



MISSION VALLEY News

June 10, Issue 6 June 10 – July 7, 2016

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A hiker walks her dogs along the Shawn Avenue entrance to Ruffin Canyon. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

UP the CANYON

New, enhanced trails will provide recreation, greater connectivity

Jeff Clemetson
Editor

A grant from the California Coastal Conservancy has enabled San Diego Canyonlands (SDCL) to begin the process of expanding trails throughout several local canyon areas. The first on the list is a trail through Ruffin Canyon that will eventually link up with the San Diego River Park.

"Ruffin Canyon has the potential of linking the Serra Mesa community to ... Mission Valley and eventually linking to the San Diego River

Trail system," SDCL director Eric Bowlby said. "People could, theoretically, link into this trail all the way up in Serra Mesa and bike all the way to the beach; or go the other way towards the mountains because eventually there's going to be a coast-to-crest trail that follows the San Diego River both east and west to the beach."

SDCL was awarded the California Coastal Conservancy grant to plan canyon enhancement in 12 canyons in the city of San Diego. Other canyons on the list include Maple Canyon, Manzanita Canyon, Mission Hills Canyon and Chollas Creek Oak Park Branch.

As of now, the Ruffin Canyon trail is only in the pre-planning stage. The grant is funding

See CANYON page 3

Franklin Ridge Road connector is debated at planning meeting


Jeff Clemetson
Editor

At the June 1 meeting of the Mission Valley Planning Group, residents and board members debated the merits of a road proposed to connect Serra Mesa and Mission Valley through the Civita development.

Seth Litchney from the San Diego City Planning Department presented the findings of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the connector road that would extend Franklin Ridge Road to meet up with Phyllis Place. The road has been controversial because the Mission Valley Community Plan includes the road but the Serra Mesa Community Plan does not.

San Diego City Council initiated an amendment to the Serra Mesa Community Plan to include the connector, which offered another option to get to Friars Road from Serra Mesa, Litchney said.

See RIDGE ROAD page 2



OPEN TOWN HALL

Join the discussion. Officials and staff will consider all input submitted through Open Town Hall in their decision-making process.

[Read more](#)

With the new online forum, residents can give their input on the Mission Valley Community Plan. (sandiego.gov)

What's your vision?

City seeks your opinion on Mission Valley's future

Ken Williams
Contributing Editor

You don't have to leave the comfort of your home to give your opinion on the future of Mission Valley.

Public input is being sought on the update of the Mission Valley Community Plan, an important city document that will guide development and public investment priorities for the next two decades. The community plan was last updated in 1985, and an amendment was approved in 2013.

"We want the public to be part of this process," said Nancy Graham, a senior planner with the city's Planning Department

who is the project manager for the Mission Valley Community Plan Update.

"This is an effective and convenient way for residents and stakeholders to help shape the future of Mission Valley, all from the privacy and convenience of their own home."

Part of the city's General Plan, the Mission Valley Community Plan is

See PLAN page 12



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Mission Valley Community Update Plan Subcommittee** will meet at 3 p.m. Friday, June 10, at the Mission Valley Library, 2123 Fenton Parkway.
- **Mission Valley Planning Group's Design Advisory Board** will meet at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 5, at the library — due to the July 4 holiday.
- **Mission Valley Planning Group** will meet at noon Wednesday, July 6, at the library.



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Friday Movie Nights
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July 15 | Zootopia
August 19 | Back to the Future

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Town and Country reveals design ideas for park

Jeff Clemetson
Editor

On June 6, the city of San Diego held a workshop for the future river park at the Town and Country Resort & Convention Center where tentative designs were revealed and input from the public was encouraged.

The future park is part of a complete overhaul of the dated resort, which will also include housing, a parking garage and a makeover of the hotel. The park will be 4.33 acres along 7.71 acres of restored river habitat, much of it replacing current asphalt parking areas, and it will be situated on both sides of the pedestrian bridge that currently connects the Town and Country property to the Fashion Valley Transit Center and the mall.

"Today, where the location of the public park is, it's a heavily-urbanized, certainly degraded environment, so we're taking that and really converting it into something that looks like Mission Valley's Central Park," said Todd Majcher, vice president of Lowe



One of the conceptual drawings of the park at Town and Country Resort (Courtesy of MIG)

Enterprises, which is the lead developer on the the Town and Country project.

Principal designer Richard Barrett shared three potential design concepts, each based on separate themes. The final design, he said, may end up being a mix of some or all of them, or even contain new ones brought forth by the public.

The first concept incorporated the theme of "agricultural valley" — a nod to Mission Valley's agrarian past.

"For over 200 years, Mission Valley was agricultural; from mid-1700s and before during Native American use of the valley, through European development and up to the 1940s," Barrett said.

This concept includes amenities like shade structures and pavers designed to resemble crop fields. Some areas would include things like slews for children to play with and core tin walls for sitting.

The "upside down river" concept highlights the natural features of the San Diego River, which is deep in some area, shallow in others and subject to flooding as it winds down to the ocean. Design elements include concrete "lily pads," walls that mimic the river geology, and curving benches that imitate the serpentine shape of the river.

The third design is based on urban flooding. Barrett said

See PARK page 11

► Ridge Road, from page 1

The proposed road would be four lanes wide and have bike and pedestrian features.

The PEIR analyzed the road's impact to land use, air quality, noise and biology, and concluded they could be mitigated. However, the report found traffic could not be mitigated on connecting streets, highways and intersections.

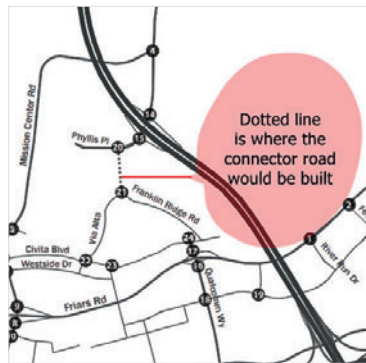
"The impact on traffic would remain significant and unavoidable," Litchney said.

Board member John Laraia said the subcommittee of the planning group that looked at the PEIR voted 4 to 1 in favor of recommending to approve the road but with a contingency clause to address problems with the report.

He then motioned to support road construction "in theory" as described in the [PEIR] but also ask the city to further address the following areas: increase discussion on noise impact concerns; address the Bike Master Plan; address the quantitative analysis on the no road alternative, specifically as to how a no road alternative will impact other connection points in Mission Valley; show clearly how traffic is reduced with the connection; address Caltrans on metering light cueing at the Duboce Place/Interstate 805 ramp; and correct apparent inconsistencies in the executive summary.

The motion then brought discussion among the planning group as well as from community members who came to speak in favor of or against the road construction.

Board member Josh Weiselberg spoke against building the road and was the lone vote against approving the PEIR in the subcommittee. He said that it would be better to encourage more development of light rail rather than build roads that encourage car traffic and suggested that the Mission Valley Community Plan should



be amended to match Serra Mesa's and have no road.

Laraia agreed that mass transit is preferred but that the planners should work with what they have at the moment.

"Today we have ... freeways and connections to those freeways and the fewer connections you have, the more back up you have, and the more connections, you have traffic flowing better," he said, adding that the report on this road has been worked on for more than 30 years.

"Well for 30 years they've been working on a bad idea," Weiselberg said.

Bryce Niceswangler, a local resident, said she read the entire PEIR and noted the report stated that the connector road will not improve the level of service, currently graded F, on existing roads leading to Interstates 8 and 805.

"My conclusion ... is to not recommend the Serra Mesa Plan be amended based on the facts that the alternatives are not comprehensive, [the PEIR] does not meet the proposed goals and is fundamentally inadequate."

Board member Deborah Bossmeyer said she was not necessarily against the road, but voiced concern about how it will affect the residents along Via Alta, which will also be connected to Serra Mesa by the proposed road.

"The difference between Via Alta and all these others is you have doorsteps walking right out onto [the street]," she said, adding that bedrooms and

balconies in those residences also face the street.

Marco Sessa, a senior vice president for Sudberry Properties, said Civita has two transportation phasing plans.

"One says everything that we have to do if the road connection is in and one says all the different things we have to do if the project doesn't have a road connection," he said, explaining that without the road connection, improvements need to be made at places like Mission Center Drive and Interstate 8 and the Friars Road connections to State Route 163 and Interstate 15.

"At the end, they all cost the same, which is about \$50 million worth of work that has Civita funding for," he said.

Paul Brown voiced his support for the PEIR, pointing to the time and money spent on it and that the city must "rely on something" to make its decision.

Rob Hutsel supported the PEIR because it was part of the Mission Valley Plan, but voiced frustration over the process.

"It is unfortunate that any of us are in a pickle like this," he said. "Two community groups should not be pitted against each other. It should not happen."

The board took a vote on the motion to recommend the PEIR, which ended in a 7-7 tie. That means the report will go in front of the San Diego Planning Commission without a recommendation unless the planning group decides to take the issue up again.

Litchney said the commission will take comments on the PEIR under consideration. Comments must be submitted in writing by June 20, sent to: Seth Litchney, City Planner, City of San Diego Planning Department, 1010 Second Ave. MS 413, San Diego, CA 92101.

—Reach Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdenn.com.



Ruffin Canyon may soon be home to a new trail that will connect Serra Mesa to the San Diego River Park. (Graphic by Todd Kammer)

► Canyon, from page 1

the conceptual trail design and also the process of gathering input from all the various neighbors along the proposed trail.

“All the stakeholders — people from Serra Mesa, Mission Valley and Escala — will be involved in a discussion about linking trails and trying to fulfill a vision to connect down to the San Diego River,” Bowlby said. “We want to be as open and have as much involvement with the stakeholders as we can; that’s the idea.”

Other stakeholders that own nearby properties include SDG&E and San Diego Unified School District.

Neighbors and interested parties will have an opportunity to hear first-hand about SDCL’s trail plans on June 25 when the group will lead a guided tour through Ruffin Canyon. The tour is free and runs from 9 to 11:30 a.m. The tour starts at the trail head off the 9300 block of Shawn Avenue near the intersection of Amulet Street in Serra Mesa.

“We’ll hike in the canyon to look at all kinds of natural



The current trail at the bottom of Ruffin Canyon is too rocky for bikes and uncomfortable for hikers. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

resources and our incredibly unique habitats we have in San Diego and we’ll also talk about the need for trails and trail alignments and we’ll talk about the vision of connecting all the way down to the coast,” Bowlby said.

The tour will use the existing trail through Ruffin, which is at the bottom of the canyon and is perpetually damaged by rainfall.

“People should wear dirty, ankle-supporting shoes because it is rocky in the bottom of that canyon and there’s no real comfortable trail at this point in time,” he said.

The vision for the proposed trail has two possible routes right now, Bowlby said, but they are subject to change depending on the outcome of the stakeholder process. One route goes through Sandrock Canyon area and the other starts at the end of Shawn Avenue in Serra Mesa. The trail might then go south along Ruffin Canyon before connecting to an easement through the Escala neighborhood in Mission Valley. That easement connects to the pedestrian tunnel under Friars Road and then to a sidewalk along Fenton Parkway and ending at the San Diego River near the Mission Valley Library. Going north, the trail may end at either Taft Middle School if the Shawn Avenue route is used, or Sandrock Canyon if the Sandrock Canyon route is picked.

Whichever route is used, the trail will be built into the slope and above the flood plain. It will be roughly 4 feet wide and may include small parks and informational signage, but those details won’t be worked on until after the stakeholders get together.

“Once there is community agreement and a comprehensive enhancement plan for the entire Ruffin Canyon,

then SDCL can spend money on designing the trails,” Bowlby said.

Coming to agreement has already had some difficulty. Some homeowners along Walker Drive in Serra Mesa have already voiced opposition to a trail running behind their backyards. They expressed concern over possible issues with transients. Bowlby thinks a trail will actually improve transient issues.

“Well, there are transients using the canyon now, and the trails are pretty rough,” he said. “They usually like isolation and choose places to camp where it is difficult to be seen or found. Trails with lots of user activity can thus be a deterrent.”

Other issues neighbors may have include the possibility of destabilizing the slope and damage to important ecosystems.

“There are endangered species in Ruffin Canyon, the California Gnat Catcher, and so we would choose routes that cause as little impact to habitat as we could for this,” Bowlby said.

Once the plan has community support, he said, the next step is to secure funding to complete a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) study, which is required before permits to build the trail can be issued. The city has development services funds “waiting to be spent” on a trail through Ruffin Canyon but the money can’t be released until it is shovel-ready, after the CEQA report is completed and the project is approved.

“At that point, they are willing to reimburse anyone that has spent that money to go through the process,” he said.

After that, it will just be a matter of building the trail.

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

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Food Network founder coming to Mission Valley for book signing

Frank Sabatini Jr.



Jack Clifford quickly agrees with critics that programming on the Food Network is vastly different today than when he launched it in 1993 to 200,000 households – and not necessarily for the better.

For those who fondly recall the early shows that aired straightforward cooking lessons around the clock — “Essence of Emeril,” “Molto Mario,” “Two Hot Tamales,” “Cooking Live with Sara Moulton,” and many others — Clifford shares a plethora of nostalgic anecdotes about the network’s initial evolution as well as his illustrious media career in the book, “The Least Likely to Succeed” (Lone Wolfe Press).

The affable Michigan native, who now resides in Chula Vista and also owns a home in Coronado, will share his tales and sign copies of the book at 11:30 a.m., June 30, at the Mission Valley Resort, 875 Hotel Circle South.

When discussing today’s Food Network format in a recent phone conversation, he quickly stated: “I’d like to see more cooking and less contests,” referring to the glut of reality-based elimination shows stacked with celebrity chefs, restaurateurs and food writers as judges.

“I originally saw the network as a way of teaching people how to cook,” he adds. “I’m disappointed by the lack of those kinds of shows.”

Clifford sold the Food Network to Belo Corporation in Dallas in 1997 after expanding its reach to more than 100 million households. (It’s now owned by Scripps Networks Interactive.) Decades before creating it, he started out as a sports announcer and disc jockey for an AM radio station in Kalamazoo, Michigan while completing his degree in communications from Western Michigan University.

He would later excel in sales, as well as scriptwriting and directing live television shows for various affiliates of the three major networks (ABC, CBS and NBC). His climb up the ladder took him to Arizona; California; and Atlanta, Georgia, where he befriended Ted Turner.

“Ted would tell me that cable TV systems were becoming more important than network television,” Clifford recalls, adding that his “big break” came in 1977 at the Providence Journal

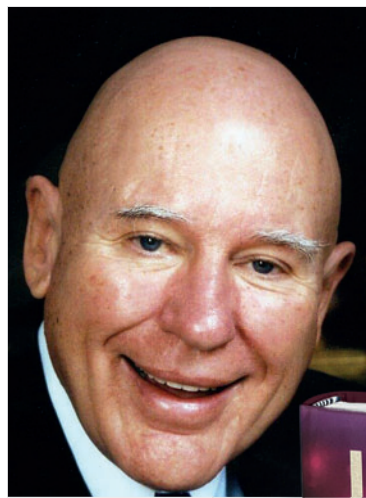
Company in Rhode Island, where he developed 12 television stations serving millions of viewers in nine states.

“I was put in charge of their non-newspaper operations, and I became the senior vice president of the company.”

Clifford retired from Providence in 1997 with the legacy of not only inventing the Food Network during his tenure, but for turning it into a hot channel among cable subscribers while sustaining the support of investors and big advertisers.

“There were plenty of sports and news and everything else on cable networks at the time — but not food. We really didn’t have any competition,” he says.

His book contains dozens of testimonies by industry veterans who worked with Clifford throughout his career, including



Jack Clifford created the Food Network and is now a local resident. (Photo by Beverly Clifford)

a forward written by Robin Leach reminiscing about the “rodents that ran across the floor of the studio” during a live Christmas Eve dinner Leach hosted on the Food Network’s Manhattan set.

The pages also highlight Clifford’s academic struggles in high school, and how his sister, Rosejean Clifford Hinsdale, inspired him to enroll in college. The book, in fact, is dedicated to her.

“We came from a family of modest means, and I was academically and socially at the bottom rung during my high school years,” he says. “And I was voted the least likely to succeed by my classmates.”

Clifford credits numerous broadcasting and corporate mentors for his achievements, and speaks highly of the early talents that helped shape the Food Network.

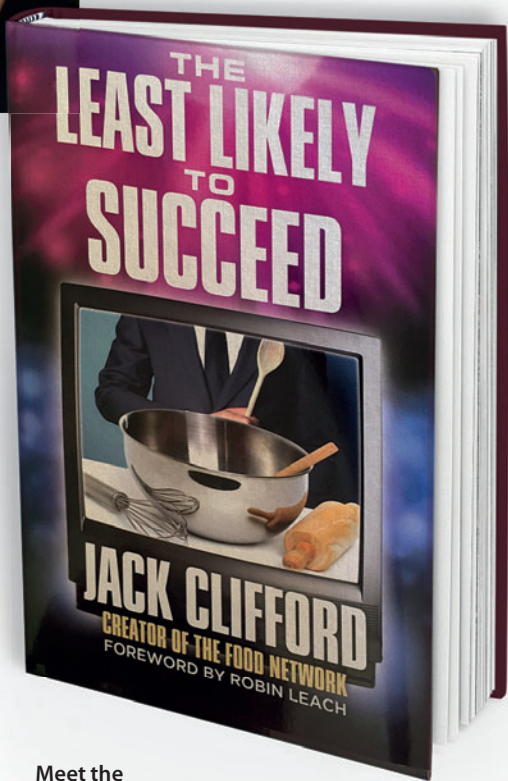
“The show that Leach did making holiday dinner with his famous friends was absolutely important to the success of the network,” he notes. “We aired it every year for a while.”

Viewers also took well to Emeril Lagasse, who Clifford says was “frightened by the cameras at first until we gave him a live audience to interact with.”

Other notable hosts of the ’90s included Mario Batali, Wolfgang Puck and Debbi Fields of Mrs. Fields cookies, all of whom cooked the food for their shows in a kitchen adjacent to the New York studio.

“They carried their prepared meals into our fake kitchen during commercial breaks to make them look like they were cooked on set. We did it that way because of New York City fire codes, which were later relaxed,” he revealed before pointing out that “we offered Martha Stewart a show, but she turned it down.”

When asked if he held any personal interest in culinary arts that may have fueled his ambition for the Food Network, he said, “My father was a chef before I was born and my mother was a homemaker who made wonderful German foods – but my true love was in broadcasting.”



Meet the man behind the book this month at the Mission Valley Resort. (Photo by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

Clifford began visiting San Diego for vacations with his late first wife, Marguerite, several years after retiring. He has since remarried and manages to squeeze in book signings about three times a month in cities around the country.

“I overcame the liability of ‘least likely to succeed,’ and because of that I started a scholarship fund for senior-year students from my high school in Michigan to help them go to college.”

Clifford’s book can be purchased on major websites for \$24.95, although it will be available in limited quantities for \$20 at the upcoming book signing.

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

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On-the-spot storytelling

Mission Valley local brings age-old art to Finest City Improv

Margie M. Palmer

Storytelling is among the oldest and most effective forms of communication; it's taken various shapes and forms since the beginning of humanity.

Thus, it's no great surprise that Finest City Improv, the home of the largest variety of improvised comedy in San Diego, has decided to feature the tradition in its monthly show, A Moment of Truth.

Finest City Improv founder Amy Lisweski said that while expert improvisers are trained to embrace off-the-cuff storytelling, the storytellers in this show aren't all trained in improv.

"They're speaking from the heart and sharing their values,

their truths and their memories in a very open way," she said.

Joining the show this month is Mission Valley resident Kendall Burdett. He, along with co-host Robert Rutherford, hope to get participants to embrace the idea of being vulnerable.

The pair are part of The Narrators San Diego, a group which promotes the art of storytelling and provides community access to storytelling events. Last year, The Narrators found a home in San Diego every second Tuesday of each month at Tiger! Tavern in North Park.

The group has since united with Finest City Improv to tell stories and cultivate an atmosphere of support and joyful honesty.



Mission Valley resident Kendall Burdett co-hosts Finest City Improv's "A Moment of Truth." (Courtesy of Finest City Improv)



"A Moment of Truth" encourages audience members to become storytellers during the show. (Courtesy of Finest City Improv)

"The Moment of Truth is something we wanted to do because it involves improv along with storytelling, which is another thing that's becoming big [in San Diego]. The city has a huge storytelling community," Burdett said, adding that there is a lot of overlap between the two genres. "[The show] intersects them by having people tell true stories from their lives. They'll come up and draw the theme out of a hat and they'll need to tell that story on the spot. That's where the improv part comes in."

Although some will be funny, Burdett said some of the best stories are more dramatic.

"There's no preparation for this other than what someone draws out of the hat," he said.

Interested volunteers will be invited on stage to tell

five-minute stories; they won't be interrupted. The subjects will vary and will range from awkward and hilarious to heart-breaking and inspired.

Lisewski describes the best part of the show as the moment when the storyteller hears their audience-chosen topic.

"While they take a minute to digest their topic, you can see the wheels turning and the creative process unfolding," she said. "We all have these moments in life where we must pause, think about our next step, and then move forward with confidence. It's a very moving moment to witness."

Burdett said he wants people to know that those who attend the performance are by no means required to participate.

"Just being in the audience is wonderful," he said. "If people

want to participate or volunteer they should know this is the most supportive environment they can imagine. There is no failing here. The best stories are the ones that are true and you should never be afraid to share something from your life, no matter how awkward, embarrassing or vulnerable it makes you," he said. "It's OK to be vulnerable in life, on stage and off."

The next Moment of Truth experience is scheduled for Saturday, June 11 at 7 p.m. at the Lafayette Hotel in North Park. For more information or to buy advance tickets visit finestcityimprov.com.

—Margie M. Palmer is a San Diego-based freelance writer who has been racking up bylines for a myriad of publications for the past decade. Reach her at mmpst19@gmail.com. ■

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Guest Editorials

Concrete solution to San Diego’s growing infrastructure needs

Councilmember **Mark Kersey** and **Kris Michell**

In San Diego, we see every day how neighborhood improvements can have a positive impact on our quality of life. New streetlights make our community safer. Fixing sidewalks increases walkability and improves business frontages. New bike lanes take cars off the road and reduce traffic.

In recent years, residents have seen more of this kind of work because improved economic times have allowed for spending on infrastructure, and Mayor Kevin Faulconer and the City Council have chosen to make it a priority. City streets are being re-surfaced at the rate of 300 miles a year, stormwater and drainage systems are being replaced, public safety facilities including police, lifeguard and fire stations are being built or restored and parks are coming on line.

While this is no doubt positive, it hasn’t always been this way. Fiscal turmoil and budgetary constraints caused by the economic downturn have tied the hands of our elected leaders for more than a decade, forcing infrastructure to be

pushed down City Hall’s to-do list. Civic leaders and residents meanwhile struggled to come to consensus on where to get the money needed to address the problem.

With each passing year, the project backlog grew, and by 2015, a city report identified \$3.87 billion in rotting infrastructure needs.

While city leaders have recently done a great job chipping away at the backlog, we need to take steps to ensure we never fall behind again. In June’s primary election, San Diego voters are being given a big say on the future direction of San Diego when they go to the polls to vote on a ballot measure that will determine the future of our city’s infrastructure security. We urge you to support Proposition H.

Commonly referred to as the Rebuild San Diego measure, Prop H secures up to \$4 billion in future revenue growth specifically for infrastructure — and does so without raising taxes. It’s a long-term plan that ensures the city budget reflects the priorities of San Diego residents who have said time and again that public facilities such as good streets and sidewalks should be among our top budget priorities.

Rather than asking voters to reach into their pockets, a bipartisan super-majority of the City Council sent Proposition H to the ballot in order to prove they can do more with existing tax money. Prop H relies on *expected growth* in existing revenue streams, and sets aside a portion for infrastructure repair and construction. This ensures infrastructure will remain a key budget priority even as we come out of the crisis stage we’re in now.

Under the measure, over the next 25 years, the city will reserve any growth in the sales tax above the rate of the Consumer Price Index and capture all cash savings from reduced payments to the city’s pension fund. Proposition H will also capture 50 percent of all growth in property tax, hotel tax and franchise fees over the next five years.

The measure isn’t taking money away from other needs to help pay for infrastructure improvements, either; in fact, Proposition H will not take a single dollar away from what is already budgeted for other general fund needs. Instead, it relies on the natural growth of the economy. As the economy grows, the city will invest more in infrastructure. In years it

slows, we’ll invest less. If we hit an economic crisis, the measure allows for a one-year suspension upon a vote of the Council.

Let’s not forget that by providing a steady funding stream dedicated to infrastructure, Proposition H will also provide steady jobs for San Diegans. From street repairs to building maintenance, the majority of work will be done by local companies and workers.

In addition to the Downtown San Diego Partnership, Proposition H is supported by Mayor Faulconer, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce and the San Diego County Taxpayers Association.

For San Diego and Downtown to reach its fullest potential as a world-class city, it’s necessary that we invest in our local assets. We urge your support for Proposition H on Tuesday, June 7th. Let’s continue the momentum and Rebuild San Diego.

—Kris Michell is president and CEO of the Downtown San Diego Partnership. Councilmember Mark Kersey represents the City of San Diego’s 5th Council District. He is Chairman of the City’s Infrastructure Committee. ■

Renters will benefit from improvements to smoke detectors

Molly **Kirkland**

Not long ago, I spoke with a renter who told me about some trouble he was having with a smoke detector in his San Diego apartment.

The device was installed on the ceiling just outside a bathroom, and unless the bathroom door was securely shut, the steam from a hot shower would set off the alarm. This resident said he and his roommates had resorted to covering the hypersensitive smoke detector with tape and a paper towel.

Please, don’t try this at home!

California law requires landlords to install and maintain smoke detectors in rental properties, and for good reason: Smoke detectors are one of the cheapest and most effective

ways to save lives and protect property in the event of a fire. But since fires happen so rarely, most residents’ interactions with their smoke detectors are more likely to be false alarms from burnt popcorn or incessant chirping from a battery that needs to be replaced.

If you’re having trouble with a smoke detector that is too sensitive or needs a new battery, don’t bother trying to fix it yourself. Call your landlord or property manager and ask for their help. Not only is it their job to keep the smoke detectors in good working order, it’s also in their own best interest to protect the investment they have made in the property. They will be happy to come in and make any adjustments necessary.

In the past couple years, California has adopted some

additional laws that should make it even less likely that you’ll have a problem with a smoke detector. Beginning this year, when a landlord replaces a smoke alarm, they must replace it with an alarm that has a “hush” or silencing feature. This allows the resident to press a button that easily turns the alarm off if there’s not actually a fire — no more furiously fanning the device with a towel or removing the battery to get the alarm to turn off.

The law now also requires that new battery-powered smoke detectors come with a battery that cannot be replaced or removed; the battery must be able to power the smoke detector for a minimum of 10 years. This should make it far less likely that you’ll ever hear chirping from an alarm that needs a new battery.

The new laws allow landlords to keep their existing smoke detectors in place as long as they are still in working condition, so renters will likely see this new generation of devices appear gradually rather than all at once. Smoke detectors are now also required in each bedroom or sleeping unit. Your landlord will periodically come inspect detectors to make sure they are properly maintained.

Despite the occasional annoyance, smoke detectors serve a vital purpose for both renters and landlords. Keep them in good working order and you’ll be in good shape in case of a real emergency.

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



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A lesson on Wikipedia

Congressional Watch

Andy Cohen



Much like Duncan Hunter in last month's column, it was a rough May for **Darrell Issa (R-49)**.

First, there was the serious matter of the Congressional investigation of the IRS, with Republicans seeking to impeach IRS Commissioner John Koskinen for singling out conservative organizations that claimed tax exempt status; accusations that have been proven again and again to be baseless after numerous Issa investigations as Chair of the House Oversight Committee.

Just how serious is this impeachment proceeding against Koskinen? Serious enough for Ron DeSantis (R-FL) to use it as a fundraising ploy. Nothing like a good ol' partisan witch-hunt to fill the campaign coffers.

But there was a hitch in the plan proffered by the Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee: None of them seem sure what qualifies as an impeachable offense. As the Washington Post's Dana Milbank wrote, "Everything Darrell Issa knows about impeachment he learned from Wikipedia."

"You and I are not lawyers," Issa told committee chair Jason Chaffetz during a Judiciary Committee hearing. "According

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vargas.house.gov

to Wikipedia, at least, the definition of high crimes and misdemeanors constitutionally says it covers allegations of misconduct ..." Issa then went on to cite the examples presented by Wikipedia contributors.

Wikipedia, for those who are unaware, is an open source website to which just about anyone can contribute. It is not acceptable as a source for academic or investigative purposes.

But that was not the end of the Issa follies for the month. House Republicans had added a provision into the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would have opened the door for contractors to openly discriminate against LGBT individuals.

The amendment states that every branch of the federal government "shall provide protections and exemptions" to any religious corporation, educational institution, or society that receives a federal government contract, purchase order, grant or cooperative agreement that is consistent with the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

What the provision does is open the door for any entity doing business with the government

to claim that their religious conscience requires them to discriminate against LGBT individuals.

Encouragingly, it was also Republicans who led the charge to strip the provision out of the bill. As an amendment to remove the language from the NDAA went to the floor for a vote, members believed they had the 217 voted needed to strip the offensive language and move on. However, at the last moment, seven Republicans switched their votes from "yes" to "no." Among the seven who switched their vote was Darrell Issa.

No one will say why Issa and the six others switched their vote, but Rep. Charlie Dent (R-FL), who sponsored the amendment to remove the discriminatory provision, believes they were pressured by Republicans who did not want to be on record voting for the NDAA with LGBT protections in place.

Susan Davis (D-53) took a stand against a bill that, according reports, promotes fossil fuel generation and consumption and creates new subsidies for coal, and seeks to resurrect the now defunct Keystone XL pipeline.

"We need an energy policy suited for the 21st century that invests in the future," Davis said in a press release. "This bill is tone deaf to our energy needs and the crisis we face from climate change. If you wanted to hasten

the effects of climate change, this would be the bill to do it."

The House bill would also seriously dismantle the Endangered Species Act in an effort to effect water distribution in California, and take steps to hamper enforcement efforts on the illegal ivory trade.

"I reject the notion that the only way to provide drought relief is to put endangered species at risk," the Davis release said. "Sadly, the bill before the House simply continues a fight that opponents of the Endangered Species Act have been waging for decades and framing it as drought relief."

In a related note, Donald Trump informed supporters at a rally in Fresno that there was, in fact, no drought. The evidence backing his claim remains a mystery.

Scott Peters (D-52) returned a campaign donation from the father of Democratic Rep. Ami Bera of Sacramento. Babulal Bera pleaded guilty to two felony counts of election fraud involving the finances of his son's campaign. The senior Bera had contributed the maximum \$5,400 to Peters' campaign last year, campaign donations that were perfectly legal. However, according to Peters' spokesperson, the decision was made to return the money in order to avoid the appearance of association with the corruption charges, despite the fact that the

charges stem from the 2010 and 2012 campaigns and had nothing to do with the current cycle.

Duncan Hunter (R-50) is feeling a little slighted, having been "snubbed" by presumptive GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump. Trump was in Washington, D.C. for his much-publicized meeting with House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, along with other Republican Congressional leaders, but chose not to meet with the rank-and-file, such as Hunter.

Hunter, who was among the very first members of Congress to endorse the reality TV star, noted that Trump had received multiple requests to meet with some of his supporters in Congress, but Trump refused.

"I think it would have been good of him to meet with the first endorsers," Hunter told Politico.

"If they endorse him, then go back to their districts to say that they've met him and he's not crazy, it goes a long way," Hunter said.

Both Hunter and Issa have endorsed Trump for president and each had the opportunity to introduce Trump at his rally at the San Diego Convention Center in late May.

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





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Get your home ready to rent

ASK KATHY



Kathy McSherry

Hi Kathy:
I own a home in Serra Mesa that I purchased in 1980 for \$37,000. And frankly, after my wife of 22 years passed, and being 65 years of age, I never thought I would leave. That is until a miracle happened two years ago and my now bride-to-be came into my life. My fiancé lives in Temecula, and after our upcoming nuptials, I will be moving into her home as we have chosen to live together there. We will then rent my home in Serra Mesa. I was wondering what I need to be aware of in order to prepare my home for any tenants that may decide to rent from me. Codes and requirements may have changed since my original purchase and I would like to know what specifically I should look for, and/or what steps should I take in preparation?

—Jim B.

Hi Jim:
First, allow me to congratulate you and your new bride. I've often questioned what is more difficult; finding a new home, or a new partner? Clearly you have managed both!
Your question regarding your existing home and preparing for renters is so significant. The first item that comes to mind is carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Many of the older homes are still missing

these safety mechanisms. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. It can be very toxic to humans and any oxygen-breathing organism.
In addition, 70 percent of all fire deaths are from smoke inhalation and not burns. It can take just one or two breaths of smoky air to render someone unconscious.
A safety tip that will cost you nothing, is that if you are over 62, the Burn Institute of San Diego will come to your home and install smoke detectors for free. That's right. No cost to you. It's called The Senior Fire Safety and Smoke Alarm Program, and the telephone number is 858-541-2277.
Studies have shown that the chances of someone over 65

dying in a fire increase twofold as compared to their younger counterparts. And, if you are over 75, your chances of dying in a fire are quadrupled. It would be so wise to take advantage of this free and valuable program.
Secondly, I would suggest you hire a licensed home inspector. This will help you identify and fix any critical issues or maintenance problems before your tenant moves in. Not only could this save you from answering maintenance phone calls on a holiday or in the middle of the night, or in an emergency situation, it could help protect against any legal issues. Having a home inspection both before a tenant moves in, and after a tenant moves out,

would also provide for third party documentation, should you need it.
Basic rental hygiene, and making your home look the most up to date and trendy will attract the most qualified tenants and get you the best bank for your rental.
Here are a few more tips for you to consider when preparing your home to rent:

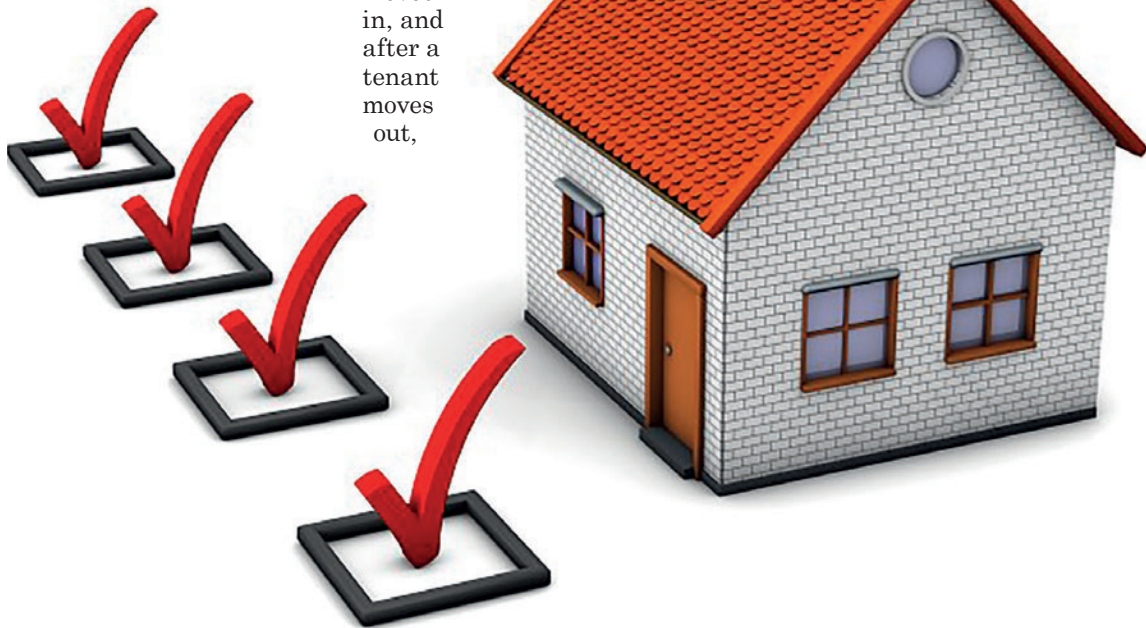
- Rekey locks if necessary. If anyone besides yourself has had a key at some point, you might consider rekeying all locks and changing garage door remotes and mailbox keys.
- A fresh coat of paint. Check for any holes in walls that may need repairing and consider repainting. It's amazing how fresh and

alive a home can become with freshly painted walls.

- Change your air filters.
- Inspect and clean windows and sliding doors.
- Clean, repair or replace screens if needed.
- Attend to the landscaping of your home and spray for pests. Sprucing up your yard and enhancing curb appeal will also contribute to getting top dollar.
- Do you have fire extinguishers? Equip the kitchen and each floor of the home with one.
- Professionally clean carpets and/or replace if necessary.
- Make sure all emergency exits are free and clear of obstacles.
- Check into landlord insurance. In addition to your homeowner's insurance you will want to have landlord property insurance which will give you added protection should something bad go down with your home.
- Consider whether you will manage it yourself or need to hire a property management company.
- Check with your CPA regarding the tax benefits associated with owning a rental.

Jim, as lovely as I know Serra Mesa to be, tenants expect to rent a home that is move-in ready. Taking steps to make your home feel like a real home to your future tenants goes a long way.
Best of luck Jim in your new ventures. How wonderful and exciting to have some new beginnings!

—Kathy McSherry is a veteran realtor in Mission Valley with Caldwell Banker West. Email your questions to her at ask.kathy@outlook.com.■



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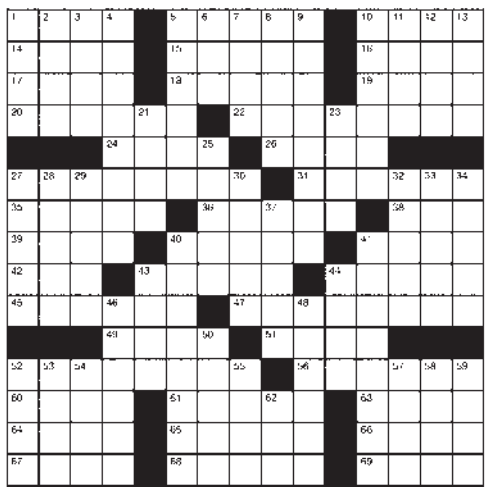
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MVN Puzzles

MISSION VALLEY NEWS

Crossword Solutions on page 12



- ACROSS
- 1 A real winner

5 Drummer's concern

10 Saucy

14 act

15 helmet

16 Smell

17 Alt, e.g.

18 Was compelled

19 Plan's instrument

20 We, the

22 Drains

24 Metrical foot

26 Swing's partner

27 Fore-and-aft sails

31 Commence business

35 What poi is

36 Debtors

38 WWII agcy.

39 Member of the choir

40 Forbidding

41 Let it stand!

42 Hawaiian token of welcome

43 Anesthetic

44 Offer an opinion

45 Printing errors

47 Forebodes

49 Twine

51 Ceremony
- 52 It's often removed with a needle

56 Peculiar fellow

60 Mount or Robin

61 Hi lide

63 Cloy

64 Gem

65 Say

66 Forearm bone

67 Gainsay

68 They're taken by the conscientious

69 Fruit
- DOWN
- 1 Set off, as a trigger

2 French river

3 Marco's surname

4 Enter

5 Devious idea

6 Constellation

7 Hollywood name

8 Colorado park

9 Too long on the shelf

10 Certain sailorman

11 Redact

12 Bad cigar

13 Uno plus dos

21 Michigan or Ontario

23 Times around the track
- 25 Soup, pretty near

27 Splinter: dial

28 Whiter

29 Out of bed

30 Chimney

32 Out

33 Turn over

34 Heads

37 Occasion for pardon

40 Gets the motor going

41 Accelerates

43 English school

44 Man's palindromic name

46 With bile

48 Potato preparers

50 Triangular a luvial plain

52 Having shoes

53 English poet

54 Financial crisis palliative

55 Roast: Fr.

57 Strong wind

58 Sicilian mountain

59 Stern

62 Pig or fountain

Sudoku Solutions on page 12

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

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Summer's Top 10 garden flowers

Exciting new versions of old stalwarts

Gary Jones

In just a few weeks, summer's hot days will be upon us. But it is not too late to fill pots and borders with hot weather flowers that will pump out color all summer. The key to success will be to keep these plants well-watered while they root in. While they become established, they should never be allowed to become completely dry.

Remember to work in an organic planting mix and starter fertilizer at planting time. The mix will improve drainage and help to retain water and nutrients. If planting in containers, use an organic potting soil straight from the bag, along with starter food.

Colorful plants need plenty of nutrients to keep producing blooms. For non-stop color, feed monthly with an organic bloom

Cosmos, with its country-simple flowers, are a fool-proof summer bloomer. You get your choice of heights with different varieties. Cosmos can contribute charm to any garden style. Pure white cosmos are often used to fill boxwood parterres in Provence — a sophisticated, yet carefree choice.

Salvias (there seem to be millions) are the quintessential Mediterranean-climate summer bloomer. If you have not already introduced yourself to the world of salvias, do it by growing a stunning one: Amistad. It has sensational spikes of rich, royal-purple flowers with black bracts on a well-behaved, 4-foot plant.

This summer, you should pass on the large flowered zinnias and plant the super Profusion series. These award-winning, mounding plants will be covered with 1 1/2-inch flowers right through our dog days of sum-



Salvia leucantha (Courtesy of Armstrong Garden Centers)

mer. The middle number of the NPK (nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium) will be the highest of the three. Phosphorus is what promotes flowering.

Many of the flowers listed below will tolerate drought, but to bloom their best, they will need regular water. They also need well-draining soil — never allow these plants to be in soggy soil. Many stalwarts including geranium, salvia, cone-flower and zinnia have exciting new cultivars. Don't miss them.

First, it is time to give vinca another chance. Many gardeners moved away from it because of disease problems, but the new varieties are disease-free and have extra-large flowers in bright, clear colors.

Daylilies are classic summer flowers and, virtually, carefree. For season-long color, choose reblooming varieties. The latest hybrids have large, wide-petaled flowers in rich colors, from sherbet-toned blends to rich purple, red, pumpkin, near-black and more.

Coneflowers have undergone a remarkable transformation. Just about every color is available now with the exception of blue tones. But you will find pink, pristine white, bright yellow, orange, fire-engine red and, of course, purple. And doubles and pom-pom forms that don't even look like coneflowers.

Another flower that has undergone a major makeover is gaillardia. Choose from bright yellows, clear oranges, reds, rust tones, apricot and more. Gaillardia Fanfare, with tiny trumpet flowers instead of petals in red, orange and yellow, is sensational.



mer. You won't find the complete zinnia color range, but there are enough choices to give your garden some pizzazz.

With the exception of English types and a few others, lavenders will produce spikes of color summer-into-winter. Look for the Spanish and French kinds with very prominent ears in contrasting colors. Do not overwater them while they become established. If you are not sure, it is better not to water.

Geraniums will never go out of style because they are just fantastic in California gardens. There are terrific new kinds called interspecifics — hybrids of zonal and ivy geraniums. Two series are available: Calliope and Caliente. They have gorgeous foliage, large sturdy blooms and a pleasing, mounding habit.

Lastly, consider the lowly marigold. If you want a jolt of hot-toned color, marigolds simply cannot be beat. For a fresh look, don't mass them or line a flowerbed with them. Simply plant them in threes or fives in a mixed border. Marigolds make mixed flower borders really zing.

There is no better time than now to try out some new versions of traditional classics and old standbys. You will love seeing the bright blooms all summer long.

—Gary Jones is the Chief Horticulturist at Armstrong Garden Centers, which has locations on Friars Road and Morena Boulevard. Email your drought and gardening questions to growingdialogue@armstronggarden.com. ■



(l to r) Coneflower, Geranium, Happy Returns Dwarf Daylily (Courtesy of Armstrong Garden Centers)



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Fat cats an epidemic

Sari Reis



If you have a fat cat at home, you are not alone. Fifty-eight percent of our domestic cats are considered overweight or obese. Many people, not realizing their furry felines are overweight, continue to indulge them with food and treats as a form of showing their love. Unfortunately, this is a very unhealthy way to demonstrate your affection. Those extra pounds can lead to heart disease, diabetes, joint pain, arthritis, kidney disease, breathing problems, difficulty grooming, and a shortened life span.

Not sure if your cat is overweight? Here is a way to determine it. At an ideal weight, his face will be slim with clear bone structure. There will be definition between his head and neck and his abdomen will be slimmer than his chest and hips. You will be able to feel his ribs when you touch his sides. If this is not the case for your kitty, he is probably carrying some extra pounds and one extra pound on a cat is equal to 20 extra pounds on a person.

So, how do you go about getting rid of that excess weight? The answer is slow and steady. Discuss the speed of weight loss with your veterinarian. It is very dangerous for a cat to lose weight too quickly so you must be patient. Find out



Feline obesity needs to be managed. (Catster.com)

from your veterinarian what your cat's ideal weight should be and weigh him every week until he reaches his goal. The best way to weigh him is to get on a scale and see what you weigh, then pick up the kitty and weigh yourself holding him. The difference will be the cat's weight. Be sure to record it.

Just like humans, weight loss is about calorie intake and output. To figure out how many calories your cat should consume daily to achieve his ideal weight, follow these steps:

- Convert his ideal weight to kilograms by dividing by 2.2.
- Then multiply his weight in kilograms by 30 and then add 70 to that result.
- Now, multiply that figure by .8. If your cat's ideal weight is 15 pounds, his daily calorie intake should be 220 calories. If 13 pounds, it should be 198 calories.

Find out the number of calories per cup (if dry food) or can (if wet food), by reading the labels on the food packaging. If the calories aren't listed, call the manufacturer and ask. Once you

have that number you can determine how much of his food he should be eating daily. And don't forget that treats have calories too. They should be figured into the equation. Since dry food is higher in carbohydrates, switching to wet food can lower your kitties' calorie intake. Also, switching to regular meal-times twice a day as opposed to free feeding can help your kitty shed those extra pounds.

Since the main reasons our cats are overweight are too much food, poor quality food, too many treats and not enough exercise or play time, it is not hard to figure out what needs to be done to get them svelte and healthy and to lengthen their lives.

—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. ■

How do you measure success?



Erica Moe

Everything we do has a measurement. In school, grades on tests measure how much we learned. We get annual performance reviews at work. Even for fun, you see how many likes you can get on Facebook. Exercise is no different. We count sets, reps, calories, minutes and miles. All these numbers help us know we're making progress — right? So you run, you sweat, and you want results. But how do you REALLY know that you are on the right track with your weight loss?

Why not just use the scale?

Stepping on the scale does give you data. It lets you know your current bodyweight. However, it doesn't distinguish the difference between fat weight and lean weight. If you gain weight, was it muscle or fat? On the scale, there is no way to be sure.

BMI

BMI or body mass index is a measure of body fat based on height and weight. Like the scale, the weight is not categorized into fat or lean. This calculation may inaccurately categorize you. Your doctor uses it because it is fast and free!

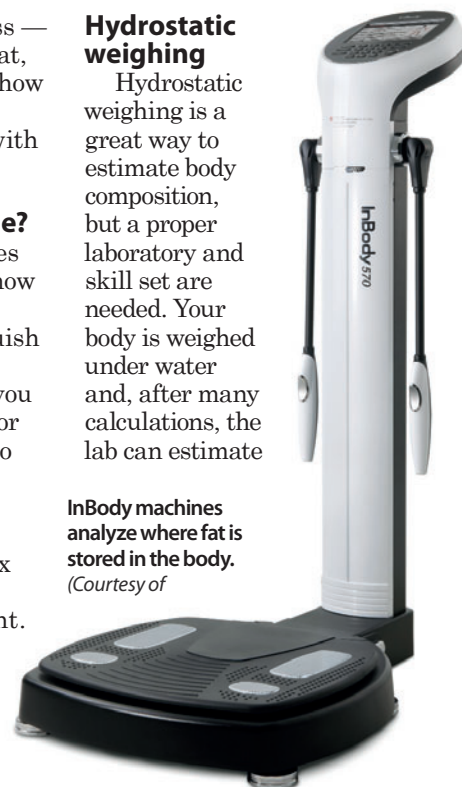
Calculate yours at bmi-calculator.net

Skin fold calipers

This tool is great for measuring some of the fat on your body. Protocols can measure from three to seven different sites on your body. Simply gather the skin and fat that are on top of your muscle and take a measurement. However, that sneaky fat that hides under the muscle layer cannot be measured or estimated. Error can be plus or minus 3 to 5 percentage points.

Hydrostatic weighing

Hydrostatic weighing is a great way to estimate body composition, but a proper laboratory and skill set are needed. Your body is weighed under water and, after many calculations, the lab can estimate



InBody machines analyze where fat is stored in the body. (Courtesy of)

See SUCCESS page 11 →

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► **Success**, from page 10

your percentage of body fat. The test can be expensive, and not many locations offer it. Error can be plus or minus 1 to 2 percentage points.

Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis (BIA)

Bioelectrical impedance analysis uses a device to send a small electrical current through your body to estimate body composition. Most use two points of contact on the hands or feet. They are inexpensive and fast, but the error can also be up to plus or minus 10 percentage points.

InBody

This intricate machine works similarly to bioelectrical impedance analysis, however, it has an eight-point contact. It gives information about fat weight and lean weight, and it is able to estimate how many pounds of each are in your limbs and torso. That means it can measure muscle growth and fat loss in each of these areas, as well. In addition, it yields more sophisticated data like total body water and basal metabolic rate (the number of calories you need at rest per day). Error for the InBody is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Mission Valley Y offers InBody tests to members.

What else?

In addition to tests that measure body composition, fitness gains can be measured by other tests that give data about other components of physical fitness like flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance and muscular strength.

— *Erica Moe is an ACSM certified exercise physiologist who writes on behalf of the Mission Valley YMCA, where she is a fitness director.* ■

► **Park**, from page 2

the conversion of natural open space to impervious surfaces has brought flooding and this design conveys the impacts of that urbanization on the river. The design includes debris motifs and incorporates reclaimed materials.

“What do you see after flooding? Lots of debris, logs that are piled up; you go out there today and you can still see remnants of the flooding in January,” Barrett said.

All three concepts would also incorporate art, as well as signage to help tell the story of the design concepts.

These are only tentative designs, Majcher said, and the final will likely be a mix of the best ideas from all three. As of now, nothing is set, not even the park’s name.

“It shouldn’t be called Town and Country Park,” he said. “[The name] should be tied to something contextual to match the design.”

Majcher said the next chance for the public to view the progress on the park design will “probably” be at the Aug. 3 meeting of the Mission Valley Planning Group.

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



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9 Ways Contour is Changing Television



Technology has changed the way we live, and now Contour is changing the way we watch television. With an image rich on-screen guide, smart search that predicts what you will want to watch, and a voice controlled remote, the all new Contour from Cox offers an innovative way to experience television. Here are 9 ways that Contour will change the way you watch TV.

- 1. Talk to Your Remote.** Simply press the microphone button on your Contour remote and speak into it to change the channel, launch an app, search for your favorite show actor, or genre, or even get a recommendation.
- 2. Smart Search.** The new Contour features an innovative on-screen guide with rich graphics, show and movie posters, and detailed information on more than 35,000 On Demand titles. The new search function predicts what you are looking for when you key in as few as three letters, and will bring up programming by network, title, genre, or actor.
- 3. Smart Recommendations.** The all new Contour helps you discover new TV shows and movies by offering recommendations based on what you like to watch,

whether it's a sitcom, children's programming, or superhero movies.

- 4. Apps! Apps! Apps!** Launch personalized apps for sports, news, weather and traffic directly from your remote. Apps can be viewed simultaneously with other programming so you can check the score on your game and not interrupt your current show.
- 5. Parental Controls.** If you want to monitor and limit what the children can watch, the new Contour makes it easy to add security PINs (personal identification numbers) to buy or watch content, and it has a customizable Kids Zone for children of all ages.
- 6. Watch your shows anywhere in your home,** even if there isn't a television in the room. Just download the Contour app on your Apple or Android device and begin watching your favorite show.
- 7. The "Last" Nine.** An updated 'Last' button gives you quick access to the last *nine* programs you recently viewed so that you can easily resume watching where you left off.
- 8. 2 Terabytes of storage.** What is a terabyte, you ask? It's a trillion bytes, which means you have a huge storage capacity with Contour. Store up to 300 hours of high definition programming and 1,000 hours of standard definition programming, and record six programs at the same time.
- 9. There's more?** If you start watching a program in one room, you can finish watching it in another room, and enjoy smaller boxes for additional TVs in the home.

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► Plan, from page 1

currently being revised by a panel of local volunteers who represent stakeholders such as homeowners, property owners and the business community. The panel is a subcommittee of the Mission Valley Planning Group, an advisory panel to the Planning Department.

The panel members are Deborah Bossmeyer, Paul Brown, Perry Dealy, Terrence Fox, Alan Grant, Ryan Holborn, Derek Hulse, Rob Hutsel, Richard Ledford, Elizabeth Leventhal, Andrew Michajlenko, Patrick Pierce, Michael Richter, Karen Ruggels, Rebecca Sappenfield, John Schneidmiller, Marco Sessa, Nate Smith, Dottie Surdi, Rick Tarbell and Karen Tournaire. They face a deadline to complete their mission.

“Our three-year timeline has us completing the project in the spring of 2018,” Graham said.

Mission Valley is considered a desirable place to live, eat and shop. Conveniently located near Downtown, the regional airport and the beaches, Mission Valley has the chance to take advantage of all the transit options via future development. Additionally, the potential demolition of the aging Qualcomm Stadium site could present numerous opportunities, from an expansion of San Diego State University to a large regional park that fits into plans for turning the San Diego River into a recreational destination for bicyclists, hikers and pedestrians.

“I don’t know if you would say the committee has specifically identified a single biggest issue facing Mission Valley,” Graham said. “The bullets below represent the major themes we heard from community members, which include:

- Improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience.
 - Address and manage traffic.
 - Make it easier to take transit.
 - Reinforce the vision of a river-focused community.
 - Develop more parks and open spaces.
 - Create more active recreation facilities.
 - Provide a diverse mix of land uses, while reinforcing regional commercial.
 - Recommend more housing options, including affordable ones.
 - Offer a more urban experience — making a great place.
- “However the general sentiment can be encapsulated

in this statement: The single biggest challenge in Mission Valley is providing a graceful transition from an auto-oriented commercial environment to a vibrant urban neighborhood that celebrates the San Diego River,” Graham said.

To learn what the experts are saying about Mission Valley’s potential for future development, read the document titled “Issues and Options Analysis” found at bit.ly/1ZgOqgS. The lengthy document was prepared for the city by consultants Dyett & Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners.

To provide comments, visit the city of San Diego’s online portal, where you can take a short survey and complete an interactive mapping exercise to share what you believe should be priorities for development in Mission Valley for the next 20 years. Future development is expected to double the current population of 21,303.

The interactive exercise gives the participant 30 pins to tag the best opportunities for growth in Mission Valley. Five of those pins must be placed in each of three categories: housing, employment and commercial. The rest of the pins can be allocated however you choose.

According to Graham, the map pins should reflect how you would distribute new development intensity throughout Mission Valley, which stretches on both sides of Interstate 8, from Interstate 5 on the west to the east side of Interstate 15. Do you think that intensity should be focused on one or two areas, or spread out across Mission Valley?

City planners have also highlighted on the interactive map all the Green Line trolley stations in Mission Valley, where properties within a quarter-mile distance are considered “transit priorities areas” for future development because the land is within walking distances of trolley service. The city’s Climate Action Plan to significantly reduce greenhouse gases encourages development near transit centers, bus stops and trolley stations.

To give your opinion, visit the online portal at bit.ly/1X-14pBS. These two online activities — the first in a series that will be launched on the portal — will take comments through June 30. Future exercises will focus on parks and recreation, infrastructure, urban design and more.

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

DINING OUT IN SAN DIEGO BITS OF FOOD NEWS FROM MISSION VALLEY AND BEYOND

Frank Sabatini Jr.



After a six-year run, The Wellington Steak & Martini Lounge in Mission Hills will close June 20 in preparation for a bar-focused establishment yet to be named. Owner Trish Watlington, who also owns the adjoining Red Door Restaurant & Wine

Bar, said “Wellington’s beef-heavy menu no longer fits our commitment to local sourcing.” Her decision to re-brand was fueled also by the lack of a “true cocktail bar in Mission Hills.”

The business is slated to reopen in July, with mixologist Brandt Stenberg overseeing the bar program, and executive chef Miguel Valdez introducing a menu of small plates. 741 W. Washington St., 619-295-6000, thewellingtonsd.com.



Labor Day will mark the end of a 14-year run for Shades Oceanfront Bistro in Ocean Beach, which has provided a dog-friendly environment with ocean views for customers under the co-ownership of Jeff Levitt and his wife, Michelle. The couple summed up in a newsletter to customers that it was time to rest and move on.

After Sept. 5, the restaurant will be renamed the OB Surf Lodge by a trio of new owners who hold various stakes in other local restaurants and bars such as Wonderland Ocean Pub a floor above, plus Bayside Landing, Resident Brewing Company, and The Local. The menu will remain focused on breakfast dishes with much of the same staff in place, and canines will still be welcome. 5083 Santa Monica Ave., 619-222-0501, shadesob.com.

More than 40 restaurants are taking part in the 22nd annual Taste of Gaslamp, which runs from 1 – 4 p.m. June 26. The self-guided walking tour will also feature receptions and open houses at various art galleries and museums located throughout the historic neighborhood. Establishments that will dole out food and drink samples include Café 21, Nobu Restaurant, The Field, 1919, Café Sevilla, Quad Ale House, Blue Point Coastal Cuisine, and more.

Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$40 on the day of the event. In addition, VIP passes are available for \$75, which include access to exclusive receptions and special wine and beer tastings.

Guest check-in will be located at Pocket Park, 410 Island Ave. For more information, call the Gaslamp Quarter Association at 619-233-5227 or visit gaslamp.org/events.

—Reach Frank Sabatini Jr. at fsabatini@san.rr.com. ■

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PUZZLE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 8

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

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A culinary escape to Mexico's capital

Frank Sabatini Jr.



"This isn't like the Mexican food up the road," I said to my companion when tapping into a brittle sheet of rolled, fried cheese the size of our forearms. The appetizer, chicharron de queso, ranks among several dishes at El Charko that are well-known throughout Mexico City but absent along San Diego Avenue in Old Town.

The colorful indoor-outdoor restaurant surfaced more than a year ago in place of Craze Burger. It's owned by a family from Mexico City, and based after a restaurant there that is perched beside a pond inhabited by frogs. Hence, the name El Charko, which translates to "the puddle" or "pond," manager Tony Hinojosa explained while steering us to authentic dishes he termed as "peculiar to San Diego."

The lacy, fried queso is made with Gouda and Monterey jack cheeses. It closely resembles a Parmesan tuile in flavor and texture – fantastically tangy and extremely fragile – yet five times bigger in this tubular form. Served with a plop of guacamole, it felt as though we were unintentionally damaging an ancient scroll as it broke into pieces from minimal finger pressure.

A menu category titled "alambres" allows you to choose from a variety of proteins sautéed with onions and bell

peppers, and served sizzling in a cast-iron skillet.

Fajitas they're not. Bits of bacon are hidden within the medley, which adds a dash of smokiness. There's also a small measure of jack cheese on top. We opted for marinated pork (pastor), flavored here with ginger, paprika and cinnamon. All combined, the ingredients spawned a thin, exotic sauce you won't find in Mexican kitchens along San Diego's beaten track. Served with corn or flour tortillas, the dish is an unsung staple in most provinces of Mexico.

After polishing off a bowl of tomato-based tortilla soup containing a halved, peeled avocado, we proceeded to tacos.

One filled with beer-battered fish (probably cod) tasted pedestrian except for its inclusion of chipotle cream sauce, which added a safe zing. Two others filled with different styles of meat, however, could potentially tickle the fancy of those who haven't dabbled in the burgeoning American-hipster taco movement, which borrows heavily from Mexico City's food scene.

The "Villamelon" taco features salted, sun-dried beef mixed with chorizo, pork rinds and hot sauce. I'm not sure where the meat catches its rays, or for how long, but it ends up pleasantly chewy and slightly caramelized.

El Charko Grill & Bar
2415 San Diego Ave.
(Old Town)
619-795-0908
el-charko.com

Prices: Appetizers, \$4 to \$11.99; soups and salads, \$5.50 to \$11.99; tacos and burritos, \$3.35 to \$11; entrees and combo plates, \$12.50 to \$16.50

Chorizo and prime steak are combined in the "campechano" taco, although we didn't detect the chorizo. This was basically a carne asada taco with cubed meat sporting familiar whispers of garlic, citrus and cumin. Regrettably, I had somehow overlooked the smoked pork chop taco accented with bacon and onions — something I haven't yet seen north of the border.

Other precious finds include an appetizer of grilled hot peppers and onions; cactus salad; zucchini flower or huitlacoche-mushroom quesadillas; and the El Charko burrito stuffed with French fries, pastor, beans, cheese and sour cream, should you over-indulge in the house margaritas, green sours or tempranillo wine.

—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. ■

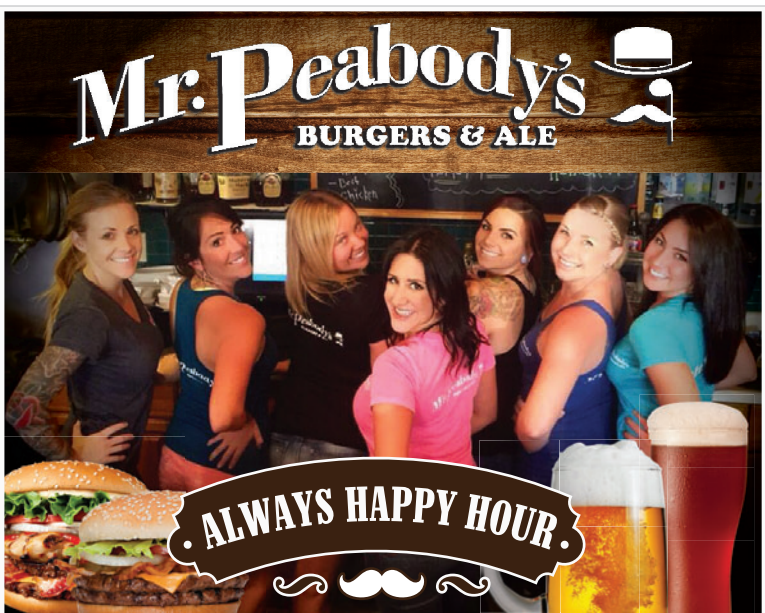


A stir-fry of marinated pork, bacon and veggies

Two beef tacos flanking one filled with beer-battered fish

The chicharron de queso

(Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)



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Civita celebrates summer with free concerts and family movies



Siren's Crush plays July 24. (Facebook)

Friday nights at the movies and Sunday concerts and sunsets are once again on the summer schedule at Civita's temporary park located at the corner of Civita Boulevard and Via Alta in Mission Valley.

The lineup for "Sundown Sunday" concerts includes the country rock band Nancarrow on June 26, the Top 40 dance band Siren's Crush on July 24, and Todo Mundo, which plays world music blending pop, reggae, rock, gypsy, Caribbean and Latin music, on August 28. The free concerts run from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Community members and the public are invited to bring picnics, beach chairs and blankets. (No glass, please.)

Nancarrow and Siren's Crush are making return appearances following last year's popular concerts at Civita.

Fronted by singer/songwriter Graham Nancarrow, his namesake band was nominated in the Best Country/Americana Band category at the San Diego Music Awards in 2012, won the 2015 SDMA for Best Americana Album, and remains one of San Diego's favorite original country-rock bands.

Siren's Crush is a local seven-piece Top 40 dance band that plays covers by a wide variety of performers, ranging from Katy Perry to Earth, Wind & Fire.



Nancarrow (above) plays June 24; Todo Mundo plays Aug. 28 (Facebook)

Todo Mundo (All the World) is a San Diego-based, six-piece world fusion band fronted by Santiago Orozco, a native of Columbia. The band has won the Best World Music Album category twice at the SDMA's, which also awarded them the Best World Music Band last year.

Civita will screen family-friendly movies outdoors on the big screen on June 17,

July 15 and August 19. The public is invited to bring a picnic and enjoy free popcorn. The "Film Friday" festivities start at 7 p.m. with movies beginning at 8 p.m.

June 17 will feature "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" and future titles will be announced on civilife.com the week before the movie and updates can be found on the CivitaLife Facebook page. ■

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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 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

July 1 – 3: Star Spangled Pops at Embarcadero Marina Park South. \$23+. 7:30 p.m. 200 Marina Park Way, Downtown. SanDiegoSymphony.org.

July 15 – 16: Classical Mystery Tour: A Tribute to the Beatles at Embarcadero Marina Park South. \$23+. 7:30 p.m. 200 Marina Park Way, Downtown. SanDiegoSymphony.org.

ALTERNATIVE/ROCK

June 11: Rock & Roll San Diego fifth anniversary party with A New Challenger Approaches, Picasso Drive, Sunday Drivers and more. Free. Noon – 8 p.m. 3360 Sports Arena Blvd., Suite A, Point Loma. RockAndRollSanDiego.com.

June 17 and 18: Oysterfest featuring Thievery Corporation, Boombox and more on Friday and Reblution, Expanders and more on Saturday. \$44 - \$75. 2 – 10 p.m. each day. Marina Embarcadero North. sfoysterfest.wix.com/oysterfestsd.

June 23: Peter Bolland performing Bob Dylan songs at Vision Center for Spiritual Living. \$15. 7 p.m. 6154 Mission Gorge Road, Suite 100, Grantville. FolkeyMonkey.com.

POP

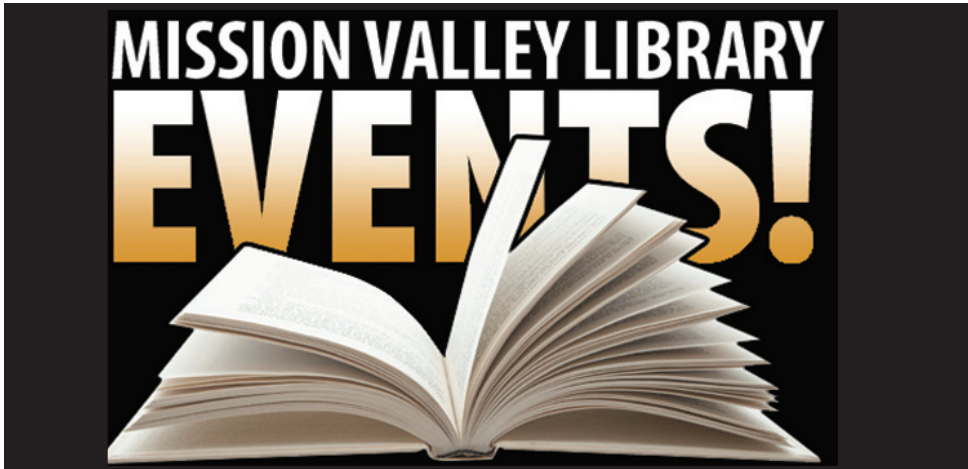
Tuesdays: Suzanne Shea and Bob Wade at Bistro Sixty. Free. 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. 5987 El Cajon Blvd., College Area. BistroSixtySD.com.

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

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.

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



Mission Valley Library Events: June 10 – July 7, 2016
Assemblymember Weber’s mobile office
Second Tuesday of the month, 6 – 8 p.m. and third Monday of the month, 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 renters and homeowners assistance programs, property tax issues, consumer complaints, unemployment and disability insurance. No need to make an appointment; just stop in.

Baby signs storytime
Second and fourth Mondays, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.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.

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

Knit-a-Bit and Crochet Circle
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. June: “Where’d You Go, Bernadette?” by Maria Semple.

Preschool storytime and craft
Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Preschoolers are invited to a storytime followed by a fun craft.

Summer Reading Program Event
Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Music performances, a visit from a clown and more are on this summer’s schedule.

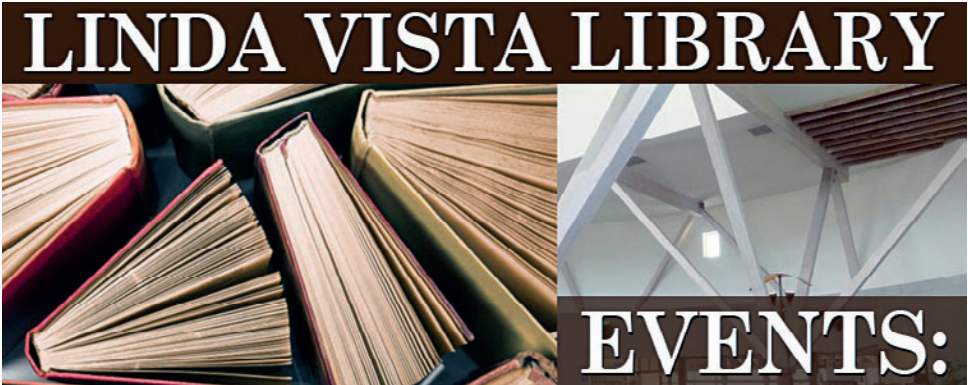
Toddler storytime
Fridays, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Storytime designed for toddlers featuring songs, rhymes, and finger plays.

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.



Chinese language storytime with Mr. Enyu
Saturdays, 10 – 10:30 a.m.
Come enjoy exciting stories told in Chinese.

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

Hatha yoga for adults
First Thursday of the month, 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 – 6:15 p.m.

Join Miss Kim for a fantastically fun program containing crafts, music and stories for babies and toddlers.

Lego Time
Fridays, 4 – 5 p.m.
Kids: build, build, build to your heart’s content! Skyscrapers, automobiles, airplanes, spaceships: create these and more! Learn basic building science while having loads of fun!

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

Silver Chair Yoga
Thursdays, Noon – 1 p.m.
Designed so that seniors can safely practice yoga at their level of comfort.

Storytime with Mr. Luan
Fridays, 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.
Energetic storytime that is fun, interactive and educational. The session will include singing and maybe a little dancing.

Tai Chi
Mondays and Thursdays, 10 – 11 a.m.
Improve your balance and mobility with slow, controlled movement!

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](https://www.facebook.com/lvlibrary).

Community Calendar

MAY 13 Film and discussion with **Ralph DeLauro: ‘May in the Summer’**
Monday, June 13

San Diego Oasis presents this film class at their location in Mission Valley (Third floor of Macy’s 1702 Camino del Rio North) starting at 1 p.m. The film by writer-director-star Cherien Dabis is a semi-autobiographical look at romantic confusion and family pressures set in Amman, Jordan. The class fee is \$10. Visit OasisNet.org for more information.

MAY 17 – MAY 18 ‘Fashion + Flavors’
Friday, June 17 – Saturday, June 18

This new event will feature food, fashion and fun at Old Town’s Bazaar del Mundo. The festivities will be held from 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. each day at the corner of Juan and Taylor streets. A cooking demonstration by Casa Guadalajara’s Chef Jose Duran will be held each day at 11:30 a.m. and attendees can try his creations and enjoy a light lunch in Bazaar del Mundo’s courtyard. On the fashion side, guest artists will be showcasing handmade fashion accessories, clothing and crafts including scarves, handbags, jewelry and more. Visit BazaarDelMundo.com for more information.

MAY 17 Civita Friday Movie Night with ‘Star Wars: The Force Awakens’
Friday, June 17

Mission Valley housing community Civita will kick start up their summer movie series with this event. This edition features a screening of the 2015 film “Star Wars: The Force Awakens.” This event is open to the public and attendees are invited to bring their own picnic or partake in free popcorn. 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.

MAY 23 – MAY 24 20th annual ‘Character Matters’ Conference
Thursday, June 23 - Friday, June 24

Attendees will learn techniques to teach “character education” from renowned experts. Each year this conference is attended by teachers, administrators, social workers, coaches, parents, caregivers and college instructors. The conference will be held from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. each day in Mother Rosalie Hill Hall at University of San Diego (5998 Alcalá Park). Registration starts at \$75. Visit bit.ly/213R4Y5 for tickets.

MAY 24 – MAY 26 Gem Faire
Friday, June 24 – Sunday, June 26

The Gem Faire returns to the Scottish Rite Event Center (1895 Camino del Rio South, Mission Valley) with a three-day event. Admission is \$7 for the entire weekend (children under 12 are free) and there is free parking. Over 100 exhibitors will showcase fine jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, pearls, gold and silver and more. Jewelry repair, cleaning and ring-sizing services will be available while you shop. There will be a special wholesale preview on Friday from 10 a.m. – noon. The general admission 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

MAY 25 ‘Growing plumerias’ class
Saturday, June 25

For this free gardening class, Armstrong Garden Centers will give tips and tricks on how to care for plumerias and keep them blooming all summer. The fragrant and beautiful flowers are the traditional Hawaiian lei flower. 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. ■

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