the Village Square plaza.

Located toward the back of the complex, we were immediately struck by the high-resolu-

tion photographs of menu items canvassing its front windows — not the faded, unappetizing kind common to other casual Chinese eateries. These hinted at bright, quality food.

Inside, we were greeted by a fast-smiling waitress speaking in limited English. From what we gathered, she co-owns the small, newish restaurant with her husband, who would occasionally shout out to customers with a glint in his eyes while cooking from the semi-open

Mr. Spicy

6618 Mission Gorge Road (Grantville)
619-546-6686

Prices: Soups and appetizers, \$2.99 to \$7.99; entrees, \$6.99 to \$13.99; lunch specials (available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday), \$5.99 to \$7.99

kitchen, “Spicy enough?”

In most cases the answer was “yes,” given that few dishes escape the spirited combination of red chili peppers and fresh jalapenos.

The pork dumplings we so craved were the first dish we ordered. Unlike their spicy, oiled counterparts at Szechuan Mandarin, these were naked, wetter and tamer, but considerably



chubbier from their ginger-kissed pork fillings. Better yet, they came 12 to an order.

The egg drop soup was expectedly mild, although rosy in color and less plain-tasting than others, thanks to juicy bits of tomatoes mingling with carrots, peas and the wispy eggs. We also ordered hot and sour soup, which for once didn't taste like 80 percent vinegar. The sour component stemmed mainly from

generous measures of tender cabbage bobbing within the peppery broth.

Chinese dry pots are the soup-less incarnations of classic hot pots. They're constructed here with chicken, fish, lamb, beef or tofu, in addition to a bounty of colorful vegetables that includes bamboo shoots, snap peas, celery and double doses of chili peppers.

We chose the chicken dry pot, served in a metal urn and kept warm by Sterno. The presentation and flavors were gorgeous, and the amount of tender

See PEPPERS page 10 —————>

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(l to r) Egg drop soup and dumplings from Mr. Spicy in Grantville. (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

► Peppers, from page 9

chicken meat was surprisingly abundant for a dish costing only \$8.99. Two people can easily share it and possibly end up with leftovers.

Perhaps it was overkill, but I had to try the “kong” pao chicken, which also yielded scads of meat and didn’t fall

short on peanuts or chili peppers. As with all of the entrees, you must inspect every forkful of food before shoveling it into your mouth. Otherwise you risk incinerating your uvula with sneaky bits of chili peppers and their unforgiving seeds that surfaced continuously in our main courses.

In a subsequent visit, I started with a stack of six extra-crispy

spring rolls. The waitress-owner admitted reluctantly they are not made in-house, but stressed “they are very good with all vegetables inside.” She was right.

I also tried a weakly flavored onion cake that sprang to life with a few drops of chili oil. Its texture was comforting, like a cross between phyllo pastry and a grilled flour tortilla. For saucy dishes such as Szechwan shrimp,

hot and sour cabbage or the Kung pao choices, it acts as a more interesting mop than white rice.

A few dishes across the menu are preceded with the words “local flavor,” such as the pork dish I ordered afterwards. It basically means that those particular proteins are served in chili sauce and accented heavily with fresh cilantro. Spicy and delicious it was, although I wasn’t nuts about the pork’s long, wormy cuts. It was as though the meat had been extruded from a sausage maker.

There are several dishes that will lure me back when the gods of capsaicin call again. Among the hottest that I’ll dare try are green-chili shrimp in hot sauce, dry pot flounder, cumin lamb, and sliced beef in Szechwan sauce.

The menu caters kindly to timid palates with almond chicken, walnut shrimp and chow mein. But with a name like Mr. Spicy, why bother coming if your taste buds aren’t ready for a thrill?

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



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Elizabeth Hospice patient Carmin, at home with her family in San Diego, CA.

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Alvarado Hospital expands healthcare services

To better meet the needs of the community, Alvarado Hospital is expanding several important services:

- Brand-new, state-of-the-art emergency department will add 24 beds along the busy I-8 corridor.

- Advanced Spine & Joint Institute, which opened in July, offers minimally invasive, laser, and robotic-assisted procedures and features a healing-designed unit reflecting San Diego’s beautiful landscapes and landmarks.

- Leading-edge digital mammography suite — opening in October — will launch with a community “Battle of the Bras” design contest to bring awareness to importance of regular mammograms.

- Innovative geriatric-psychiatric unit will provide a much-needed safety net for seniors who have both medical and mental conditions, such as Alzheimer’s.

- High-tech cardiac catheterization lab to support the facility’s other two cath labs to expand care for heart attack patients.

- Re-engineered ICU to provide critical care in a more patient- and family-centric unit.

To learn more, visit AlvaradoHospital.com or call (800) ALVARADO. Alvarado is located next to SDSU.

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August is Kids Eat Right month

Erica Moe

With childhood obesity on the rise, it is vital that kids eat healthy and get plenty of exercise.

Parents and caregivers can play a big role in children's nutrition and health by teaching kids about healthy foods, being a good role model and making sure that physical activity is incorporated into each day.

August, which is Kids Eat Right month, is a great time for families to focus on the importance of healthful eating and active lifestyles. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is encouraging families to take the following steps:

Be a smart shopper

To encourage a healthy lifestyle, get your children involved in selecting the food that will appear at the breakfast, lunch or dinner table.

Cook healthy food

Involve your child in the cutting, mixing and preparation of meals. Learning about food and helping to prepare a dish can entice a child to try something new. On Fridays this month, join Chef Chevroy for Great Meals with Nutritious R' Us classes at the Copley-Price YMCA. Participants ages 7 and older can enjoy hands-on learning while tasting and sampling your masterpiece. Junior Chefs is another great opportunity for children ages 8-15 at the YMCA YFS Kitchen.

Eat together

Sit down together as a family to enjoy a wonderful meal and the opportunity to share the day's experiences. Research indicates that families who eat together have a stronger bond, and children have higher self-confidence and perform better in school.

Healthy habits

You can help kids form great, healthy habits by setting a good example. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, choose lower-sodium options and, make sure that at least half of the grains your family eats are whole grains. For beverages, choose water over sugary drinks, and opt for fat-free or low-fat milk.

Get moving

Aside from being a great way to spend time



together, regular physical activity is vital to strengthen muscle and bones, promote a healthy body weight, support learning, develop social skills and build self-esteem. Encourage your children to be active for 60 minutes per day.

Speak up

Getting kids to eat healthfully can be a challenge, particularly if they are picky eaters. But experts say that a conversation can help.

"Talk to your children," says Angela Lemond, registered dietitian, nutritionist and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics spokesperson. "Learn the foods

they like. Teach them about the foods they need for their growing bodies.

Find ways together to make sure they have the knowledge and ability to eat healthful and tasty foods at every meal."

It may help to consult a registered dietitian nutritionist in your area to ensure your family is getting the nutrients it needs with a meal plan tailored to your lifestyle and busy schedule. The Mission Valley YMCA is offering a new pro-

gram called Evolution Nutrition, which includes access to a meal-planning database to help you reach your goals.

This month, reevaluate your family's eating and exercise habits, and take steps to make positive, healthful changes. For more healthful eating tips, recipes and videos, and to learn more about Kids Eat Right Month, visit KidsEatRight.org.

—Erica Moe is an ACSM certified exercise physiologist who writes on behalf of the Mission Valley YMCA, where she is a fitness director. Her source for today's column is the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. ■

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Mission Valley keeps getting more roads—and more traffic

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MUSIC NOTES

JAZZ

Thursday and Fridays: Antonio Fe at the Cosmo in The Cosmopolitan Restaurant and Hotel. Free. 6 p.m. 2660 Calhoun St., Old Town. OldTownCosmopolitan.com.

Fridays: Jazz Happy Hour at the Handlery Hotel's 950 Lounge. Free. 5 p.m. 950 Hotel Circle North, Mission Valley. SD.Handlery.com

Saturdays: Douglas Kvandal with the LiveJazz! Quartet at the Amigo Spot at Kings Inn. Free. 7 p.m. 1333 Hotel Circle South, Mission Valley. KingsInnSanDiego.com.

CLASSICAL

Aug. 16: Burt Bacharach at Embarcadero Marina Park South. \$22+. 7:30 p.m. 200 Marina Park Way, Downtown. SanDiegoSymphony.org.

Aug. 23: Amy Kanner on Celtic harp at Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center Auditorium. Free. 3 – 4 p.m. 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos. MTRP.org.

Aug. 27: "Faithfully – A symphonic tribute to the music of Journey" at Embarcadero Marina Park South. \$22+. 7:30 p.m. 200 Marina Park Way, Downtown. SanDiegoSymphony.org.

ALTERNATIVE / ROCK

Aug. 21: Serious Guise at Pal Joey's. Free. 9 p.m. 5147 Waring Road, Allied Gardens. PalJoeyOnline.com.

Aug. 28: 6one9 at Navajo Live Bar. Free. 9 p.m. 8515 Navajo Road, San Carlos. NavajoLive.com.

Sept. 10: Peter Bolland performing Neil Young songs at Vision Center for Spiritual Living. \$15. 7 p.m. 6154 Mission Gorge Road, Suite 100, Grantville. FolkeyMonkey.com.

POP

Tuesdays: Suzanne Shea and Bob Wade at Bistro Sixty. Free. 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. 5987 El Cajon Blvd., College Area. BistroSixtySD.com.

Fridays: Nathan Welden at Bistro Sixty. Free. 6:30 p.m. 5987 El Cajon Blvd., College Area. BistroSixtySD.com.

Aug. 15: Baja Bugs at Tio Leo's Lounge. Price TBD. 9 p.m. 5302 Napa St., Linda Vista. TioLeos.com.

OTHER

Wednesdays: Blues Jam at Proud Mary's Southern Bar and Grill in the Ramada Conference Center. Free. 6:30 p.m. 5550 Kearny Mesa Road, Kearny Mesa. ProudMarysSD.com.

Sundays: Jazz 88.3 Blues Brunch at Proud Mary's Southern Bar and Grill in the Ramada Conference Center. Free. 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. 5550 Kearny Mesa Road, Kearny Mesa. ProudMarysSD.com.

Aug. 29: N. Scott Robinson (world percussion) at Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center Auditorium. Free. 3 – 4 p.m. 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos. MTRP.org.

Sept. 1: Sue Palmer Quintet at Tio Leo's Lounge. Price TBD. 9 p.m. 5302 Napa St., Linda Vista. TioLeos.com.

Sept. 6: The Peter Popping Band (Latin-inspired) at Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center Auditorium. Free. 3 – 4 p.m. 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos. MTRP.org.

—Compiled by Jen Van Tieghem. Bands, venues and music lovers: please send music calendar listings to jen@sdcmn.com. ■



David Bennett became general director of the San Diego Opera on June 12. (Photo by Jake Heggie)

Opera's umbrella is opening wider New general director discusses plans for the future

Charlene
Baldrige



The news is good. At its recent annual meeting, San Diego Opera (SDO) announced that it expects to complete fiscal year 2015 (ended June 30) in the black. For an organization that nearly ceased operations before the 2015, 50th anniversary season, this is something to shout about.

As for FY 2016, board president Carol Lazier has given another gift of \$1 million and Darlene Shiley has given \$250,000 in honor of Jack O'Brien, who stages Jake Heggie's "Great Scott," a co-world-premiere with Dallas Opera to be produced here in May.

O'Brien is former artistic director of the Old Globe, where Shiley has long been an active supporter. Shiley also donated \$250,000 in support of SDO's 2012 production of Heggie's "Moby-Dick." It was also announced that SDO has received a 4 rating from the San Diego Commission of Arts and Culture, which recommended 2016 funding of \$437,356, the largest sum the company will have received from the city since 2009.

The other big news is that new general director, David Bennett, came aboard June 15. Selected by search committee to replace Ian Campbell, Bennett is a Kansas City native steeped in music since he picked up the violin in fourth grade. A former opera singer whose experience was in standard repertoire in big houses, he comes to SDO from New York, where he headed the highly successful Gotham Chamber Opera. He was formally introduced at the SDO annual meeting where he received all the good news along with staff and opera association members.

"The city commitment, added to this year's 'I Stand for Opera' crowd-funding campaign, will help realize our fundraising goals," he said in his office several weeks after taking up residence.

"That's another phenomenal story — people have once again said, 'We want to give gifts of all kinds of sizes to support opera in San Diego.'"

Bennett, 51, is enthusiastic and full of ideas for making SDO stronger.

Lest readers have concerns, doing away with performance of standard repertory at the 3,000-seat Civic Theatre is the farthest thing from his mind. He loves the standards, and the idea of producing them fills him with something akin to glee. Be assured there is room for plenty of variety under what he called the umbrella of opera today.

"A lot of things can fit underneath it, right?" Bennett said. "Some companies are doing musical theater, chamber opera and concert opera. Zarzuela can fit, and so can operetta. Some people define opera as only works that are fully sung-through without spoken text. When you seek to define what can be under your umbrella, things that fit must be specific to their intended community."

Right now Bennett is exploring the distinct communities of San Diego — Latino, African-American, Asian and the military — to see how the umbrella might embrace them and allow them to experiment with opera, a mode of presentation they may not have experienced before.

He enumerates works that might speak directly to these communities while the interviewer tries to ignore the tantalizing titles scrawled on the big black chalkboard in his office. On the left are tentative future seasons (I'm sworn to secrecy) and on the right a plethora of operas and musicals that are under consideration.

"What we want to do is three traditional, large operas and then three recitals in the fall," he said. "Other things are to be explored — the umbrella of opera in San Diego is going to look a bit different than the umbrella

of opera in Philadelphia, and it should because the communities are different.

"Contracts are already in place for the next few seasons for traditional opera at the Civic Theatre," he continued. "Beginning in 2016–17 we'll start to see those operas spread throughout the year; fall, late winter and spring, interspersed with chamber opera, concert opera, musicals, works of other cultures, opera in non-traditional spaces, presentations throughout San Diego County; and co-productions and commissions with other opera companies (and cultural institutions) with an emphasis on American artists."

"We hope to make San Diego Opera more in step and responsive, make it the place to be."

Meanwhile, the 2015-16 season (budgeted at around \$11 million, same as the last one) comprises three recitals at selected venues and three large-scale works at the Civic Theatre.

The latter are Giacomo Puccini's "Tosca" Feb. 13, 16, 19 and 21 (matinee); Puccini's "Madama Butterfly" April 16, 19, 22, and 24 (mat); and Heggie's new operatic homage to bel canto opera, "Great Scott," May 7, 10, 13, and 15 (matinee). The three recitals are tenor René Barbera, Sept. 19 at the Balboa Theatre; soprano Patricia Racette's "Diva on Detour," Nov. 14 at the Balboa Theatre; and Italian bass Ferruccio Furlanetto in a concert featuring arias from his favorite SDO performances, March 5, at the Jacobs Music Center — Copley Symphony Hall.

Whatever the future holds for SDO, it's looking good, and you are certain to find something to your liking under David Bennett's umbrella. For more information or to make your voice heard, visit sdopera.org or call 619-232-7636.

—Charlene Baldrige has been writing about the arts since 1979. You can follow her blog at charlenbaldrige.com or reach her at charb81@gmail.com. ■

A conversation with Sameer Patel

The ‘finest city’ welcomes a humble conductor

Margie M. Palmer

If you're a fan of the arts, you've likely heard the San Diego Symphony has announced the appointment of Sameer Patel as its new assistant conductor; if you were lucky enough to experience the symphony's surprise concert this year at Comic-Con, you would have experienced his premier performance.

In a recent interview, San Diego Downtown News discovered the man behind the baton is as humble as he is sincere and that his passion for music is part of his lifeblood.

Patel, a Michigan native, said his love of music began early on; he was quite privileged to have music lessons be part of his youth.

"My parents saw playing an instrument as being important, which is why they enrolled me in piano lessons and playing in the band at school," Patel said. "I'm very lucky, because I had really excellent teachers."

It wasn't until he got to high school that he realized he wanted to actually pursue a career in music. That's when he realized



Sameer Patel (Photo by Arielle Doneson)

he had a passion for conducting.

"I was drawn to the leadership aspect of it," he said. "I had a great band director in high school who had this way of inspiring all the students; I could tell from his work that so much of his time was spent in preparation. That's what fascinated me —what goes on before rehearsal starts."

Patel also pointed out that there was plenty of music he hadn't been exposed to, which often happens when someone

grows up in a small town. That teacher, he said, is the one who first exposed him to the world of classical music.

"He really nurtured my interest," Patel said. "He let me borrow recordings and would talk to me about it. Playing an instrument and at the same time developing a passion for the art — that was beyond anything I knew or had contact with — that's how I knew I wanted to pursue a career in music."

Since then he's grown to be-

come one of America's most exciting conductors. Before coming to San Diego, Patel served for three seasons as Associate Conductor of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, where he conducted the orchestra in over 100 performances. In 2013, Patel was one of only six conductors selected by the League of American Orchestras for the Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, an event that showcases emerging and talented conductors to orchestra industry professionals.

Despite his impressive resume, the most memorable moments of his career are drawn from the heart.

Several years ago he worked with the El Sistema movement in Venezuela. The organization, he said, has trained hundreds of thousands of mostly poor kids in classical music.

"It gives them an opportunity to learn to play an instrument for free," he said. "I went with a conductor from Boston and we spent two weeks going into the barrios and got to work with the littlest children who were first learning to play an instrument or sing — I really got to see firsthand that music is a universal language."

Another one of his career "wow" moments came in July, when Patel conducted the surprise "Star Wars" concert at Comic-Con.

"The fans' reaction to that was so sincere and you could see how much the music has meant

to them," he said. "It sent chills down my spine."

"The musicians couldn't help but feel that energy on stage; most of us aren't part of these types of events," he continued. "After the concert was finished, when I left the stage I heard something, it sounded like the audience was chanting. I realized they were chanting 'thank you.' It was a huge privilege to be a part of that."

Patel said that in addition to working with the San Diego Symphony, he and his wife have taken some time to enjoy some of the simpler aspects of what America's Finest City has to offer.

When they relocated, they chose to make their home in Bankers Hill. It's been a good fit, he said, especially since it's so close to Balboa Park, Downtown and countless restaurants.

"It's a great sense of community within this big city," he said. "We have great neighbors and although a lot of people don't know this, my wife and I were married at the San Diego Museum of Art. The byline for San Diego is America's Finest City, and for me, in all honesty, it feels that way. It's been a very welcoming place."

For information about the San Diego Symphony's upcoming concert season or their current Summer Pops outdoor schedule, visit sandiegosymphony.org.

—Margie Palmer is a San Diego-based freelance writer. You can reach her at margiep@alumni.pitt.edu.■

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Summer Pops update

San Diego Symphony's outdoor concert series is sponsored by Ashford University and runs through Labor Day. Concerts are held at Embarcadero Marina Park South. All concerts are at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise specified.

AUG 14 & 15: **Sinatra at 100: A Salute to the Chairman of the Board**

AUG 16: **Burt Bacharach** makes his annual return with his trio of singers

AUG 20: **Esperanza Spalding** makes her debut with Emily's D+Evolution

AUG 21: **LeAnn Rimes** returns to Summer Pops

AUG 23: An unforgettable evening with **Natalie Cole**

AUG 27: **Faithfully** – a symphonic tribute to the music of Journey

AUG 28: **A Night of Classic Rock** with driving drums, guitar solos and soaring vocals

SEPT 4, 5 & 6: **Tchaikovsky Spectacular** – a grand 1812 Overture and Summer Pops finale with a rousing display of fireworks

For more information including tickets and seating options, visit sandiegosymphony.org/pops.■

How to select a real estate agent



Melania Mirzakhanian



There are a number of attributes to look for in an agent:

- **Negotiations skills:** Will my real estate agent fight to get the best terms for me or will he push me into a deal to make a buck?
- **Empathy:** Will my real estate agent care about my stress level or will he push his personality on to me?
- **Experience:** Has my real estate agent conducted or been part of many transactions or am I just a hobby to him?
- **Easy to reach:** Will I have to go through a zillion hoops of voice mails and assistants to speak with my real estate agent or is he responsive and respectful of my time and questions?

To obtain perspective and information from another experienced real estate professional, an interview with Dino Katsiametis was conducted. He is the branch manager of Citywide Home Loans, and began his ca-

reer as a broker and owner of California Coastal brokerage. He is also the host of the popular radio show "Money Matters."

According to Katsiametis, the real estate industry "needs more people who have a business mind, a legal and common sense." A successful real estate agent should not only be a strong negotiator but also understand contract terms and have an understanding of the legal aspects and implications of the home buying or selling process.

"Working in real estate should be your business," he said. After all, a real estate agent affects your decision to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars if not millions of dollars into a property. So when selecting a real estate agent, Katsiametis urges buyers and sellers to "avoid the ones that just sell here and there." To him, that's really scary to trust such an important decision with someone who is not committed full-time.

When selecting a real estate agent, Katsiametis' view is to look for attributes to avoid.

- Avoid a hobby real estate agent who is not dedicated to the industry and instead work with an agent who is committed to the profession as a career and not just a side gig.
- Don't feel obligated to work with an agent just because

he is family, a friend or promises you a discount. The real estate industry has a low barrier of entry and just because your high school buddy or cousin got their real estate license and used it once doesn't make him a real estate professional.

- Beware of some agents that go to lengths advertising discounts and deals that are often deceptive. While it makes sense to use coupons for groceries it is not advised to make an important decisions such as home buying or selling solely based on a coupon.

Do your research when selecting real estate agents, ask questions throughout the process and enjoy the journey.

A tip for new real estate agents who are serious and committed to the profession: You should seek out a mentor that can provide and teach you their knowledge of a real estate transaction, what pitfalls to look out for, and how to resolve them for your clients. A mentor will guide you toward your success.

—Melania Mirzakhanian is a local attorney focused on real estate, business and employment questions. She is the designated broker for Tomea Real Estate and also is involved with the Housing Opportunities Collaborative, a San Diego based non-profit organization. Her blog is at AskMelania.com.■

► Mail, from page 1

stands, hotels and the Mission Valley Library.

"We believe Mission Valley residents and businesses deserve to have their very own community newspaper offering news and information pertinent to the people who live or work in Mission Valley," Manis said.

"We feel Mission Valley News will bring about a more community feel and cohesiveness," he said. "We want Mission Valley News to be a primary resource for all that is taking place in this thriving community with all of the growth and development that affects people's lives both positively and negatively."

Mission Valley News is one of three newspapers purchased by SDCNN in July 2014 from Mission Publishing Group. SDCNN owns six newspapers with a total circulation of 118,000: Mission Valley News, San Diego Uptown News, San Diego Downtown News, Mission Times Courier, La Mesa Courier and Gay San Diego.

SDCNN's office is located at 123 Camino de la Reina, Suite 202 East, in Mission Valley. The parent company's phone number is 619-961-1950 and the website is SDCNN.com.

—Ken Williams is editor of Mission Valley News and San Diego Uptown News and can be reached at ken@sdenn.com or at 619-961-1952. ■

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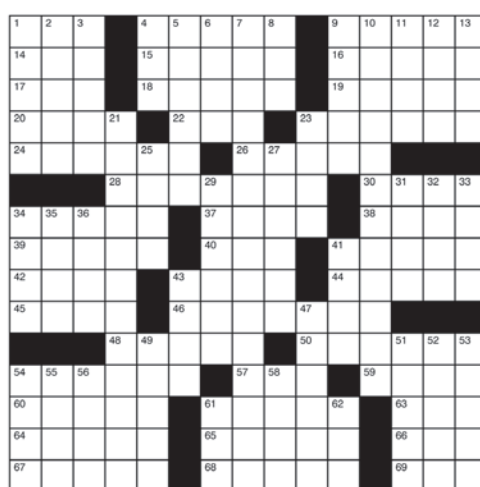
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MVN Puzzles

Crossword Solutions on page 7



- CREATORS NEWS SERVICE
- ACROSS**
- 1 Tin
 - 4 Vise device
 - 9 Egyptian martyr
 - 14 Baseball stat.
 - 15 Rhinoceros relative
 - 16 Cease-fire
 - 17 Long time
 - 18 Engraved stone pillar
 - 19 Bounds
 - 20 Declare openly
 - 22 Assam silkworm
 - 23 Seersucker, e.g.
 - 24 Units
 - 26 Follows
 - 28 Draw back
 - 30 Man-shaped mug
 - 34 A small Tom
 - 37 Killer whale
 - 38 Obi pendant
 - 39 Rent again
 - 40 Nautical chain
 - 41 Happen
 - 42 Saroyan hero
 - 43 Depletes
 - 44 Golfer Calvin
 - 45 California lake
 - 46 Secreted
 - 48 Assessor
 - 50 Nail polish
 - 54 Hiking paths
 - 57 Every one of
 - 59 Hindu ascetic
 - 60 Competitor
 - 61 Vote to accept
 - 63 Anglo-Saxon coin
 - 64 French school
 - 65 Bar used as a pry
 - 66 Japanese coin
 - 67 Taut
 - 68 Grenoble's river
 - 69 Greek vowel
 - 25 Obligation
 - 27 Admittance
 - 29 Take turns
 - 31 Fairy tale start
 - 32 Dry wine
 - 33 Ancient times
 - 34 Mine vehicle
 - 35 Leander's love
 - 36 Bator
 - 41 Candid
 - 43 JFK sights
 - 47 Assistant
 - 49 Walk through the
 - 51 Elk
 - 52 Plummed heron
 - 53 Tropical vine
 - 54 Weight allowance
 - 55 Chinese staple
 - 56 English river
 - 58 World-turner
 - 61 Clay now
 - 62 Uno plus due
- DOWN**
- 1 Coffee additive
 - 2 From the beginning: L.
 - 3 Curtain fabric
 - 4 Partner of dolls.
 - 5 Most recent
 - 6 Mimic
 - 7 Veterans Day features
 - 8 Evangeline's home, Grand -
 - 9 Stable part
 - 10 November 11, 1918
 - 11 Confers a title upon
 - 12 Beloved of Galatea
 - 13 French head
 - 21 Goals of some of 7 Down
 - 23 Pocket bread

Sudoku Solutions on page 7

Rules

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.

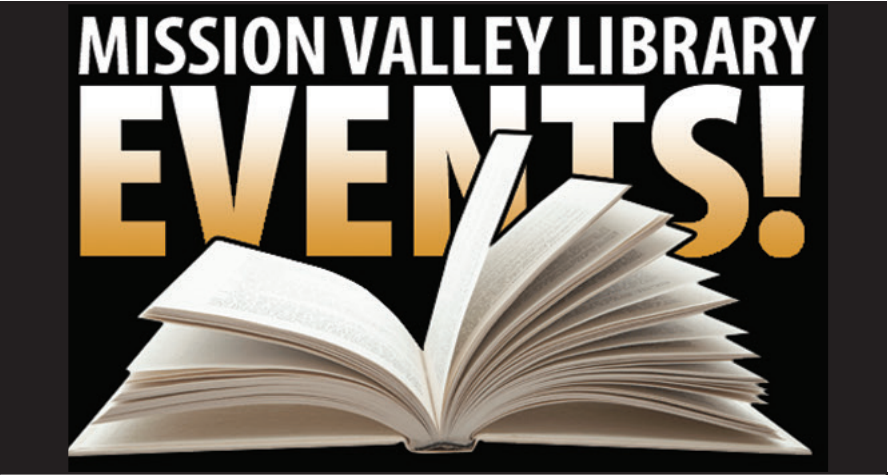
8		1		4		7		3
					5	4		2
	3		1	7				6
	1	7			3	2		
2				9				5
		9	5			6	7	
	7			8	4		2	
1		8	3					
9		3		1		8		6

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INTERNSHIP WITH SDCNN

San Diego Community News Network seeks an editorial intern. To apply, email resume, writing samples and references to ken@sdenn.com

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Assemblymember Weber’s mobile office

Monday, Aug. 17, 10 a.m. – noon
Connect with Assemblymember Shirley Weber’s staff in your community, get help with any problems you are having with public agencies, ask questions about legislation and learn about state and local services. Issues that staff can assist with include renter’s and homeowner’s assistance programs, property tax issues, consumer complaints, unemployment and disability insurance. No need to make an appointment; just stop in.

‘Ask the Lawyer’ free legal clinic

First Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m.
Join attorney Mark Miller the first Tuesday of every month to talk about your legal issues and learn about your options. No appointment is necessary; just show up with your questions.

Baby signs storytime

Second and fourth Mondays, 11:30 a.m.
Parents often wonder, “What is my baby thinking?” There is a way to find out: Teaching your baby some basic signs using American Sign Language will fill the gap. Communication is said to be the foundation of a solid relationship; learning to sign with your baby will build that bond early and provide you a bridge from infancy to childhood.

Film forum

Wednesday, Aug. 22, 6 p.m.
A haunting noir feast of decadence and blackhearted dealings. A pair of newlyweds (Charlton Heston and Janet Leigh) become embroiled in a murky maze of corruption in a Mexican border town. Dazzling camerawork and a superb Henry Mancini score highlight Orson Welles’ last film as a Hollywood director. 1958. 111 minutes, discussion to follow. The library’s contract does not allow the movie title to be publicized.

Friends of the Library meeting

Third Wednesday, 6 p.m.
Monthly meeting of the group.

Knit-a-Bit

Second and fourth Wednesdays, 12:30 – 2 p.m.
Bring your own knit or crochet project to work on while spending time with others who share your talent.

Library Book Club

Third Tuesday of the month, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
Monthly meeting to discuss the latest book selection. August: “Bridge of Sighs” by Richard Russo; September: “Play Dead” by Harlan Coben.

Paws for Reading

Second and fourth Mondays, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
New readers can get some valuable practice time with a very non-judgmental certified therapy dog, courtesy of the nonprofit Love on a Leash. Try out those longer words — dogs don’t care if you get them wrong. They just want to hear you read.

Sumi-E art class

Wednesdays, 2:30 – 5 p.m.
Learn the classical Japanese style of ink and brush.

Tai chi class

Thursdays, 2 – 4 p.m.
Designed for adults over 55 teaching strategies for exercise and relaxation in addition to tai chi.

Toddler storytime

Fridays, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Storytime designed for toddlers, featuring songs, rhymes, and finger plays.

Yoga for adults and teens

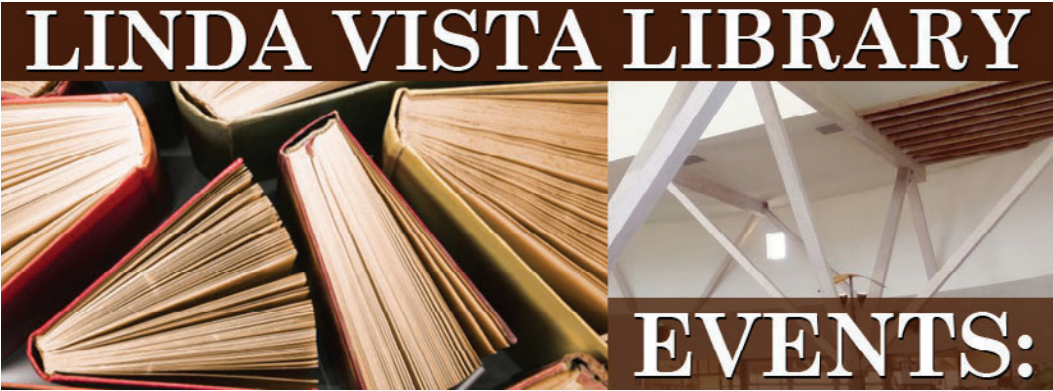
Tuesdays, 6 – 7 p.m.
Are you looking for a workout program that’s easy to learn, requires little or no equipment and soothes your soul while toning your body? If strengthening your cardiovascular system, toning and stretching your muscles and improving your mental fitness are on your to-do list, then yoga is for you.

Zumba Basic

Mondays, 4 – 5 p.m.
Join the Zumba craze. Find out what makes this fun workout such a hit. A towel and bottled water are recommended for Zumba sessions.

Zumba Gold

Fridays, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Zumba Gold is a lower impact version of our Zumba Basic class on Mondays, but just as fun. The moves have been carefully designed to be easy to follow by participants of any size or age.■



Linda Vista Planning Group general meeting

Monday, Aug. 24, 5:30 p.m.
This is an open meeting of the Linda Vista Planning Group. The public is encouraged to attend. Visit lindavista.org/lvpg.

Crafts for kids

Fridays, 4 – 5 p.m.
Stretch your imagination and create fabulous crafts. The craft is different every week.

Do your homework at the library

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, 3 – 6 p.m.
You’ve got homework? Linda Vista Branch Library has held. Students in grades K through 8 can receive free personalized assistance.

Fight Club

Wednesdays, 5 – 6 p.m.
Discussion of mixed martial arts; use of video and literature to enhance analysis. For adults.

Hatha yoga for adults

Thursdays, 11 a.m. – noon
Aryn Rannazzisi leads a gently paced class combining breath work and postures to promote strength, flexibility and balance. This all-levels

class will include inversions, backbends and sun salutations. Please bring a mat or large towel and a hand towel or strap to class.

Hopscotch tiny tots

Tuesdays, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Join Miss Kim for a fantastically fun program containing crafts, music and stories for babies and toddlers.

‘Just Kickin’ It Karaoke’

Mondays, 4 – 5 p.m.
A special summer karaoke hour for kids with a collection of contemporary songs available.

Morning storytime with Kathie

Mondays, 10:30 – 11 a.m.
Children and their families are invited to join us for stories, rhymes and songs.

Patio Pix

Wednesdays, 6 – 8 p.m.
Movies and short films will be shown outside on the library’s patio. For children and teens.

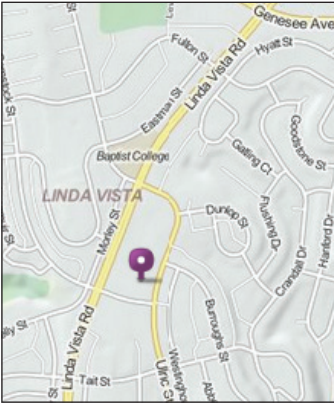
Storytime with Ms. Andie

Saturdays, 11 a.m. – noon
Stretch your imagination and enjoy a story told energetically.

Storytime with Mr. Luan

Fridays, 10:30 – 11:10 a.m.
Energetic storytime that is fun, interactive and educational. The session will include singing and maybe a little dancing.

Linda Vista Branch Library is located at 2160 Ulric St. The library is open Monday 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Thursday and Friday 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.; closed Sunday. For more information, visit lindavistalibrary.org or facebook.com/lvlibrary.■



Community Calendar

AUG 21 – **AUG 23** **Gem Faire**
Friday, Aug. 21 – Sunday, Aug. 23

The Gem Faire returns to the Scottish Rite Event Center (1895 Camino del Rio South, Mission Valley) with a weekend-long event. Admission is \$7 for the entire weekend (children under 12 are free) and there is free parking. Over 100 exhibitors on hand will showcase fine jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, gold and silver and more. Jewelry repair and ring sizing services will be available while you shop. There will also be hourly door prizes given away. The hours are: Friday noon – 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Visit GemFaire.com for more information.

AUG 21 **Civita Friday Movie Night with “Big Hero 6”**
Friday, Aug. 21

Mission Valley housing community Civita will wrap up their summer movie series with this event. This edition features a screening of the 2014 animated film “Big Hero 6” featuring the voices of Scott Adsit, T.J. Miller, Ryan Potter, Daniel Henney, Damon Wayons Jr. and many more. This event is open to the public and attendees are invited to bring their own picnic or partake in free popcorn (starting at 6:30 p.m.). There will also be tacos for sale for \$1 each. The film will start at about 7:45 p.m. at Civita’s temporary park located at the corner of Civita Boulevard and Via Alta. Visit CivitaLife.com for more information.

AUG 22 **Parks Fit Fun Run/Walk**
Saturday, Aug. 22

The City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department is hosting this event to promote a healthy and active lifestyle for

San Diego residents starting at 7:30 a.m. The 5K course winds around NTC Park at Liberty Station. After the run/walk there will be a variety of booths promoting city facilities including park and recreation centers, pools, golf courses and more, which can be utilized by residents to keep active. The post race event will also include games and activities, fitness challenges and more. Participants will receive a Parks Fit drawstring bag and raffle entry for prizes. The event is scheduled to end at noon. Visit SDRecConnect.com to register and for more information.

AUG 22 **“Firescaping with waterwise plants” gardening class**
Saturday, Aug. 22

For this gardening class, Armstrong Garden Centers will teach the basic principles for designing a firescape for your home; and provide plant suggestions as well. The Mission Valley 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.

SEPT 10 **Sixth annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Day**
Thursday, Sept. 10

The San Diego ASIS Chapter hosts this yearly ceremony and luncheon recognizes and celebrates the achievements of San Diego County law enforcement investigators. San Diego District Attorney’s Office chief investigator Adolfo Gonzales will be the keynote speaker. Awards will be presented to investigators from several local agencies. The event will be held at the Admiral Baker Clubhouse (2400 Admiral Baker Road, Mission Valley) from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Visit asissd.org/meetinginfo.php?id=26&ts=1436186919 for more information and to register.■

Mayor: ‘San Diego’s stadium plans are on track’

Ken Williams
Editor

City and county officials on Aug. 10 updated the National Football League on its plans to build a new stadium in Mission Valley and informed residents about three areas of progress that have been made.

The Chargers appear intent on moving to Carson to share a stadium with NFL West rival, the Oakland Raiders. At the same time, the owner of the St. Louis Rams, formerly of Los Angeles, wants to move his team to a new stadium he hopes to build in Inglewood.

Six NFL team owners have been appointed to the commissioner’s Los Angeles relocation committee, and are hearing proposals from the Chargers, Raiders and Rams.

City and county officials cited three steps forward in plans to build a new football facility on



A conceptual stadium design has been created by Populous, an internationally known architectural firm. View from trolley station. (Courtesy of sandiego.gov)

the Qualcomm Stadium site:

— The draft of the environmental impact report (EIR) has been completed. Read it online at bit.ly/1f8pJlg.

— A conceptual stadium design has been created by Populous, an internationally known architectural firm that has designed stadiums for five of the six NFL team owners who sit on the Los Angeles relocation committee. See the concepts online at bit.ly/1f45Ds9.

— A financing concept to build a new stadium without

raising taxes, subject to voter approval, has been made available to the public. Read the document online at bit.ly/1f8psyD.

“San Diego’s stadium plans are on track thanks to our continued regional cooperation and the work of dozens of experts,” Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer said in a statement. “A new stadium means new opportunities. This is an opportunity to replace an aging facility with a world-class sports and entertainment complex that’s an asset to our community, and to forge a new agreement with the Chargers that’s a better deal for taxpayers over what we have currently.”

County Supervisor Ron Roberts backed up Faulconer’s comments.

“The release of this draft environmental impact report proves that at least one San Diego team can deliver on its promises,” Roberts said in a statement. “Under Mayor Faulconer’s leadership, we remain

extremely well positioned to negotiate with the Chargers a stadium deal that will meet the NFL’s timeline.”

The officials said a January special election is still possible if the Chargers return to the negotiating table and agree to financial terms by early September.

“If the NFL wants a franchise in the nation’s eighth largest city, we have demonstrated we can move quickly toward a public vote meeting the NFL’s timetable,” City Attorney Jan Goldsmith said in a statement.

Meanwhile, city staff will be at the Sept. 2 meeting of the Mission Valley Planning Group to discuss the Mission Valley stadium EIR, according to MVPG member John W. Nugent.

—Ken Williams is editor of Mission Valley News and San Diego Uptown News and can be reached at ken@sd cnn.com or at 619-961-1952.■

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7 ways to help trees and shrubs survive heat and drought

Gary Jones

It's one thing to let our lawns go brown when water is tight. They probably shouldn't have been planted in the first place. A thoughtful reimagining will no doubt result in a reasonably easy-to-achieve and beautiful substitution.

Trees and shrubs are another matter, however. They are not easily replaced, nor should we be doing so. Most well-established trees and shrubs are quite waterwise with the exceptions being some tropical plants. Removing, replanting and establishing new trees and shrubs will likely require more water than what has been uprooted.

Nevertheless, these large-scale plants won't survive long without at least some water and a minimal bit of care.

Here's what to consider:

The unusually high humidity we are having this summer is helping. While it's hard on people, it helps plants remain hydrated, lessening the effects desiccating, hot, dry air.

Rather than just giving up and hoping for the best, make a plan to take care of your garden during the torrid months of August, September and October.

An occasional deep watering is what trees and shrubs need to survive. Start by creating a basin or "well" around the trees and shrubs that are no longer being watered automatically. It should hold 3- to 4-inches of water. Unlimited hand-watering with a hose-end shutoff valve is permitted in California. Fill your "wells" two or three times from any device with a shut-off valve every three to four weeks.

Mulch the soil around trees and shrubs. This will help retain whatever moisture is in the soil. You will want to apply a 2- to 3-inch layer of shredded or chunked bark, oak leaves, or any organic material that is very slow to break down. Keep the mulch about 6 inches away from trunks. Mulch out to the drip line — the outward limits of the plant's leaves.

Don't feed with a high-nitrogen fertilizer. This is the op-



Mulching around trees and bushes will help retain moisture in the soil. Unlimited hand-watering with a hose-end shutoff valve is permitted in California. (Photos courtesy of Armstrong Garden Centers)

posite of normal tree and shrub feeding. Usually you want the lush, new growth that nitrogen promotes. But during a drought, you want to avoid new growth that will require additional water support. Instead, feed with a high phosphorus fertilizer that will encourage new root growth, helping plants to access more of the available water.

Don't give trees or shrubs a heavy trimming until late October when the weather cools. Trimming them now will only encourage new growth, which

will require more water to support them.

Most of these suggestions are excellent practices for Mediterranean climates at all times, not just during droughts. If we get normal rain during our rainy season, return to typical tree and shrub fertilizers for feeding.

—Gary Jones is Chief Horticulturist at Armstrong Garden Centers. Email your drought and gardening questions to growingdialogue@armstrong-garden.com. ■



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Lottery, from page 1

The lottery was held Aug. 5 in the library's Community Room during the monthly meeting of the planning group, which acts as an advisory board to city planners.

Dottie Surdi, chair of the Mission Valley Planning Group, picked the names from a container held by Nancy Graham, a senior planner with the city's Planning Department who is assigned to the Mission Valley community. Some candidates were chosen by categories that need to be filled, and then a total of seven at-large seats were picked. Graham said a total of 14 people applied for the 11 seats.

The remaining seats went to:

- **Rebecca Sappefield**, resident tenant.
- **David Norvell**, property owner.
- **John Schneidmiller** of Scottish Rite of San Diego, business owner or representative.
- **Ryan Holborn** of Preferred Employees Insurance Co., employee.
- **Terrance Fox** (property owner), at large.
- **Michael Richter** (South Land Law), at large.
- **Phillip Saenkov** (property owner), at large.
- **Stephen Fluhr** (Westfield), at large.
- **Patrick Pierce** (resident tenant), at large.
- **Richard Ledford** (Riverwalk Property) at large.
- **Karen Tournaire** (property owner) at large.

— *Alternatives: Karen Ruggels (H.G. Fenton Co.) and Rebecca Ritsema (property owner).*

In January, Dottie Surdi, chair of the MVPG, appointed the 12 members from the planning group who will serve on the Community Plan Update Subcommittee. Besides the subcommittee's chair John Nugent, Andrew Michajlenko and Elizabeth Leventhal will serve as vice chairs. Other members appointed were Deborah Bossmeyer, Paul Brown, Perry Dealy, Alan Grant, Rob Huntsel, Ruggels, Marco Sessa, Surdi and Josh Wiselberg.

During the lottery, Surdi announced that Ruggels would no longer be on the subcommittee as a member of the planning group. In her place, Surdi appointed Derek Hulse from the planning group. Ruggels, however, was chosen as an alternative.

— *Ken Williams is editor of Mission Valley News and San Diego Uptown News and can be reached at ken@sdenn.com or at 619-961-1952.*

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Library, from page 1

and we try to make it a safe and welcoming environment for everybody who comes to visit, regardless of their status of whether they're homeless or if they have a home."

Although it is not uncommon for the homeless to frequent libraries, Hubbard said, the Mission Valley branch sees more than its share of homeless patrons because of its proximity to a nearby trolley station as well as the San Diego River bed and surrounding canyons, where many of them have set up make-shift camps.

Earlier this year, a concern was raised because some homeless patrons wanted to bring their shopping carts into the library, fearing that their belongings would be stolen if they left them unattended outside. Library officials objected because leaving carts inside the library would take up too much space and cause a potential fire hazard.

In a memo dated July 16, deputy city attorney Sharon Li stated that the library's restriction against bringing shopping carts inside the building was reasonable, and that the current rules of conduct did not need to be amended.

Also, homeless patrons are not allowed to sleep on the sidewalks around the building. However, the library staff will work with homeless patrons regarding leaving their carts in a safe location outside the library.

San Diego police officer Adam McElroy, who does community relations for the Eastern Division, said he has received an occasional phone call from the Mission Valley Library staff regarding a homeless person who has behaved inappropriately.

"The bulk of the complaints that I get from people, 80 percent or so, are complaining about homeless people," he said, also adding that homelessness is a top concern in the Mission Valley community. "It's a difficult situation for the police. We're not really well-gearred for getting rid of homelessness. It's more of a socio-economic kind of issue.

"We can go out there and address criminal behavior, but in



Someone has left their belongings outside Mission Valley Library. (Photo by Gina McGalliard)

general the kind of criminal behavior that we see them doing is low-level stuff that we would issue tickets on, where the goal of the community calling us would be to basically have them removed or arrested and taken away," McElroy said.

If a homeless person does receive a ticket for a violation and gets sent to jail, they are usually out in a couple days, creating what McElroy calls a "rotating door."

McElroy said he doesn't see the problem of homelessness ever going away, as many homeless people decline mental health and addiction services. He estimated the city's transient population to be around 7,000, which he believes marks an increase from years past. The San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless counted 8,742 homeless people in 2015 across the sprawling county, an increase of 2.8 percent over the 2014 count.

Although city police are fairly limited in their power to prevent the homeless from frequenting certain areas, there are rare cases where authorities can order a homeless individual to stay away.

If "you get a regular who is a constant problem, we are able to file basically a restraining order or a stay-away order if you've got a chronic problem person," said McElroy, who is aware of one case where a homeless person was banned from the library.

As opposed to what some may think, Hubbard said that homeless patrons are often well-behaved because they want to retain their privilege of coming to the library.

"We try to separate it out not by the status of their homelessness, but rather by their behavior. ... We have a zero-tolerance policy for violations of our rules of conduct," Hubbard said. "Many people come in who are homeless who behave fine and are very accepting of the rules ... people think that just because someone is homeless that they have behavior [problems] and that's not necessarily the case."

—Gina McGalliard is a freelance writer who blogs at ginamcgalliard.com/mcgalliard-matters. Email her at ginamcgalliard@gmail.com. ■

Guinea pigs make great pets

Sari Reis



Cute, social and talkative, a guinea pig can be a super pet for a child or an adult who wants a pet to care for but not the greater responsibility of a cat or dog.

As a professional pet sitter, I have cared for several of them and even had one of my own when I was younger. Guinea pig caretaking is an excellent way to teach children about the importance of kindness to animals and the responsibility involved.

Members of the rodent family, guinea pigs are native to South America. Their average lifespan is 4 to 6 years but some have lived as long as 8 years. If you are thinking about getting one of these adorable creatures, here are some of the essentials you need to know about caring for them.

Guinea pigs need and love exercise so their cage should be large enough to run around in. It should have a solid floor, and bedding should be soft and absorbent. It should also be odor-free. Recycled paper bedding, spread thickly, is the best option. Since they are very clean animals, it is important that soiled bedding be cleaned daily and the entire cage cleaned weekly. They need a plentiful supply of clean water, which should be delivered in a bottle hung on the inside of the cage. The water needs to be changed daily and it is important to make sure the water tube is not clogged.

The mainstay of the guinea pig's diet is timothy hay, and lots of it. They can also be given plain pellets but no more than two tablespoons for an adult. Since these rodents do not produce their own vitamin C, it must come from their food. The hay and pellets will provide the needed vitamins with the addition of vegetables. Collard greens, parsley, broccoli, bell peppers and romaine lettuce



Guinea pig (Courtesy of author)

are good for them. Two or three small pieces of veggies can be given daily.

Since guinea pigs need exercise and love human interaction, they should be taken out of their cages regularly in a safe environment, to run around as well as sit in your lap. They should also have some toys for stimulation and to chew on — to keep their front teeth properly sized. Toys can include tunnels, tubes they run through, balls made from natural materials, and special chew toys.

As social animals, these little critters love to talk and will keep you amused with their chatter and their antics. You can find out more about them at guineapigcorner.com.

If you are considering acquiring a dog or cat in the near future, I recommend that you attend the 7th annual Doggie Street Festival at NTC Park Liberty Station on Aug. 22 from 9 a.m. — 4 p.m. It will be a great event for all animal lovers, and there will be lots of wonderful dogs and cats available for adoption. For more information, go to doggiestreetfestival.org.

—Sari Reis is a Certified Humane Education Specialist and the owner of Mission Valley Pet Sitting services. For more information you can contact her at 760-644-0289 or missionvalleypetsitting.com. ■

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