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# MISSION VALLEY News

Mission Valley | Linda Vista | Old Town | Morena District



(Images for graphic courtesy of Latino Film Festival)

## Latino Film Festival returns to Fashion Valley

Joyell Nevins

Five screens, 11 days, more than 160 films. The San Diego Latino Film Festival will incorporate drama, comedy, romance, documentary and other film styles to share the Latino experience at the AMC 18 Fashion Valley theaters from March 16-26. The festival is in

its 24th year and draws audience members from California to New York, along with special guest actors and filmmakers from Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Spain.

More than 600 entries are submitted every year, but only the top-ranking ones by festival staff can make the cut.

"The criteria we use to rank the movies includes cinematography, editing, storytelling style, and originality," said Moises Esparza, programming manager for the festival. "We are, above all, most interested

in what the film proposes about the Latino experience."

The festival began in 1994 as a small student film festival called Cine Estudiantil. It was held at several different schools the first few years. Then in 1997, renowned actor Edward James Olmos came as a special guest. The house was packed, and an idea was born.

The film festival was moved to a commercial movie theater, special guests were invited, and corporate sponsors and media outlets started to take notice.

See **FESTIVAL** page 4 →

## Conference contemplates the future of cannabis businesses

Jeff Clemetson  
Editor

Navigating various rules and regulations is hard in any business venture — it is even more difficult if your business is in California's marijuana industry.

On Feb. 25, a diverse group of entrepreneurs gathered at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Mission Valley to learn how to open and operate a variety of marijuana businesses at a conference called "The Inside Track: Preparing for Your Future in the Cannabis Industry."

See **CONFERENCE** page 9 →



(l to r) Attorney Kimberly Simms, CEO of California Cannabis CPA Derek Davis and David McPhearson of HdL Companies present at "The Inside Track: Preparing for Your Future in the Cannabis Industry" at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Feb. 25. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

## Soccer stadium plan dominates meeting of MV Planning Group

Jeff Clemetson  
Editor

The agenda for the March 1 meeting of the Mission Valley Planning Group included action item votes on a medical marijuana dispensary, a sidewalk improvement project and a major construction project that will reshape the Town and Country Resort & Convention Center. But it was an information item on a proposal to develop the Qualcomm Stadium site into the future home for a Major League Soccer (MLS) team that brought a full house to the meeting.

"We think soccer, the opportunity for soccer, here in the city of San Diego will be well received," said Nick Stone, a partner at FS Investors, the group proposing the soccer stadium.

Stone said the project is fully funded by FS Investors; will meet the city's climate goals by including mixed-use developments along the trolley line; and will include approximately \$50 million in road and traffic improvements along areas that will be affected by the increased traffic.

The entire proposal would include the following:

- An 18,000- to 30,000-person soccer-centric stadium that would also be used by SDSU's football program.

See **PLANNING GROUP** page 8 →

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# Sober living center founder celebrates 60 years of sobriety

Margie M. Palmer

Mission Valley resident Jeanne McAlister is not your average 84 year old. Not only is she the CEO of the McAlister Institute, which is among the county's largest drug and alcohol treatment providers, she still leads it with lots of energy and wearing heels.

A recovering alcoholic herself, the 60-years-sober spitfire has used her experience to build an agency that is founded upon empathy and hope. "It's no one's fault that they get addicted. No one wakes up and says they want to become an alcoholic or drug addict," McAlister said. "For some people, once you take the drug, or a drink, it takes you. That's what happened to me. I started drinking at 15 or 16 years old, which is what a lot of kids did at that time. Not all of them became alcoholics but I did; it was a very quick descension for me."

It wasn't until she was in her 20s, when she was dating a man who was in recovery, that she managed to turn her life around.

"He was in AA and he took me to my first meeting without my knowing where I was going," she said. "He could see all the signs. Going to that meeting was like an awakening where I was able to hear a lot of people speak who thought like I thought and who had experiences like I had. I made a commitment to the program and I've never looked back."

It also inspired her to try to pay it forward; a short time later she began working for a psychiatrist that provided drug and alcohol recovery services.

"He felt that people who had their own personal experience [with recovery] allowed patients to identify. He hired me and trained me and I worked for



Jeanne McAlister (left) poses with Little Tommy Sablan from KyXy at her celebration of 60 years sober. (Courtesy of Jeanne McAlister)

him for about five years in a clinical setting." Several years later, she branched off to found the McAlister Institute and today, what started out as a three-program treatment program, has grown by exponential proportions.

The nonprofit currently offers 28 programs and its 200 employees oversee approximately 2,500 individuals each month in San Diego and Napa County, she said.

The McAlister Institute is also the first organization in San Diego County and among the first five in the nation to develop a residential program that allows women to live with their children in a safe, instructive and supportive environment while they receive treatment.

"We had realized there were a number of women who needed treatment who were not coming in because they were worried about what would happen to their children or because they were afraid they would lose their children. Others had lost their children and wanted them back and they were trying to figure out how to do that,"

she said. "Our Kiya Learning Center for Women and Children allows children to live with their mothers while they are in treatment. The women learn about nutrition, parenting and how to handle their money. We treat the whole woman."

Her message to those who may have a friend or family member who is struggling with addiction is simple.

"I would tell them to provide loving confrontation and to give them a resource. Give them my phone number. I'm happy to do that," she said. "People call me all the time about getting someone into a program and usually I can help them do that. We've saved a couple of people's lives by answering the phone at 6 a.m. on a Sunday. There are resources out there and if I can't do it, I'll make sure they get help."

For more information on the McAlister Institute, call 619-884-0277 or visit [mcalistin.org](http://mcalistin.org).

—Margie M. Palmer is a freelance writer who has been racking up bylines for over a decade. Reach her at [mmpst19@gmail.com](mailto:mmpst19@gmail.com). ■

## New look, new name for Union-Tribune building

CBRE Group

The Casey Brown Company is close to completing the first part of the revamp of the former home of The San Diego Union-Tribune into a modern and highly amenitized work campus, that will now be called AMP&RSAND.

The 330,000-square-foot site featuring two separate buildings is located at 350 Camino de la Reina in Mission Valley. The repositioned five-story office tower, where editors and journalists once published the newspaper, will be completed in the third quarter, and the adjacent three-story building, which housed the printing presses, will be delivered in the first quarter of 2018. Both properties are 165,000 square feet, each. The interior design has an industrial loft-style feel, featuring exposed



An artist rendering of what will be the courtyard at the revamped Union-Tribune building in Mission Valley (Courtesy of CBRE Group)

brick, concrete pillars, 13-foot ceilings and oversized windows. The amount of money spent on the renovations is undisclosed. Matt Carlson, Jeff Oesterblad and Ryan Grant of the Los Angeles-based CBRE Group will be leasing the property.

"The campus offers large, collaborative spaces to accommodate a company's growth," said CBRE Group senior vice president Carlson in a press release. "The floorplates will entice and retain talented

See BUILDING page 5 →



MISSION VALLEY  
NEWS BRIEFS



Volunteers serve up dishes at Taste of Morena 6. (Courtesy of Morena Business Association)

Get ready for  
Taste of Morena

The date is set and tickets are soon to be on sale for one of the Morena District's premiere events.

The 10th annual Taste of Morena will be held on Wednesday, April 26 from 5 to 9 p.m. and will feature an evening of savory food samples, drink specials from micro-breweries and local bars, and special sweets from several eateries, sponsored by the Morena Business Association, Max Folkers Team at RE/Max Pacific, US Bank, Mission Valley News and Morena Storage.

For only \$25, attendees will enjoy a culinary adventure from more than 20 restaurants, breweries and bars including Bay Park Coffee, Pita Pit, Andres Restaurant, Baci Ristorante, Bay Park Fish Company, Siesel's Old Fashioned Meats, Bull's Smokin' BBQ, Dan

Diegos, JV's Mexican Food, La Gran Terraza, Luce Bar & Kitchen, Offshore Tavern & Grill, Sardina's Italian Restaurant & Bar, zPizza, Fiji Yogurt, Home Brew Mart by Ballast Point, The Clutch Bar, Side Car Bar, Poseidon Project, and new this year, the cafe and bar at San Diego Tennis & Racquet Club, Pho Kitchen, and tastes from a local establishment at Morena Storage.

The Taste of Morena takes place in the Morena District along Morena Boulevard, West Morena Boulevard, Linda Vista Road and the surrounding side streets.

Complimentary Old Town Trolley shuttles will take guests to the participating restaurants and a special tram from University of San Diego will be on hand to shuttle guests to La Gran Terraza on the University of San Diego (USD) campus.

Tickets go on sale Monday, March 20 at the following locations:

**Jerome's Furniture** – 1190 W. Morena Blvd. (cash or credit card)

**Morena Storage** – 908 Sherman St. (cash or credit card)

**Max Folkers Team at RE/Max Pacific** – 4112 Napier St. (cash only)

For more information, call 619-892-8307 or visit explore-morena.com.



USD in list of top  
Peace Corps volunteers

USD ranked No. 14 among medium-sized schools in the Peace Corps' 2017 Top Volunteer-Producing Colleges and Universities list. There are 18 Toreros currently volunteering worldwide, according to USD.

"Peace Corps service is an unparalleled leadership opportunity that enables college and university alumni to use the creative-thinking skills they developed in school to make an impact in communities around the world," Acting Peace Corps Director Sheila Crowley said in a press statement. "Many college graduates view Peace Corps as a launching pad for their careers because volunteers return home with the cultural competency and entrepreneurial spirit sought after in most fields."

Since the Peace Corps' founding in 1961, 217 alumni from USD have traveled abroad to serve as volunteers. This is the second year the university has held the No. 14 spot. The Peace Corps ranks

See BRIEFS page 5 →

How to Sell a Mission Valley Condo That Didn't Sell

Mission Valley - If your home has just come off the market and hasn't sold, don't be discouraged. The reason your home did not sell may have nothing to do with your home or the market. In reality, your home may have been one of the more desirable properties for sale. So Why Didn't Your Home Sell?

Last year many of the homes listed for sale never sold at all, and many sellers found that there was a tremendous amount a homeowner needed to be educated on the sell their home for top dollar in the shortest time period. Don't risk making the wrong choices and losing both time and money on your investment. Before you hire a realtor, know the right questions to ask to save you time and money.

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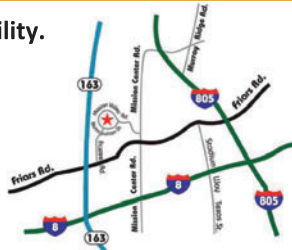


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## ► Festival, from page 1

"We had the option of using multiple auditoriums within one movie theater, and we could present a diversity of movies that appeal to diverse audiences within the Latino community," said Ethan van Thillo, executive director and founder of the San Diego Latino Film Festival.

More celebrities began to attend, and the reach of the films increased. Well-known names such as Ray Bradbury, Clifton Collins Jr., and Jacob Vargas have all appeared at the festival. This year, Bruno Bichir, Stefanie Sherck, Cecilia Suarez, Sofia Espinoza, Jaime Garcia, Andres Almeida, Maria Rojo, Jesus Magana, Rodrige Reyes, and Marimar Vega all will be making an appearance.

In 1999, the film festival branched out with screenings throughout the year and morphed into the nonprofit Media Arts Center San Diego. Now, in addition to the film festival, the Media Arts Center has a "Digital Gym" in North Park.

The Digital Gym boasts a movie theater that shows 15-20 independent films a



Director Arturo Ripstein will be honored with a special tribute reception at this year's Latino Film Festival. (Courtesy of SD Latino Film Festival)

month; a tech bar computer space with Power Mac G5s loaded with graphic and design software; a media lounge and a digital techie store. Media Arts Center also hosts training, workshops and outreaches for future filmmakers and audio, visual and multimedia designers.

The San Diego Latino Film Festival still remains one of

their biggest and broadest events of the year.

"Our 24th festival is going to be the best and most important ever. Not only will it include entertaining new movies never before screened here in San Diego; but this year comes at an important time in our country's history. The festival stands for all that is good with the U.S.A.



Oscar nominee Demian Birchir's directorial debut of "Un cuento de circo and a Love Song" will be one of the featured films. (Courtesy of Itica Films)

and our border region — diversity, creativity, innovation, international collaboration y más," Thillo said.

The festival boasts spotlight films like Oscar nominee Demian Birchir's directorial debut, "Un Cuento de Circo and a Love Song" and tributes to and screenings of iconic filmmakers Manolo Caro and Arturo Ripstein. It offers opportunities to meet such talented artists at special question-and-answer sessions.

But it also provides an audience for documentaries like "Beyond the Crossfire," a project by a group of students at High Tech High Chula Vista. The film explores the effects of gun violence in the U.S., capturing stories of leaders

in brain health, youth mentor programs, peer to peer counseling and juvenile justice reforms who are all working to reduce the violence.

It took two years for the students to finish the film, learning everything from how to finance a film project to creating a DVD. "Crossfire" was completed three days before their graduation. However, more than eight of the original students that served as directors and crew will be at the festival.

"It is still a relevant topic with a strong call to action for viewers," High Tech 11th grade science teacher Nuvia Ruland said. "We hope it inspires everyone who sees it to get involved in small and big ways to make change in their community."

"Beyond the Crossfire" is part of the Frontera Filmmakers showcase, which also includes first-time filmmakers and a short film compilation. To help audiences determine which movies to watch out of the masses available, the festival's film curators have put together "showcases," collections of films celebrating certain countries, genres or themes. There are 18 total, including a CineGay showcase, providing insight into the Latino LGBTQ experience; focus on the countries Brazil and Mexico; and one dedicated to movies revolving around food.

The festival extends beyond the film screenings. There will also be Sonido Latino daily musical performances by local and international artists and the second annual Sabor Latino Food, Beer and Wine Festival. That event includes unlimited food and beverage tastings by celebrated Latino chefs and more than 20 craft breweries and wineries from San Diego and Baja California. All proceeds benefit the Media Arts Center's youth education and outreach programs.

Start and end the film festival with a bang as well: The Opening Night party will feature live music and dancing at Balboa's Historic Abbey, while the Closing Night party will be an upscale soiree with music and cuisine at the Meze in the Gaslamp.

Find out more information about the events, the films, and the screenings at 2017. [sdlatinofilm.com](http://sdlatinofilm.com). Learn more about Media Arts Center at [mediaartscenter.org](http://mediaartscenter.org).

—Freelance writer Joyell Nevins can be reached at [joyelle@gmail.com](mailto:joyelle@gmail.com). You can also follow her blog *Small World, Big God* at [sublog.wordpress.com](http://sublog.wordpress.com). ■



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# 2017 ushers in a new era of angst in America

## Congressional Watch

Andy Cohen



Welcome to a new era of angst. In 2009, it was the rise of the Tea Party that gave Democrats across the country major headaches, particularly when it came to health care and the soon-to-be-introduced Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obamacare. Republicans made it known that they would have no hand in crafting the legislation, and took every opportunity to deride the Obama administration and the Democrats' efforts at reforming health care. The lies were staggering: Who can forget Sarah Palin's and Iowa Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley's denunciations of the "death panels" that would surely be included in the law?

Aided and organized in large part by the Charles and David Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity, protesters packed town halls and tormented Democratic lawmakers nationwide. Republicans rode that angry wave to victory in the 2010 midterm elections, overtaking a large Democratic majority in the House of Representatives and pulverizing the Democrats' 60-vote majority in the Senate.

Now it's the Republicans' turn. The topic this time, just like last time, is health care, and the Affordable Care Act. Only this time, the crowds are hammering Republican lawmakers over their efforts to

scrap the law, with no discernible plans to replace it.

On Jan. 15, **Reps. Susan Davis (D-53)** and **Scott Peters (D-52)** held a press conference in front of Sharp Memorial Hospital in San Diego to discuss what the repeal of the ACA would mean for San Diegans.

"I get really frustrated when I hear the conversation in Washington. It seems to skip over the real impact the repeal will have on our communities," Davis said. "I can't tell you how many San Diegans I've spoken with who are scared to death of losing their care."

If the repeal does become a reality, Davis said, 300,000 people in San Diego would lose access to health care.

"Unfortunately, some of my colleagues in Congress have fast tracked a repeal of the law without any plan for a replacement," Peters said. "The repeal of the law would not only leave millions of Americans without health insurance, but it would blow a crater-sized hole in the federal budget, and it would add \$350 billion to the national debt in the next 10 years."

The press conference featured several constituents who depend on the health care law. Among them was Elizabeth Silva, who suffers from a chronic lung condition and will need a lung transplant to survive. She would not have access to care without the ACA.

Stephanie McMahon's 3-year-old daughter, Charlie, has leukemia. "We are an average American family," McMahon said. "My husband

and I both have good jobs, and we own our home in San Diego." Both McMahon and her husband work for small businesses and buy their health insurance through Covered California, the state's health care exchange.

"The misconception," McMahon said, "is that the Affordable Care Act only benefits people who are needy, poor or not working. This is not true. It guarantees people like my daughter access to health care who would otherwise be denied based on pre-existing conditions." If the ACA is repealed, the McMahon's will have to pay for Charlie's care out of pocket, an expense that will exceed \$1 million this year.

Republican lawmakers have been besieged at town halls, with many avoiding them altogether, including Rep.

**Darrell Issa (R-49)**, one of Donald Trump's most loyal supporters who has been the target of constituent ire for his unwillingness to address them. Locals, determined to have their voices heard, arranged their own town hall meeting for Feb. 21 in Vista. An estimated 1,500 attended, hoping their congressman would show up. He didn't, citing a previously scheduled meeting with a nonprofit group that provides services to the homeless.

Early that same day, Issa did respond to several hundred protesters who had gathered outside his office, holding an impromptu Q&A in acknowledgment of the crowd, a majority of whom gathered to express

their displeasure with their congressman.

Issa made news again later in the week when he broke with Republican orthodoxy and called for a special prosecutor to investigate ties between the Trump administration and Russia. Appearing on HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher," Issa made the case for an independent inquiry, and for Attorney General Jeff Sessions to recuse himself from any Department of Justice actions.

"You cannot have somebody, a friend of mine, Jeff Sessions, who was on the campaign and who is an appointee. You're going to need to use the special prosecutor's statute and office to take — not just to recuse. You can't just give it to your deputy. That's another political appointee," Issa said.

Sessions on March 2 recused himself on any investigations involving Russia.

What Issa did not call for is an investigation into Donald Trump's ties to Russia, and it is suspected there are many. Still, this is a significant departure from the reflexive partisanship that has become expected. Cynics will point to Issa's narrow victory over Doug Applegate in November — by less than 1 percent — and the fact that his seat appears to be endangered in 2018 for this newfound reasonableness. Regardless of the rationale, it's a positive step.

Scott Peters held his own town hall at the San Diego

Islamic Center, a gathering that went much more smoothly in comparison to others. One critic, however, derided Peters for his choice of venue, questioning the "appropriateness" of holding the confab in an Islamic Center. "I fully embrace the symbolism of having this meeting here," Peters said when challenged to push back against the anti-Muslim comments. "The religion itself does not represent a threat. In fact, I welcome it as part of my community. It makes my community richer."

**Rep. Juan Vargas (D-51)**, whose district spans California's border with Mexico, pushed back against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials after he and other members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus were barred from a meeting with the acting director of ICE.

"Today, my colleagues in the Hispanic Caucus and I were excluded from a meeting with officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and that is completely unacceptable. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus requested a meeting with the Acting Director of ICE because our constituents are living in fear. By being excluded from today's meeting, we were unable to get clear information regarding the immigration policies that are directly impacting our communities. All we want are answers," Vargas said in a press release.

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

## ► Briefs, from page 3

its top volunteer-producing colleges and universities annually according to the size of the student body.

In 2016, California ranked No. 1 among states with the highest number of Peace Corps volunteers, with 916 volunteers serving worldwide.

Service in the Peace Corps is a life-defining, hands-on experience that offers volunteers the opportunity to travel to a community overseas and make a lasting difference in the lives of others.

This year's rankings follow the launch of a refreshed brand platform that underscores the agency's commitment to putting the user experience first and makes the Peace Corps more accessible to audiences through the platforms they already use. A simple and personal Peace Corps application process can be completed online in about one hour. Applicants can learn more about service opportunities by assignment area, country and departure date by visiting [peacecorps.gov](http://peacecorps.gov) and connecting with a recruiter.



Priyanka Talkdar (LinkedIn)

## Mission Valley lawyer joins South Asian Bar Association board

Sullivan Hill Lewin Rez & Engel associate Priyanka Talukdar has been appointed

See BRIEFS page 14 →

## ► Building, from page 2

employees with amenities that go beyond the nine-to-five workdays of the past."

The campus features nine patios and 64,000 square feet of outdoor collaborative space as well as an amphitheater for multifunction gatherings. A central meeting place called the treehouse is a patio space under a massive ficus tree, planted by Helen Copley, with hanging chairs, hammocks and meeting areas. The campus also boasts additional outdoor spaces and parks both within and between the buildings as well as along the San Diego River.

"When the Union Tribune stopped its presses in 2016,

it made one final impression with the last characters of the traditional alphabet — the ampersand," said Casey Brown, principal of Casey Brown. "AMP&RSAND is a historic location reimagined for the demands of the modern workforce. This final impression was not to mark the end of an era, but to signify that the best is yet to come, and we welcome you to explore the AMP&RSAND campus."

Other amenities include a fitness studio equipped with spa-like lockers and showers for all tenants, concierge services such as valet parking, Craft Coffee Café, as well as an on-site bike center.

Positive fundamentals in the fourth quarter

contributed to an overall strong year for the San Diego office market, according to the latest CBRE research. Vacancy fell to a new historic low during the last three months of the year, while average asking lease rates increased from the previous quarter and year. Large blocks of highly amenitized and contiguous space are very difficult to secure, paving the way for a successful delivery of the AMP&RSAND campus.

The campus is located near intersection Interstate 8 and state Route 163, and is in walking distance to the Green Line Trolley stop and Fashion Valley mall.

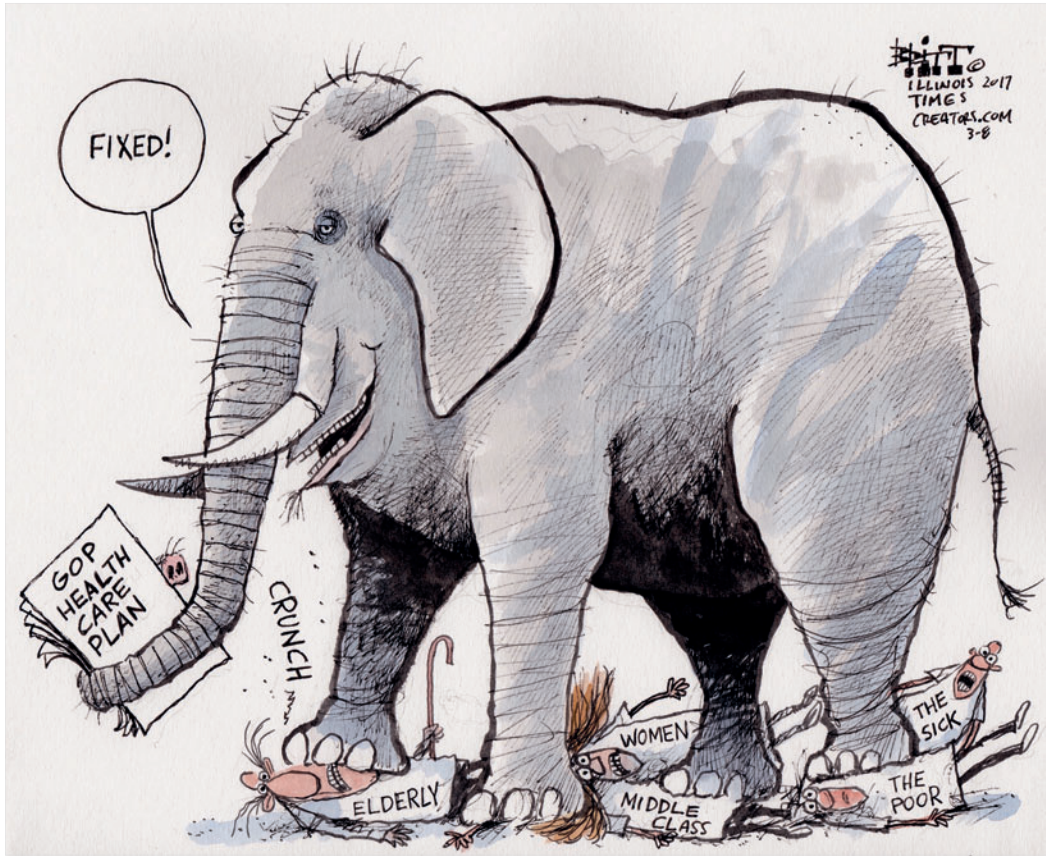
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## Guest editorial

# Higher education is the issue of our time

Rep. **Susan A. Davis**

A nation's potential is aligned closely with the strength of its education system. America's success is a result of the quality and abundant opportunities in the area of higher education.

Education has always been a passion of mine. I got my start in public service because of education. In 1983, I ran for a seat on the San Diego Board of Education. Serving for nine years, including as vice president and president, I saw firsthand the importance of the federal role in shaping how our children are educated.

When I came to Congress, I prioritized the House Committee on Education and the Workforce as one of the committee assignments I wanted to land.

When I was presented with the opportunity to become the ranking member of the Higher Education Subcommittee this year, I jumped at the chance. This means San Diego will have a key seat at the table when it comes to making higher education policy, such as the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The Higher Education Act was last reauthorized in 2008 and is in desperate need of another update. I hope to hear what you think needs to be done to make the law as effective as possible.

Here are some of my priorities:

College is out of reach for too many students, with access and affordability being two major factors. This is true for all students, but even more so for students of modest means and students of color.

According to U.S. News, the average tuition at private universities has jumped 179

percent since 1995. The average in-state tuition at public universities has jumped 226 percent in that same time.

As tuitions continue to rise, it is clear we are no longer making the investment in our people. Between 2008 and 2012, 44 of 50 states decreased their funding support for public colleges. That needs to change.

Making a degree more affordable will be a priority for me in any reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Protecting Pell grants is crucial for providing access for low income students. The Pell grant program needs to be protected and expanded.

While many for-profit schools provide a quality education, there are bad actors. We need to provide oversight to protect students against for-profit schools that are more concerned with earning a profit than with teaching a student.

Active duty personnel and veterans have been particularly vulnerable to rogue for-profits. Over a quarter of all Department of Education student aid funds, a third of all post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, and half of Department of Defense Tuition Assistance funds go to for-profit colleges.

Congress has a responsibility to guarantee these taxpayer funds are a worthwhile investment for our students.

We need to look at how we define higher education to include two-year degrees and teacher credential programs. We also need to align higher education with workforce needs.

As we help students realize their dreams and full potential, they must also feel safe on campus. Many California campuses have responded to my bill to establish resources for survivors of campus sexual assault. We need to

expand that nationally to create a positive campus environment.

While I will be pushing these priorities, protecting the progress we have made from this new administration is likely to be a full-time job.

We are already seeing some of the progress being scaled back. The House of Representatives recently voted to undo vital protections that ensure higher education teacher preparation programs are at the top of their game.

It sounds like this could be just the beginning. President Donald Trump plans to appoint Liberty University president and creationist Jerry Falwell Jr. to head his higher education task force. His comments about rolling back Title IX protections, especially as it pertains to sexual assault, are particularly disturbing.

It is important to remember that behind these safeguards there are students whose interests we must protect.

We need the best educated workforce to compete in today's global economy. The future of America's success depends on our commitment to a quality education and investing in our nation's best resource — its people.

—Rep. Susan A. Davis represents Congressional District 53, which includes including the San Diego communities of Mission Valley, Old Town, Kensington, Mission Hills, University Heights, Hillcrest Bankers Hill, North Park, South Park, Talmadge and Normal Heights, as well as La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley and parts of El Cajon and Chula Vista.■

## Letters

### Housing and wages

Re: "District 7 Dispatch: Housing Summit marks begging to fix San Diego's housing crisis" [Volume 11, Issue 2 or bit.ly/2mDy2Kd]

I recently read 7th District Councilmember Scott Sherman's column concerning the upcoming Housing Summit, his take on the housing crisis here in San Diego, and wish to comment. While I appreciate Councilmember Sherman's attention to the matter, I find his apparent solutions to be missing the mark.

It is true that San Diegans spend more of their monthly income on housing than those that live in San Francisco. The reason for this is not that housing prices are lower in the Bay Area than in San Diego, it's because the wages here in San Diego are depressed and do not keep up with the rising cost of housing. This is the 800-pound gorilla in the room that Councilmember Sherman, and many that think like him, wish to ignore. Councilmember Sherman talks of a multifaceted approach to the problem, but leaves out the very important issue of depressed wages. If I recall, Councilmember Sherman did not approve of the recent raise in the minimum wage here in San Diego, despite his claims to want to find a solution to the housing crisis.

I object to the idea that giving further incentives to developers will bring down the cost of housing in the area. This is always the "go-to" solution that really is code for reducing regulations for developers that really, in the end, do little to nothing to bring affordable housing to most of those that live and work here.

Does anyone believe that a developer that saves a few thousand dollars by reduced development fees, or regulatory relief, will pass this savings onto a home buyer or by reducing rent? It's not the San Diego business model. As an example, not too long ago it was revealed that the city of San Diego was allowing developers, at their construction sites, to get free city water. This was a savings to a developer's overall costs but never showed up in any savings to a home buyer or renter. At the time, San Diego housing costs were at an all-time high. Any savings from getting free water went into the developers' pockets. Besides, most, if not all, developers here in the San Diego area do very well financially so why give them any more incentives? It seems that many developers have reams of cash available to lobby and give away in philanthropic ventures, but these same development interests ignore, or even fight, addressing the wage issue here in San Diego.

Any multifaceted approach to the issue of housing here must address wages. I am also for getting rid of redundant regulations or streamlining the regulatory process, but only if these processes actually go to fixing the problem and not making the rich even richer.

—Stuart Rachmuth, Mission Valley ■

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► Planning group, from page 1

- 55 acres of parks, including 46 acres of park space along the river and 12 acres of community recreation fields for youth and community sports.
- 4,800 units of housing — 480 affordable units, 800 student-focused units and 3,520 traditional market rate units.
- Millions of square feet of retail and office space that could also be adapted to house a school or meet other community needs.

“One of the things that was amazingly clear to us, as laid out by the [MLS] commissioner, was that unless we do more than just build a stadium in the middle of a parking lot at Qualcomm, Major League Soccer will not come,” Stone said. “And so we have to build a sports and entertainment district around that in order to convince the league to come.”

The league is also demanding that the city have a plan in place to guarantee a stadium is built by March of 2020, to secure one of the final four expansion franchises would move to San Diego. Currently there are 12 cities vying for those four teams, Stone said.

Because of that deadline, the project would need an “unconventional” permitting process, to allow traffic mitigation improvements after the stadium is built, which brought objections from planning group board members Marco Sessa and John LaRaia. The board also objected to being left out of the planning process for the project.

“It’s a lot of information that would have been nice if some of



An artist rendering of the soccer-centric sports and entertainment district proposed to replace Qualcomm Stadium (Courtesy FS Investors)

us in the planning group had heard about it over the last two years, since I assume it’s been a process for a while,” Sessa said.

Board member Deborah Bossmeyer asked if the planning group could have more input on the project if it gets approved to ensure that local priorities like schools, housing and traffic issues are considered.

“We, as the community, have ideas of what we need,” she said. “We need workforce housing and the only place where we will be able to leverage that is that Qualcomm site because it is city owned. It’s such a big issue for us.

“Our concern here is that ... it feels weird because it’s being rushed,” Bossmeyer added. “To put this deadline on us is disconcerting. So, if there is a way you can involve us in the process we would greatly appreciate it.”

Stone said FS Investors will have several public meetings to answer questions and hold workshops to involve the community in deciding what amenities the

parks would have at the site. He also directed residents with questions to a website that has the entire proposal posted at GoalSD.com.

Medical marijuana dispensaries

After the soccer stadium presentation, the board heard from Sean St. Peter who sought approval for a conditional use permit for a medical marijuana dispensary located at 1233 Camino Del Rio South.

St. Peter proposed the dispensary at the February meeting but the board asked him to return with documents showing that the building meets the land use rules restricting marijuana-related businesses 1,000 feet from schools, churches and other community-oriented establishments. After the board agreed that the building did meet the city’s standards, it narrowly approved the permit with a 9-8 vote. St. Peter will still need approval from the city’s Planning Commission before opening.



The plans to redevelop the Town and Country Hotel site include a new pool experience and courtyard, pictured here. (Courtesy of Lowe Enterprises)

Town and Country

The planning group voted unanimously to approve the plans for the redevelopment of Town and Country Hotel & Convention Center.

Lowe Enterprises Vice President Todd Majcher presented the project to turn the aging resort into a mixed-use development, which will have residential and commercial spaces added to a scaled-back hotel/convention center that will be modernized and given a new look. The plan also calls for building a park along the San Diego River that was already approved by the planning group.

The master plan for the project will:

- Reduce hotel rooms from 954 to 700.
- Build 840 new transportation-oriented residential units.
- Expand restaurants and retail.

See PLANNING GROUP page 10 →

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**Crossword Solutions on page 7**

**ACROSS**

1 Son of Noah  
5 Pro football team  
9 Place of trade  
13 Outdoor game  
14 Bellowing  
16 Cattlebeast ox  
17 Asian land  
18 Mouthlike opening  
19 Excellent athlete  
20 Football immortal  
22 Pro football team  
24 Electric  
26 Jai-  
27 Sports official  
31 Models  
35 Rinses  
36 Harness parts  
38 Invalid food  
39 Scored at tennis  
40 Destroyed  
41 Miracle village  
42 Mal du  
43 Parish priests  
44 More certain  
45 Tennis star Ashe  
47 Tennis equipment  
49 Receptacles  
51 Hindu deity  
52 Michigan State athletic teams

**DOWN**

1 Motor trip  
2 Book of Hours  
3 Ancient Iran  
4 Ilsa  
5 Bacon slice  
6 Skill  
7 State of mind  
8 Last home of RLS  
9 Golf club  
10 Opposer  
11 Type of horse  
12 Frigate hands  
15 Made a comeback  
21 Golfing need  
23 Shoulder  
25 Merry Widow composer  
27 Speedway man

**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.

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

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► Conference, from page 1

“My job has always been to advise clients in how to participate in the regulated market and what that means — and that’s constantly changing,” said conference organizer Kimberly Simms.

Simms, an attorney who specializes in the marijuana industry, said the conference was a chance to explain the complicated regulatory system that was put in place in 2015 when the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MCRSA) was passed. MCRSA created guidelines in how medical cannabis industry would run including rules for growing, manufacturing, storing, transporting and selling.

“It’s unlikely something that people will be able to navigate [marijuana regulations] without consultants,” Simms said. “A couple years ago, the [legal] risk was much higher but you could kind of dip your toe in it and dabble and see if this was your thing — the barrier to enter was pretty low. Such is not the case anymore. You have to be fully committed to operating within a highly-regulated system and you can’t just piece it together yourself.”

Gabriel Johnson, a marijuana grower, said he came to the conference because he’s interested in getting to know what the laws are going to be and any potential changes to them that are coming up.

“It’s very vague right now with what the laws and regulations and procedures are,” he said, adding that he is especially interested in real estate aspects of the laws because

he is looking to buy a property to farm.

One of the other consultants who presented at the conference was Derek Davis, CEO of California Cannabis CPA, who jokingly described his presentation as “the most interesting topic in the world, which is taxes.”

Davis said marijuana business entrepreneurs need professional help because there are special rules and tax codes for the marijuana industry that need to be followed, and knowing what is legally deductible could be the difference between success and failure.

“They unjustly penalize cannabis-related companies by not allowing them to deduct a lot of their business expenses and so what ends up happening is you end up with a huge tax rate,” he said.

Despite the complicated tax codes involving marijuana businesses, Davis recommends that marijuana business operators pay the taxes and be thorough with their returns.

“The risk is higher to not pay your taxes because it’s tax evasion,” he said. “The classic example is Al Capone, who was caught for tax evasion, not bootlegging.”

A question on the minds of many of the conference attendees was whether they would “get caught” up in what Simms described as the “federal situation” — the fact that marijuana is still an illegal drug in the eyes of the federal government. And the federal government has just given the marijuana industry a reason for concern.

On Feb. 23, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said that the Trump administration would pursue “greater enforcement” of federal marijuana



The marijuana business conference was sold out with 120 attendees that were diverse in age, gender, race and background. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

laws, despite several states, including California, that have legalized.

Simms said the announcement will have a “chilling effect” on some new investors, especially on “big money” investors who only recently have begun to see the industry as viable. But, she said, people who have been doing this for a long time have been dealing with the federal uncertainty all along.

“This is just more of the same bullying that we have been fighting in California for over 20 years,” she said. “This is far from settled and far from over. The cannabis industry, both in the state of California and federally, have many more years of ups and downs and bumps and twists, and that’s part of the fun but it’s also part of the challenge. It is high risk, high reward.”

David McPhearson, principal at HdL Companies which works with governments to draft marijuana

policy and legislation, said that because California’s Proposition 64, which legalizes recreational marijuana, is not in effect yet, it gives businesses in the state a chance to slowly transition and keep an eye on what the Trump administration’s policy eventually becomes.

“If the new administration cracks down, no one is settled in yet,” he said. “Sometimes being not the first mover is a good thing.”

Even without the threat of stricter federal enforcement, marijuana businesses face regulatory challenges locally.

Chris Boudreau, CEO of M Deliveries, spoke about the future of marijuana delivery businesses and how a new rule requires deliveries be only from licensed and permitted dispensaries.

“You’ve got opposing directions,” he said. “In one direction, you’ve got a world and a marketplace that is becoming increasingly interested in delivery of things

that are fast and convenient. On the flipside, you’ve got increasing regulatory challenges that make delivery of cannabis more difficult.”

Boudreau’s delivery business will not be affected because he is in the process of opening a Mission Valley dispensary at 3455 Camino del Rio South that is tentatively named Emerald Courtyard.

He said that his experience in opening the legal dispensary makes it understandable why there are so many delivery businesses that aren’t code compliant.

“The cost of starting a dispensary is so, so high that it makes it impossible for most people and so if you can’t do that, it limits what you can do,” he said, adding that his own dispensary went through 31 months of review until it was approved by the city and it will cost around \$1 million when completed. He suggested a regulated delivery system might be a solution.

“In San Diego, you can’t be in manufacturing or growing so if you want to be in the business, you have to be in retail,” he said. “So, it seems like a sensible compromise that we could allow some delivery if they go through some kind of city process.”

Another city process that marijuana business advocates would like to see changed are the strict land use rules governing dispensaries and other marijuana-related businesses.

“However, we could live in a city that has an outright ban,” Simms said. “I’m grateful that we, as a city, decided to be more progressive.”

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

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# Is your cat in pain?

Sari Reis

In a study done at Texas A&M, it was discovered that 90 percent of cats over the age of 10 had x-ray evidence of painful arthritis and their owners had no idea.

Although this is disturbing, it is completely understandable as cats are well-known for hiding any signs of illness, weakness, or pain. This is instinctive because, in the wild, any sign of infirmity is an invitation to a predator.

"Cats prefer their routines and stick to their habits as much as they possibly can, especially when they are in pain," said Dr. Robin Downing, an expert on animal pain and founder of the Downing Center for Animal Pain Management in Windsor, Colorado.

This makes it very difficult for cat owners to be able to observe that their feline is hurting. But, if you know what to look for, it's much easier to see.

"Chronic pain in cats is almost exclusively behavioral in nature," Downing said. "We can tell if they're uncomfortable by monitoring their behavior."

Some common behavioral changes that indicate a cat is in pain are:

- **Changes in activity level.** The cat may become less active and sleep more. It may be slow or reluctant to

change positions or stop jumping onto high places. On the other hand, your kitty may become more active, i.e. restless, repetitively changing positions or walking around having difficulty getting comfortable.

- **Self-mutilation.** Pain can cause repetitive licking and biting in certain areas. Although this is often associated with allergies, it can also be a result of pain.

- **Vocalizing.** Changes in the type and frequency of vocalizing can indicate the cat is in distress.

- **Changes in eating and appetite.** A cat that normally enjoys his food may become disinterested and eat much less than usual.

- **Changes in litter box habits.** A cat that has never missed the litter box may start having "accidents" outside the litter box. It could be a urinary infection or painful arthritis may make it difficult for the cat to enter the box or get into the needed position to eliminate.

- **Posture.** When cats are stiff, they change their gait and will avoid their usual leaps onto furniture. If they are experiencing internal pain such as in their stomach, they may hunch their back or become protective of a certain area of their body, hissing when being touched there. They also may start to limp.

- **Facial expressions.** Cats in pain may appear to have dilated pupils or a glazed vacant stare. They may also start to pant.



Determining if a cat is in pain is difficult because their nature is to hide any sign of weakness. (Wiki Commons)

- **Change in grooming habits.** Since cats love to groom themselves, if they stop grooming and their coats start to look unkempt and dull, it is possible that arthritis or another condition makes it too painful to properly groom themselves.

Other symptoms may include disinterest in people, lethargy, hiding, and aggression.

If you notice any of these changes in your cat, a visit to the veterinarian is imperative. Discuss your observations with the vet. Pain management is possible and the vet can help you relieve your cat's suffering and improve their quality of life making you both feel a lot better.

—Sari Reis is a Certified Humane Education Specialist and the owner of Mission Valley Pet Sitting Services. For more information, please contact her at 760-644-0289 or visit her website at [www.missionvalleypetsitting.com](http://www.missionvalleypetsitting.com). ■

# Take a stand



Erica Moe

Are you reading this sitting down? Statistics show that you probably are. Sitting has been equated to the new smoking. It is so harmful that your workout this morning may not make up for a day spent sitting. Seriously. Sitting burns few calories and many studies link it to weight gain and obesity. A review of 18 studies found that if you sit, you have a 49 percent greater risk of dying earlier than those who sit less. To counteract this, try something different where you spend most of your day — at work.

## Sit-stand desks

Your best equipment investment may be your desk. If you want to alternate between sitting and standing, look for a product that accommodates both. You'll get bonus points for going from sitting to standing and standing to sitting — it's like doing squats! A study by the CDC found the use of sit-stand desks reduced upper back and neck pain by 54 percent. Interestingly, if the desks were removed, the pain came back in just two short weeks. You don't have to stand all day to reap health benefits. Reduce blood sugar after lunch by 43 percent by standing 180 minutes. Another option is to alternate between standing and sitting every 30 minutes, which can reduce blood sugar spikes by 11 percent. Compared to sitting, standing for an afternoon burned 170 additional calories, which is almost 1,000 more per week!

## Treadmill desk (what an oxymoron!)

Take it to the next level by not only standing at work, but walking at your workstation. Eighty-seven percent of those who had a walking workstation reported increased vigor and energy. Imagine, if you walk four to seven hours a day, you'd use 500-1,000 calories. Being able to accumulate 15,000 to 25,000 steps per day and get your work done may be worth the \$600 to \$4,000 cost. As with any equipment purchase, be sure to fully understand the warranty and maintenance. The only con is figuring out how to drink your



A desk you can stand at will help get you on your feet at work. (Courtesy of Mission Valley YMCA)

coffee without spilling it! Bonus: Eating lunch at your desk will be out of the question!

## Benefits

Standing or walking at your desk will guarantee, obviously, that you will sit less. And for those who sit less, benefits abound. You may experience less fatigue, tension, confusion and depression. And you may gain more vigor, energy, focus and happiness. Happiness? Is that possible? Studies show that employees actually enjoyed going to the office more. Endorphins make you feel good. They showed a physiological response, but also a psychological performance boost, too. Quality of work, quantity of work and quality of exchanges with coworkers all improved.

## Reality check

So, standing at work is great idea, in theory. However, changing behavior can be difficult. If you have a sit-stand or a treadmill desk and don't use it, what good is it? Unfortunately, buying the desk doesn't make you stand or walk. You are the variable that can increase your life expectancy by two years, just by using the right equipment to stand or walk at least three hours per day.

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

## ► Planning group, from page 8

- Build a unique pool experience for residents and hotel guests.
- Restore 8.1 acres of natural habitat.
- Build a 3.31-acre public park.

Traffic is completely mitigated, Majcher said, because the hotel is downsizing and being replaced with residential units, and hotel guests take more trips per day than residents.

## New sidewalks

A city of San Diego Public Works project was also approved unanimously by the planning group. The project will improve sidewalks along both sides of

Mission Village Drive between Ronda Avenue and Qualcomm Stadium.

The current asphalt sidewalks will be replaced with standard 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalks that will provide "a fully ADA-compliant path of travel," said project manager Amy Mills. Old crosswalks will be replaced with high-visibility crosswalks at all intersections as well as replace one non-compliant curb ramp. The sidewalks will also have upgraded storm water gutters.

The project also calls for removing seven trees that are in the path of travel.

—Reach Jeff Clemetson at [jeff@sdccn.com](mailto:jeff@sdccn.com). ■



San Diego CityBeat KARL STRAUSS TAYLOR GUITARS DIRECT FOOT WINE Harrah's SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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# The MLS and other resources for Realtors

## ASK KATHY

Kathy McSherry



Hi Kathy:

I know as a Realtor you have access to the MLS. What exactly is that and what other resources do you use when looking for properties for your buyers and keeping them informed of the latest real estate trends? Thank you.

—Greg B.

Hi Greg:

What a great question. Many people do not realize how many resources are available for both Realtors and consumers when either looking for properties or interested in selling properties.

First, the MLS stands for Multiple Listing Service. Per Wikipedia, the MLS offers services that allow real estate brokers to “establish contractual offers of compensation (among brokers) and accumulate and disseminate information to enable appraisals. A MLS database and software is used by real estate brokers in real estate, representing sellers under a listing contract to widely share information about properties with other brokers who may represent potential buyers or wish to work with a seller’s broker in

finding a buyer for the property or asset. The listing data stored in a MLS database is the proprietary information of the broker who has obtained a listing agreement with a property seller.”

With that being said, one has to be a member to access this information and pay dues or fees.

This is where we, as a Realtor, will begin our searches to locate a property.

Another resource for us as agents is a local caravan and/or pitching forum. Many local areas will have their own forum where Realtors, lenders, title representatives and any company based around the real estate industry for buyers, sellers, rentals, and commercial properties, go on a certain day of the week and “pitch” their listings.

On Fridays, depending on the schedule, the Mission Valley area falls under the METRO - Metropolitan Realty Organization Broker Caravan. It begins at 8:30 a.m. at 3030 Front St. in San Diego, and goes for about an hour; and it is a wonderful forum for local agents to stand up and pitch their listings.

Many times, even though a home is in the MLS, reaching out to other agents on a personal and professional level and physically explaining the features and

benefits of your listing is a real plus for a seller. It helps us to keep our pulse on the market.

At the meeting on Friday, March 3, in Bankers Hill, not only were there many great properties that hadn’t even hit the MLS yet, but a company was explaining a wonderful service that agents can provide their sellers as a closing gift. It acts like a concierge service whereby the company will come out to your home and list all the home’s important facts, from paint colors, to when your air filter needs to be replaced, any maintenance issues, documents on the home, photos and more. This gives the homeowner a one-stop place for everything needed that pertains to that property. And, the service transfers to the new homeowner.

In addition to listening about new home-related products, agents are provided with a list of available listings that are set up for a “broker caravan.” This is essentially an open house for agents to come and personally view the listing so they can preview for their clients, see what other homes in the area are selling for, and again, become more knowledgeable both about the products and the community.

Networking with other agents is key to being

successful in real estate and visiting and comparing properties keeps an agent current and up to date.

Sandicor.com is San Diego’s Multiple Listing Service. This website is for licensed Realtors to gain access but it is also a very informative website for consumers. From accessing listings in the MLS to various links related to real estate, it is worth a visit. Also, the other very popular websites for consumers is Zillow, Realtor.com, and Trulia. Some of these sites

however are not timely or up to date. Find a Realtor that is actively involved that you can trust, as it is our job to have the latest information and actively network so as to fully understand the market.

Thank you Greg for your question. Please feel free to call me, text or email, with any real estate questions.

—Kathy McSherry is a Realtor at Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. Email your questions to Kathy@kathymcsherry.com or call 702-382-9905.■

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# Sake and sushi on the cheap

By Dr. Ink

Family members visiting from out of town tipped me off to Maki Maki Sushi (formerly Kimiya Sushi), which opened under new ownership about three months ago with some of the best happy hour steals I've seen in a while.

Situated next to Rubio's in a cookie-cutter strip plaza at Rosecrans Street and Midway Drive in Loma Portal, the interior offers a touch of style with black granite tabletops, leatherette booths, an aquarium, and a modest-size sushi bar toward the back.

With a cheerful staff in place, the sushi rolls, tempura dishes and other vittles are priced at \$3 in the midst of the dinner rush on weekdays. In addition, sake starts at \$4 per serving.

Visiting as a foursome, my share of the bill for a full-size spicy crab roll, a bowl of garlic edamame, and a quaint carafe of boozy, hot



(l to r) cold and hot sake



Garlic edamame



Avocado tempura



The spicy crab roll (Photos by Dr. Ink)

sake amounted to an easy ten spot. Granted, the "crab" was "krab" and it should be legally listed as such. But the roll was fresh and moist, constructed adroitly by a shy Asian woman I was told is Maki's sushi master.

The un-shelled edamame was hot and steamy and speckled generously with sautéed garlic. It carried us through the first half of our

stay as we noshed also on a few tempura dishes involving shrimp, mixed veggies, and avocado wedges, which become gloriously creamier when entombed in fried, light batter.

The portions of everything we ordered from the happy-hour menu, including a plate of pan-fried gyoza, exceeded our expectations for the low prices, which

will remain in place beyond Maki's ongoing grand opening, according to an employee.

A pretty pink bottle of chilled semi-sweet Ginjo Hana (\$8) was the sake choice for one of our tablemates, who loosened his wallet and sprung for the King Dragon roll (\$9.25) on the regular menu.

Made with smoked salmon and crowned with eel, pan-ko flakes and green onions, it was a velvety departure from the bargain crab roll I ordered, thanks to the inclusion of cream cheese and avocado tucked inside. A little too mushy, however, for my liking.

Happy hour also rings in discounts on "large" Sapporo, Asahi and Kirin

## RATINGS

**Drinks:**

The list is short, but accommodates with four types of sake and three different Asian beers.

**Food:**

Imitation crab is used in many of the rolls, although all of the seafood we encountered tasted clean and fresh. And the tempura was light and non-greasy.

**Value:**

All of the appetizer and rolls on the happy-hour menu are \$3, a near giveaway considering portion sizes are actually shareable. In addition, sake and large beers are priced graciously between \$4 and \$8.

**Service:**

Water, drinks, food and condiments were brought to our table swiftly without any lapses.

**Atmosphere:**

The vibe is casual and the décor and lighting are a cut above what you'll find in most sushi restaurants hidden in strip plazas.

beers, which sell for \$4 each. Indeed, whether you come for sake or suds, and pair either with food, the dent to your budget compared to other sushi joints goes practically unnoticed. ■

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# Leipzig

## The cosmopolitan city of Germany

Global  
Gumshoe  
Ron Stern



Located in the East German state of Saxony at the confluence of three rivers, Leipzig has always been a historically important city. Many notable figures have lived here, and its citizens were instrumental in bringing about the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

Today, while still honoring its past, Leipzig is steering a clear course toward a vibrant future in the arts, culture, cuisine and tourism.



The old city hall building in Leipzig (Photo by Ron Stern)

During the days of the Roman Empire, Leipzig was considered a primary trade city owing to its strategic location along major roads such as the Via Regia (Royal Highway), which stretched from the Rhine River to Frankfurt. Also known for its culture and music, Leipzig was home to Bach, Wagner, Schumann and Mendelssohn.

Bach was, forgive the pun, instrumental in the early development of the St. Thomas Church Choir and was also its conductor from 1723-50. Today, the St. Thomas Boys' Choir of Leipzig honors Bach in its repertoire and delights audiences all over the world. Cantinas can be heard here every Friday and Saturday.

During WWII, the city was moderately bombed by the Allies and much of its culture and creativity suffered under the rule of the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) and its authoritarian secret police known as the STASI. The movie "The Lives of Others" depicts what life was like under this oppressive regime.

During the 1980s, some of the local citizens started meeting at St. Nicholas Church every Monday to pray for peace. This led to a series of nonviolent protests against the GDR regime known as the Monday demonstrations. On Oct. 9, 1989, 70,000 marched and chanted, "Wir sind das Volk!" ("We are the people!") Without the usual massive crackdown by the government against the protestors, larger demonstrations followed, and by Nov. 9, the Berlin Wall came down, owing, in part, to the pressure exerted by the Leipzig residents.

The building once used by the STASI is now known as The Museum in the Round Corner and a testament to the brutality of the past and to the bravery of those residents who were part of what came to be known as The Peaceful Revolution.

**Art and culture**

In recent years, Leipzig has emerged as a tourist mecca with museums, restaurants and historical sites to explore. One such area that is being reclaimed is known as the Spinnerei. Situated in an industrial zone and constructed with tons of red bricks,

the building was once the largest cotton mill in Europe. Today, it houses 12 galleries and around 100 artist studios, including works from artists like Neo Rauch of the New Leipzig School of modern German painting.

The Leipzig Opera House is known as the third oldest bourgeois musical stage in Europe and is as beautiful inside as it is outside. It is located on what used to be known as Karl Marx Square, the site of the Quiet or Peaceful Revolution of 1989. Today, a wide variety of musical programs are available from modern opera to Baroque music to ballets.

Looking something like a large green-hued cube, the Museum der Bildenden Künste, or fine art museum, houses more than 3,500 paintings and features works by Degas, Monet and Max Klinger. Other museums are the Bach Museum, STASI Museum and GRASSI Museum of Applied Arts. The latter includes more than 1,500 works inspired by the art nouveau and art deco periods.

Beautiful buildings are everywhere and the Old City Hall is a glorious example of Renaissance-period architecture. On weekends, the adjacent market square comes alive with vendors turning the area into a farmers' market and offering everything from eggs to cheese to flowers. Each hour, the clock tower chimes as if to punctuate the unfailing spirit of the city.

**Culinary**

The so-called coffee culture is in full brew mode here, and the Zum Arabischen Coffe Baum is one of the oldest surviving coffee houses in Europe. Bach, Goethe and



The Kroch-Haus building is part of the University of Leipzig. (Photo by Ron Stern)

Robert Schumann are among its famous guests. Upstairs is a coffee museum with 500 or so interesting coffee-related exhibits. Another one, Coffee House Riquet, can be recognized by the two elephant heads above the main door, a nod by the architect to the area's Asian trading links. This is a good place to sit, relax and enjoy local coffee and cake.

You will never go hungry as Leipzig has more than 1400 pubs and restaurants as well as sidewalk cafes. Many locals affectionately refer to the latter as LE's, from the German word freisitz. Sit outside and watch the world go by while indulging in local cuisine or beer. Grilled bratwurst with German mustard was something I could always find from local vendors, and this is simple, culinary nirvana when served on a crispy roll.

The most famous restaurant in Leipzig is Auersbachs Keller, mentioned in Goethe's "Faust." Located downstairs in a shopping arcade, this establishment was started as a wine bar for students. Its origins can be traced perhaps all the way back to 1438. Nowadays, they serve local cuisine, and their roulade with red cabbage and dumplings is among the best you will find anywhere.

Overlooking Market Square and the Old City Hall, Restaurant Weinstock serves local German cuisine and seasonal specials. Everything here is prepared fresh and might include roast duck, white asparagus, locally caught fish, butter schnitzel, and potato pancakes with applesauce. During autumn, one entree features fresh chanterelles with pan fried bacon and onions and a bread dumpling (18 euros). They have a nice wine selection, and you can savor your candlelight meal in one of the most historic sections of Leipzig.

While you're here, you will also want to try some of the local delicacies. Leipziger Allerlei is a vegetable dish made with carrots, asparagus, cauliflower, morel mushrooms, prawns and bread dumplings. Another local dish is Leipziger Lerche, developed in response to the banning of lark hunting by the King of Saxony in 1876. This alternative is made with short-crust pastry, almonds, marzipan and nuts, all topped with a drop of strawberry jam in what resembles a bird's nest.

**Shopping**

There are many other things to see and do here, and shopping ranks high on the list by visitors. You can start spending your euros as soon as you get to the Leipzig Central Train Station (one of the largest in Europe), which has been converted into a colorful three-floor, 140-shop

retail extravaganza.

As you leave the railway station, you'll find many high-end shops along the Nikolaistraße including H&M, Breuninger and Karstadt. Many of the old passageways have been restored into a honeycomb network of about 30 covered arcades, 20 of which are original around the inner city.

The poet Goethe was particularly fond of the Mädler Passage, built between 1912-14 and patterned after the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan. Trendy fashions, restaurants and small boutiques can all be found here. The oldest original arcade in Leipzig is called Specks Hof and offers a variety of jewelry, leather goods, fine wines, and chocolates. Höfen am Brühl is one of the newer and largest retail shopping centers with 110 specialty shops of every type.

**Transportation**

Bicycles are popular in many parts of Europe, and exploring Leipzig by bike is a fun and leisurely way to see some of the city's most interesting sights. One company (Lipzi Tours) offers routes that run from downtown to Schleußig and Platchwitz, taking you along the Karl Hein Canal and eventually to the aforementioned Spinnerei. In addition to two-wheel transportation, there are tour buses and boat rides along more than 200 kilometers of

### Resources

**Leipzig Region**  
Leipzig.travel

**Hotel Fregehaus**  
Katharinenstrasse 11  
Leipzig  
+49 341 26393157

Located right in the heart of the city within an easy walk from the train station, this small hotel is a perfect place from which to explore. You enter through a cobblestone courtyard, and the four-winged building dates from the Renaissance era and has Old World charm. The rooms are basic but clean and cozy with a warm and friendly staff. They have a nicely done, included breakfast in the morning.

**Lipzi Tours**  
Holbeinstrasse 8,  
04229 Leipzig  
+49 0341 2239482

waterways and canals that intertwine themselves around the city. The Leipzig Card provides unlimited public transportation and also special deals on tours, cultural events and restaurants.

Once you come for a visit, you will find that this former member of the GDR has turned itself around in a big way with tourist visits that rival other major German cities. Whether it is art, music, food or history, Leipzig is one destination that will not disappoint.

—Contact Ron Stern at [travelwriter01@comcast.net](mailto:travelwriter01@comcast.net) or visit his blog at [originalglobalgumshoe.blogspot.com](http://originalglobalgumshoe.blogspot.com). This was a sponsored visit, however, all opinions are the author's. ■



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# STEAM programs come to District 7 libraries this spring

## District 7 Dispatch

Scott Sherman



The San Diego Public Library is holding a new education initiative that gives children the opportunity to learn about science and the ecosystem in a series of programs based on the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) concept. Classes and workshops will be held at each branch library in District 7.

In the city's efforts to get young children involved in subjects that will lead to high-paying careers, the "Spring into STEAM" programs are designed for children from ages 9 to 12. This year's theme is titled "Bug Out!" where six courses will be offered on topics including entomology, beekeeping, solar energy, computer coding, geometry, and circuitry. All of the library programs are free to participants.

Librarians, community experts, and organizations will partner up to provide expertise to teach the programs. Some experts and organizations include:

- Entomologist Bill Burkhardt, known as "Bill the Bug Guy," a docent and educator at the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center.
- Local beekeeper and educator Hilary Kearney, owner of Girl Next Door Honey.
- ThoughtSTEM, a local computer science education company.



- All Girls STEM Society, a local non-profit started by two high school students.

- The League of Extraordinary Scientists & Engineers, which connects local schools with professionals in science fields and classroom resources.

To learn more about "Spring into STEAM" programs, please visit [bit.ly/2n8clld](http://bit.ly/2n8clld). Some programs require advance registration, so please act quickly to reserve seats in preferred classes.

Also, to learn more about other library programs or to support the many educational opportunities they provide, please visit [supportmylibrary.org](http://supportmylibrary.org)

—Scott Sherman is San Diego City Councilmember for District 7, representing the communities of Mission Valley, Grantville, Allied Gardens, San Carlos and Del Cerro. ■

## ► Briefs, from page 5

to the South Asian Bar Association, San Diego Chapter (SABA-SD) board of directors for the 2017 term.

Talukdar is a resident of Mission Valley. She is a member of the firm's commercial litigation and business transactions practice groups. Her practice focuses on providing legal services to businesses and commercial enterprises located in the United States, as well as foreign jurisdictions.

Prior to joining Sullivan Hill, Priyanka worked as a foreign lawyer and as an associate at several international law firms located in Singapore and India. Priyanka has worked in a wide range of cross-jurisdictional matters including commercial and contractual matters and disputes, shareholder agreements and disputes, joint ventures, derivative actions, and breaches of fiduciary duty. She also served as an associate for the National Judicial Academy (India), which is India's foremost training institute for the judiciary.

The South Asian Bar Association of San Diego is a San Diego-based, nonprofit organization that strives to promote the professional and academic development of its members; increase the opportunities for South Asian-American legal professionals to participate in and lead civic and public

affairs; support efforts to increase diversity in the legal profession; raise the South Asian-American community's awareness of relevant legal issues affecting their interests; support public interest associations providing pro bono legal services and other grassroots community organizations serving the South Asian-American community; and serve as a resource and an advocate for both South Asian-American legal professionals and the South Asian-American community.

Sullivan Hill Lewin Rez & Engel has provided legal representation for more than 40 years. The firm provides full service representation to clients in a variety of industries with an emphasis in insolvency, construction disputes, insurance coverage, real estate, employment, business disputes, civil litigation and transactional work. The firm has offices in San Diego and Las Vegas. More information can be found at [sullivanhill.com](http://sullivanhill.com).

## San Diego Music Awards announce Lifetime Achievement Award recipient

The 2017 San Diego Music Awards, presented by Harrah's Resort Southern California and Karl Strauss Brewing Company, return on the evening of Tuesday, March 21 at 7 p.m., in the music hall at House of Blues San Diego, located at 1055 Fifth Ave., Downtown. The awards gala



Wayne Riker ([waynerikerguitar.com](http://waynerikerguitar.com))

recognizes the diverse achievements of the talented San Diego music community, with proceeds from the event donated to fund the San Diego Music Foundation's Taylor Guitars for Schools program.

Each year, a Lifetime Achievement Award is given to a San Diego musician, recording artist, manager or someone of impact within the San Diego music community. This year, guitarist Wayne Riker will receive the honor.

A virtuoso player in just about any genre since his 1980 arrival from the East Coast in San Diego, Riker has performed both solo and in numerous acclaimed bands, releasing nine albums along the way, as detailed in his recent autobiography "50 Years, 50 Bands, 50 Bucks."

But his biggest impact has been as teacher and mentor to hundreds of performers, teaching at local shops and rehearsal spaces, and most recently becoming an instructor at the Guitar Workshop Plus music camp. Taking things to a whole different level, Riker's six-string prowess also landed him long-running columns, writing for national music magazines Guitar Player and Acoustic Musician, as well as a major worldwide deal for his music instruction books from Alfred Publishing, which has seen nine titles released since 1994. For these reasons and many more, the San Diego Music Awards will present Wayne Riker with the 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award, at the awards gala on March 21.

The 26th edition of the San Diego Music Awards will feature performances from Hirie, Schizophonic, The Verigolds, The Creepy Creeps, Gilbert Castellanos and the Young Lions Orchestra, plus a special opening set by Steph Johnson & the Voices of Our City Choir.

Proceeds from the San Diego Music Awards are used help to keep participatory music programs in local elementary and middle schools through the Taylor Guitars for Schools programs, which has put instruments into the hands of more than 55,000 students county-wide from San Ysidro to San Onofre.

For complete event information or to purchase tickets, visit [sandiegomusicawards.com](http://sandiegomusicawards.com).

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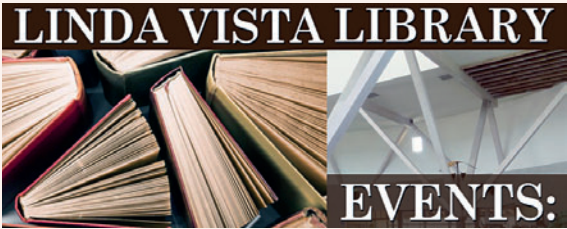
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SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY NEWS NETWORK, INC.







**Friday, March 31**  
**Closed for Cesar Chavez Day**

**Tai Chi for seniors**  
**Mondays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.**

Improve your balance and mobility with slow, controlled movement.

**Morning story time with Ms. Kathie**  
**Mondays, 10:30 a.m.**

Children and their families are invited

to join in for stories, rhymes and songs.

**Do your homework at the library**  
**Mondays and Thursdays, 3-6 p.m.; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3-7 p.m.**

The branch library offers help. Students from kindergarten through eighth grade can receive free personalized assistance.

**Crafts for kids**  
**Tuesdays, 4 p.m.**

Stretch your imagination and create fabulous crafts. The craft is different every week.

**Hopscotch tiny tots**  
**Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m.**

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

**Adult yoga**  
**First Thursday of the month, 11 a.m.**

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.

**Silver Chair Yoga**  
**Thursdays, 12:15 p.m.**

Silver Chair Yoga is designed so that seniors can safely practice yoga at their level of comfort.

**Story time with Mr. Luan**  
**Second and fourth Fridays, 10:30 a.m.; Third Saturday, 10:30 a.m.**

Energetic story time that is fun, interactive and educational. The session will include singing and maybe a little dancing. Preschoolers on Fridays; Toddlers on Saturdays.

**Lego Time**  
**Fridays, 4 p.m.**

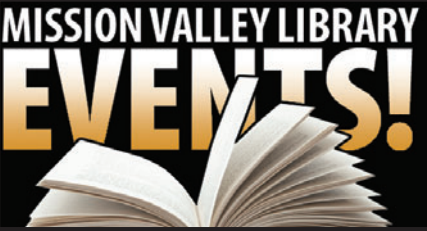
Kids: build, build, build to your heart's content! Skyscrapers, automobiles, airplanes, spaceships – create these and more. Learn basic building science while having fun.

**Friends of the Linda Vista Branch Library meeting**

**First Saturday of the month, 11:15 a.m.**

General public invited; newcomers always welcome. Visit [linda-vistalibrary.org](http://linda-vistalibrary.org).

*The Linda Vista Branch Library is located at 2160 Ulric St. It 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 facebook.com/lulibrary or sandiego.gov.■*



**Friday, March 31**  
**Closed for Cesar Chavez Day**

**Toddler Story Time**  
**Mondays, 11 a.m.**

A story time designed for toddlers, featuring songs, rhymes and finger plays.

**Zumba Basic**  
**Mondays, 4-5 p.m.**

Join the Zumba craze and find out what makes this workout such a hit. A towel and bottled water are recommended for Zumba sessions.

**Yoga for Adults and Teens**  
**Tuesdays, 6-7 p.m.**

Learn yoga, an easy to learn workout program that requires little or no equipment and soothes your soul while toning your body.

**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.

**Knit-a-Bit Knitting 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.

**Friends of the Library Meeting**  
**Third Wednesday, 6 p.m.**

Join members of the Friends and the Mission Valley Library and library staff to discuss ongoing projects, library goals, fundraising and to learn how the Friends support the library's operations.

**Preschool Story Time & Craft**  
**Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m.**

Preschoolers are invited to a story time followed by a fun craft.

**Zumba Gold**  
**Fridays, 1:30-2:30 p.m.**

Zumba Gold is a lower impact version of the Zumba Basic class on Mondays. The moves have been carefully designed to be easy to follow by participants of any size or age.

*The Mission Valley Branch Library is located at 2123 Fenton Parkway. It 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 6 p.m.; Sunday 12:30-5 p.m. For more information, call 858-573-5007 or visit facebook.com/mvlibrary.■*

Community Calendar

**Race Legal Drag Racing**  
**Friday, March 10**

Race Legal 1/8 mile street legal drag racing is scheduled for 6 to 11:55 p.m. at Qualcomm Stadium, 9449 Friars Road. The Race Legal program was developed as the safer and sanctioned track alternative to illegal street racing. It includes a "heads-up" street legal format. All races take place on the west side parking lot portion of Qualcomm Stadium. Enter the main Qualcomm Stadium gate and follow the signage to the event site. Visit [RaceLegal.com](http://RaceLegal.com)

**Just Between Friends Children's Consignment Event**

**Friday, March 10-Sunday, March 12**

Families can find all they need to raise a family, from maternity to teen at 50 to 90 percent off retail prices. This year's Just Between Friends (JBF) of San Diego event will be held in the Scottish Rite Event Center, 1895 Camino Del Rio South. Families can also turn their own items into cash, and price their own items, and JBF does the rest of the work handling the sales. For this weekend's daily schedule, visit [bit.ly/2lBCRYn](http://bit.ly/2lBCRYn).

**Citywide Community Cleanup/Drop-off Event**  
**Saturday, March 11**

Looking to clean out your garage or spare bedroom? Need somewhere to get rid of that old appliance, used furniture, mattress or electronics? City of San Diego residents can drop off all unwanted items at Qualcomm Stadium, 9449 Friars Road. Simply drop your bulky items at Qualcomm Stadium anytime between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. on March 11.

**Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health**  
**Saturday, March 11**

Sexting, social media, teen suicide and substance abuse are among the pressing issues facing today's youth. These topics and more will be addressed at the second annual Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent

Mental Health Conference, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Crown Plaza Hotel 2270 Hotel Circle North. The conference will feature nationally and locally recognized clinicians, best-selling authors, social action advocates, and a panel of youth. The cost is \$75. To register, visit [bit.ly/2lZthuy](http://bit.ly/2lZthuy).

**Color in Motion 5k**  
**Saturday, March 18**

The Color In Motion 5K is a chance to dress wacky, throw color packets on people — all while supporting Special Olympics Southern California. Participants start in white shirts that quickly get covered in color from the Mega Color Blaster at the race's start. Participants run through four color stations where more color powder gets thrown onto them. New this year: music at each color station and wacky mirrors for selfies. Color in Motion 5k at Qualcomm Stadium is scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon at Qualcomm Stadium, 9449 Friars Road. Visit [bit.ly/2lZuxhe](http://bit.ly/2lZuxhe).

**Hemlock Society CPR Informational Session**  
**Sunday, March 19**

What is CPR? How often is it successful? Speaker James Dunford, Jr., MD, city of San Diego EMS medical director, will speak about the topic. A Hemlock Society chat will follow. 1:30–3 p.m. at Scottish Rite Event Center, 1895 Camino Del Rio South. Visit [bit.ly/2kIUipF](http://bit.ly/2kIUipF).

Civic Meetings

**Linda Vista Planning Group**  
**Monday, March 27**

The Linda Vista Planning Group will hold its general meeting at 5:30 p.m. at the Linda Vista Branch Library, 2160 Ulric St. Visit [bit.ly/2jZpXh5](http://bit.ly/2jZpXh5).

**Linda Vista Town Council**  
**Thursday, March 16**

The Linda Vista Town Council will hold its next meeting with refreshments at 6 p.m. and program at 6:30 p.m. Guest speaker will be Michael Prinz, senior planner, City Planning Department, will

discuss the Morena Corridor Specific Plan. American Legion Post 731, 7245 Linda Vista Road. Visit [lindavis-ta.org](http://lindavis-ta.org).

**Mission Valley Planning Group**  
**Wednesday, April 5**

Mission Valley Planning Group will hold its general meeting at noon in the Mission Valley Branch Library Community Room, 2123 Fenton Parkway. Visit [bit.ly/2jZs7gA](http://bit.ly/2jZs7gA).

**Women's History Month events at Mesa College**

San Diego Mesa College celebrates Women's History Month with special exhibitions, lectures and performances. All events will be held on the Mesa College campus, 7250 Mesa College Drive. Women's History Month at Mesa will include the following free public events:

• **Get Your Voice Heard, Tuesday, March 14, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.** Action Booths with Dora Schoenberg-Fernandez, professor of Spanish, Women's Alliance Club. As a follow up to the Women Marches, this event is dedicated to helping students take action. San Diego Mesa College Quad.

• **Resisting Erasure: Women Artists Confront the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Thursday, March 16, 12:45-2:10 p.m.** A discussion led by art historians and Mesa College professors Denise Rogers and Cara Smulevitz. San Diego Mesa College, G-102.

• **Turn of the Century Transformations: Women's Roles and the Fashions that Resulted, 1870-1920, Monday, March 20, 4-5 p.m.** Professor Susan Lazear will lead this presentation detailing how fashion was influenced during this half-century period. San Diego Mesa College, LRC-435.

• **Sixth Annual Gracia Molina de Pick Feminist Lecture Series, Wednesday, March 22, 12:45-2:10 p.m.** Filmmaker Richard Saiz will screen "My Journey with Gracia" followed by a discussion. San Diego Mesa College, LRC-435.



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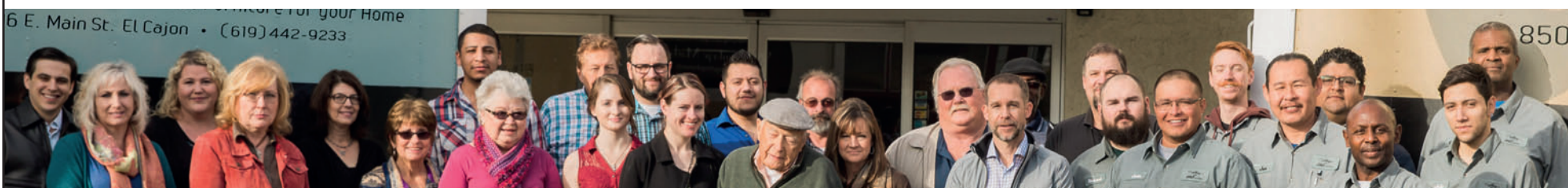
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