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# San Diego Uptown News



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## FEATURE P. 4



Little, eastern, ancient

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A lucky meal

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Tax-refundable laughs

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Noisily trekking the coast

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San Diego Community News Network

# Wheeling down University

**Uptown organizations prepare to accommodate SANDAG bike corridor**



(Photo by Sam Hodgson)

By Hutton Marshall  
SDUN Editor

Last fall, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) approved the largest bicycle infrastructure plan San Diego County ever saw. Its board of directors voted to allocate \$200 million toward creating bicycle corridors, paths, lanes and racks throughout San Diego, creating a bicycle-friendly landscape meant to encourage San Diegans to get out of their cars.

With sections of the corridor slated to begin in 2016, Uptown and North Park are near the top of the list as “high-priority projects.” They are also among the largest portions of the citywide project. Uptown’s plan alone will cost over \$43 million, according to a SANDAG analysis done last year.

Some in the area have expressed concern regard-

ing how this large investment could impact existing infrastructure, such as already congested thoroughfares and highly impacted parking. Where the corridor is planned to run through downtown Hillcrest on University Avenue, which is currently lined with metered parking, Hillcrest business owners have publicly questioned whether the planned route will do more harm than good.

At a recent Hillcrest Business Association board of directors meeting, several attendees expressed a desire for the corridor to reroute up to Washington Street through Hillcrest — a possibility several HBA members have also supported — saying this would impact fewer storefronts and parking spots. HBA Board President Johnathan Hale stressed compromise and cooperation,

see **BikePlan**, page 5

# Two scientists walk into a bar...

Science Center's new outreach brings scientists to your happy hour



(l to r) Scripps researchers and UC San Diego post-doc students Michael Tift and Peter Jordan enjoy local Automatic brews at Blind Lady Ale House amid scientific discourse. (Photo by Hutton Marshall)

By Kevin Smead  
SDUN Reporter

When “Cosmos: A Personal Voyage” first aired in 1980, it set out to accomplish a number of goals, the most important being to bring accessible yet very sound science to the masses in an entertaining, evocative format. In achieving this, the show was wildly successful, thanks in part to its host, the

beloved Carl Sagan.

It is a testament to the work of Sagan and the “Cosmos” team that not only is a sequel to the original series currently airing, but scientific outreach is more popular and accessible than it ever has been. However, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center is thinking differently about community outreach and taking a new, innovative approach — as scientists are wont to do.

“Two Scientists Walk Into a Bar” may be the start of a sure-to-be-awful joke, but its literal nature is quite apt. Much like the title itself, the setup is simple: take two scientists and send them to a bar, give them a sign that says “We Are Scientists, Ask us Anything,” and let the public loose. There’s no better forum to strike up an interesting science-related conversation over some tasty beers at a local watering hole.

So, what’s the punchline, then?

The inaugural event hosted 50 scientists at 25 local bars, restaurants and breweries, spanning the entire county. All the way from downtown’s The Field and The Knotty Barrel to Carlsbad’s Pizza Port, scientists spent their Thursday evening answering questions and engaging in some good, old-fashioned hanging out.

Since the event ran from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in most of Uptown’s bars, I planned my route so I could hit three different bars and meet as many awesome scientists as I could.

Starting at Blind Lady Ale House in Normal Heights, I encountered Michael Tift and Peter Jordan from the Scripps Institute of Oceanog-

see **Scientists**, page 5

# Gloria to propose minimum-wage increase

By Manny Lopez  
SDUN Reporter

Anyone who has tried to pay rent, a utility bill or simply buy groceries in San Diego knows that minimum wage jobs aren’t paying enough to keep families out of poverty.

On March 24, Democrats on the City Council’s economic development committee gave Council President Todd Gloria the thumbs up to collaborate with City Attorney Jan Goldsmith on a ballot proposal that, if approved, will raise the minimum wage and provide at least five earned sick days annually to all employees, regardless of industry or business type.

“San Diego needs to stand by its workers and lead in the region by developing a comprehensive policy that responds to the needs of its workers,” Gloria stated in a press release. “I appreciate the action taken by my colleagues today, and ask for feedback and participation from all San Diegans to craft a responsible proposal for the voters to consider in November.”

The proposal — presented by the Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations Committee — ties pay rates to a cost-of-living index that would be updated annually. No specific dollar amount was discussed and a draft ordinance is expected to go before committee consideration on April 30. If approved, it could then be reviewed by the full City Council for the Nov. 4 ballot.

Councilmember Marti Emerald voted to advance the issue and said that a ballot measure is an appropriate step. Prior to the meeting, Emerald said that the sick days provision will create a healthier workforce, since employees would stay home without fear of losing pay or being fired, also reducing the risk of infecting their coworkers.

“We need to put it to the voters and let the voters decide about the standard of living we need and expect in the very expensive region,” she said.

During the meeting, the Center on Policy Initiatives presented findings of a report by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research — a labor-oriented think tank. The report estimated that in San Diego, 433,500 adult employees working in for-profit businesses lack paid sick days. Hispanics, leisure and hospitality, food service and construction workers were

see **Wage**, page 23



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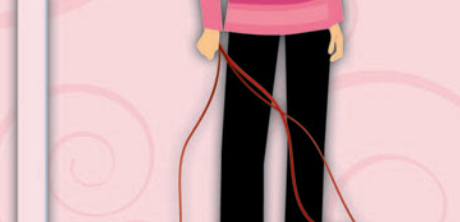
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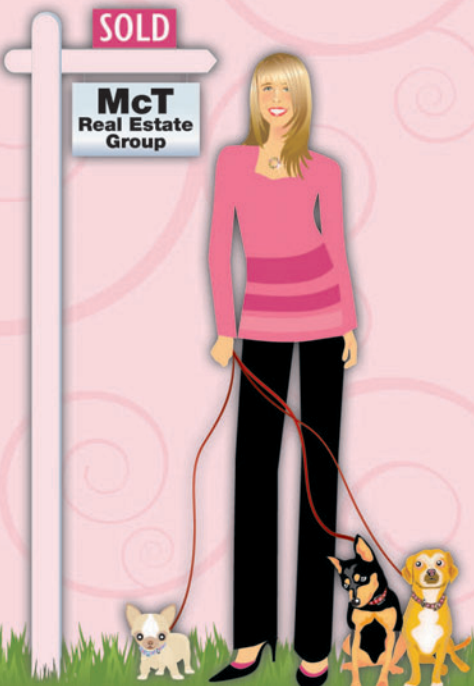
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A scene from A Masked Ball at San Diego Opera (Photo by Ken Howard)

# Requiem for an Opera

## San Diego Opera announces its closure

By Charlene Baldridge  
SDUN Reporter

San Diego Opera (SDO) presented a one-time-only, long ago sold-out performance of Giuseppe Verdi's great *Messa da Requiem* (Latin Mass for the dead) to a capacity crowd at the 3,000-seat Civic Theatre March 20.

As it happened, the Requiem, became the requiem for the 49-year-old opera company. The previous day's announcement that SDO will cease operations after its April 13 performance of Jules Massenet's

"Don Quixote" took many by surprise.

Soloists for "Requiem" were Moldovan soprano Krassimira Stoyanova, American mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, Polish tenor Piotr Beczala (three artists heard in SDO's stunning production of Verdi's "A Masked Ball," which closed Sunday, March 16) and Italian bass Ferruccio Furlanetto, who sings the title role in "Don Quixote." Italian conductor Massimo Zanetti, who made his company debut with "A Masked Ball," conducted the wondrously sung Requiem, which featured the San Diego Master Chorale and the San Diego Opera Cho-



Mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe (Madame Arvidson) in San Diego Opera's A Masked Ball (Photo by Ken Howard)

rus (chorus masters Dr. Gary McKercher and Charles Prestinari, respectively). San Diego Symphony filled the forestage. Exquisite moments included Stoyanova and Blythe's "Agnus Dei," which emanated from an unexpected, celestial place in each. Beczala ardently displayed his burnished voice in the 1874 work. Furlanetto, a frequent artist at SDO, sang gloriously and passionately, consistently elevating the quality of the performance.

As for ceasing operations, it's a pity San Diego Opera's lifespan falls short of celebrating its 50 years as a cornerstone of cultural arts in San Diego and beacon of excellence for the entire Southern California region. Prior to its inaugural production of "La bohème" at the Civic Theatre in 1965, San Diego opera lovers had to content themselves with touring San Francisco Opera productions at the California Theatre and radio broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera.

Rumors, placement of blame and considerable schadenfreude abound now, especially in social media. "Coulda, shoulda" and "if only they woulda" are typed uppercase by the snipers, sniggerers and those who failed or never even tried.

Beginning in 2009, when SDO General and Artistic Director CEO Ian Campbell had already cut one complete opera and one performance of each of the remaining

four, this writer's annual Performances Magazine interviews with him took on an increasingly dire tone. In subsequent years, additional cuts were made to programming, staff and education. Due to the economy, decreased support (governmental and personal) and decreasing attendance (subscriptions fell by nearly 7,000 between 2010 and 2014, and in the same period, total ticket sales dropped dramatically from 41,353 to an anticipated 31,500 this season), Campbell said in published features that unless things changed the opera company would close.

Rather than build up tremendous deficits and then declare bankruptcy, as opera companies elsewhere have, Campbell and the opera board decided to close the company now, while the ability to pay creditors is still possible.

The quality of the product has never been compromised. Campbell cites "A Masked Ball" as a case in point.

"I thought it was a brilliant production in every way, and it sold only 74 percent of capacity, even after rave reviews in every medium," he said.

Campbell cites the loss of several million dollars in foundation money in '09 and '10, money that was never replaced.

"The budget in 2007 was \$17.4 million," he said. "This year's will likely end at under \$15 million. For the same period other donations declined and so did ticket sales. Eventually it's make or break time. We knew this three years ago and made the sounds publically.

"Looking down the track, with these declines, we believe we would not have enough money to end 2015 if we started it," Campbell continued. "Then we'd go bankrupt and we'd owe patrons ticket money. That's immoral. We're trying to close with dignity and pay the obligations we have.

"San Diegans have invested millions through ticket purchases and contributions. I salute every one of them because they believed."

see Opera, page 20

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(l to r) The koi pond in the Japanese Friendship Garden; A Takedo Doll from the late Edo Period (18th - 19th centuries) from the collection of Kazuo Kuwabara (Photos by Hutton Marshall)

## A journey to Japan

### Local collectors showcase items at Japanese Friendship Garden exhibit

By Dave Fidlin  
SDUN Reporter

From a rare display of historic toy dolls to ancient styles of pottery, San Diego collectors of Japanese artifacts are displaying their items in the months ahead as part of a biannual program aimed at putting the spotlight on an eastern culture with deep roots.

The Japanese Friendship Garden is hosting its fourth "Collectors in San Diego" exhibition series. Marisa Takeuchi, registrar and exhibit coordinator, said

roughly 40 different pieces are on display as part of this year's program, which can be viewed with paid admission into the garden grounds at Balboa Park.

"We consider this one of our highlight shows of the year," Takeuchi said. "The goal is to share the true diversity of Japan and give some of the local collectors an opportunity to share their belongings."

This year's program kicked off with a special gala on March 20, and was well attended, Takeuchi said. The exhibit will run until June 1.

One of the more regular exhibit participants, Gordon Brodfuehrer, serves as a member of the City's Asian Arts Council and is a member of the board of trustees at the San Diego Museum of Art.

This year, Brodfuehrer is exhibiting his collection of Oribe ware — a form of Japanese pottery identified by a green copper glaze and bold painted designs. Some of the items can be traced back to the late 16th century when Japanese tea master Furuta Oribe, the namesake

of the pottery, held Japanese tea ceremonies.

Takeuchi said a small but loyal group of art collectors interested in Asian art have been contributing to the Collectors in San Diego series. This year, the organization does have a new collector exhibiting her collection.

Joanne Watson, former chair and a current member of the Asian Arts Council, is exhibiting several pieces, including a container known as Ikenobo and a vase passed down from her parents during their travels from Japan.

Watson, who studied at a specialized Japan-based school known as the Ikenobo School of Ikebana, said she became interested in Japanese art during her father's career as commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet.

As with prior years, Takeuchi said the goal throughout this year's exhibit is to showcase a disparate collection of artifacts. One of the more notable items this year is a rare set of dolls, on display from collectors Robert and Joanne Meredith.

"This is definitely a different show from any of the previous ones we've had," Takeuchi said. "We have some very old and striking items, particularly the dolls."

While Takeuchi readily recognizes each participant — from the avid collector to the novice — will glean something different

## AT A GLANCE

**WHAT:** "Collectors in San Diego: Expressions of Japan's Cultural Heritage"

**WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily through June 1

**WHERE:** Japanese Friendship Garden in Balboa Park, 2215 Pan American Place

**COST:** \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors and members of the military

**INFO:** niwa.org, 619-232-2721

by viewing the exhibit, she does have one common goal in mind.

"I hope it will spark an interest," she said. "It would be wonderful if people would like to learn more about Japanese culture."

With Balboa Park celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2015, Takeuchi said the exhibit will not be held next year. But plans are already in motion to bring a fifth installment of the exhibition series back in 2016. ♦

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The Del Mar Fairgrounds are located at 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd at the intersection of Interstate 5 and Via De La Valle just north of Del Mar, about 20 miles north of downtown San Diego. There will be an assortment of food vendors both inside and outside of the building and an ATM is available at the Fairgrounds.





(l to r) San Diego State marine biology graduate students Priya Shukla and Kate McDaniel toast to science at Hamilton's Tavern in South Park. (Photo by Hutton Marshall)

FROM PAGE 1

## SCIENTISTS

raphy. Dressed in lab coats, the pair enjoyed a pitcher of one of Automatic's finest ales, brewed on location at Blind Lady, while waiting for patrons to approach them and ask questions.

"People have been kind of timid," Tift said. "I don't think we're intimidating."

At this, Jordan laughed. "Yeah, they asked us to come hang out, drink beer and talk about science. That just sounds like a normal night for me."

Jordan continued saying, "I hope people don't think they have to try and stump us. Outside of our research areas, there's lots of stuff we don't know. People have a lot of physics questions we can't answer."

As I was leaving for the next stop, they were moving their sign identifying them as scientists to a more prominent easel, in hopes of drumming up some more

conversation.

Down the street at Polite Provisions, there was no shortage of people interested in speaking with the two scientists, San Diego State biology graduate student Brandon Kim and University of San Diego oceanographer Dr. Drew Talley. Both were excited to talk about their various scientific endeavors, though some had other interests.

"Oh, we've had a range of questions already," Talley said. "Some were very curious about what we do and others just wanted to know if there were tables available in the back." The two gathered quite a crowd in the small, but packed, bar.

Over at Hamilton's, in South Park, SDSU biology graduate students Priya Shukla and Kate McDaniel had several people show up specifically to talk with them.

"These two guys actually showed up to talk with us scientists. That's cool, I didn't expect that," McDaniel said, smiling. As someone who works in the graduate publishing world, I asked the

pair the worst question of the night: How's your thesis going?

"Oh no!" Shukla exclaimed, laughing. "That's something you never ask any graduate student."

"It's coming along. There's still time," a nervously nodding McDaniel answered.

There was one question the scientists universally answered "yes" to, however: Would they do this again?

Good thing, too, since this event was only a kick-off for many more outreach-focused events to come, including more installments of "Two Scientists Walk into a Bar." Upcoming events also include the more focused, but still beer-related, "Suds and Science," in which a scientist gives a brief presentation on a popular topic and then leads a discussion about it afterwards. All of this taking place at a local bar, of course. Also, on May 12, White Labs CEO and President Chris White will be giving a presentation on yeast, microbiology and other science-based fundamentals of brewing at Callahan's Pub and Brewery in Mira Mesa.

With all of this emphasis on beer-or-otherwise focused outreach, the best way to keep up with the R. H. Fleet Science Center is follow them on Facebook or Twitter.

So, would Carl Sagan have envisioned a time in which it was cool for scientists to hang out in bars and have the general public ask them questions over a pint or two? Maybe not. One of the main tenants of outreach is to go to people where they are, though, and if that place happens to be drinking at a local pub, then that's just cream cheese icing on the chocolate Guinness cake. ♦

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FROM PAGE 1

## BIKEPLAN

resulting in the HBA creating an ad-hoc committee to look at different aspects of the bike corridor, and how it might impact Hillcrest business.

Loss of revenue from metered parking has been a common concern of the route through University Avenue. There are 126 metered spaces along the planned route for the bicycle corridor, according to Elizabeth Hannon, the chief operating officer of the Uptown Community Parking District. SANDAG previously estimated that the route could necessitate the removal of 91 metered spaces through the area, which could result in a loss of over \$40,000 for the parking district, according to an estimate it did in 2013.

That is a "worst case" scenario, stressed Hannon, who is actively working with SANDAG to mitigate parking loss. SANDAG active transportation planner Beth Robrahn stressed that the estimate of 91 parking spaces lost was very preliminary, but also stated a more updated figure was not yet available. Regardless, Hannon said, Hillcrest is already a highly impacted parking area, meaning a lot of demand and not enough supply, so many options already being explored are now being looked at more seriously. Hannon said she expects a new figure from SANDAG in June.

When asked if she would advocate for moving the corridor from University Avenue up to Washington Street, Hannon, like the HBA, refrained from vocalizing a black-and-white position.

"We're working to understand their alignment choices," Hannon said, adding that developing alternative parking strategies in Hillcrest is imperative. "We're looking to work with SANDAG and their

resources to help us implement any projects that would change the way parking is utilized in Hillcrest."

Robrahn said that the idea of moving the route up to Washington Street was unrealistic. Not only has significant research and planning already taken place with the University Avenue route, but also a bicycle corridor on Washington Avenue would pose difficult design challenges, namely,

parking validation strategies, and smart meters.

While neither the HBA nor the parking district has formally opposed the current route, SANDAG will be required to undergo a review, inspection and approval process by the City once the planning portion of the project is complete. This was part of a formal agreement between the City and SANDAG in 2009, due to the large num-

Corridor that will be entirely owned and maintained by the City," the spokesperson stated.

Robrahn said that SANDAG has interacted with the City's Planning and Development Service departments throughout the process.

### "Street Diet" project

Although it may be relatively small in comparison, the City has bike lanes of its own nearing implementation much sooner than the SANDAG corridor. One lane will be removed from both Fourth and Fifth avenues to create protected bikeways in either direction. This was scheduled to be implemented earlier this year, but was pushed back to April or May to allow for more community outreach, said a spokesperson for Council President Todd Gloria.

### The different variations of bikeways

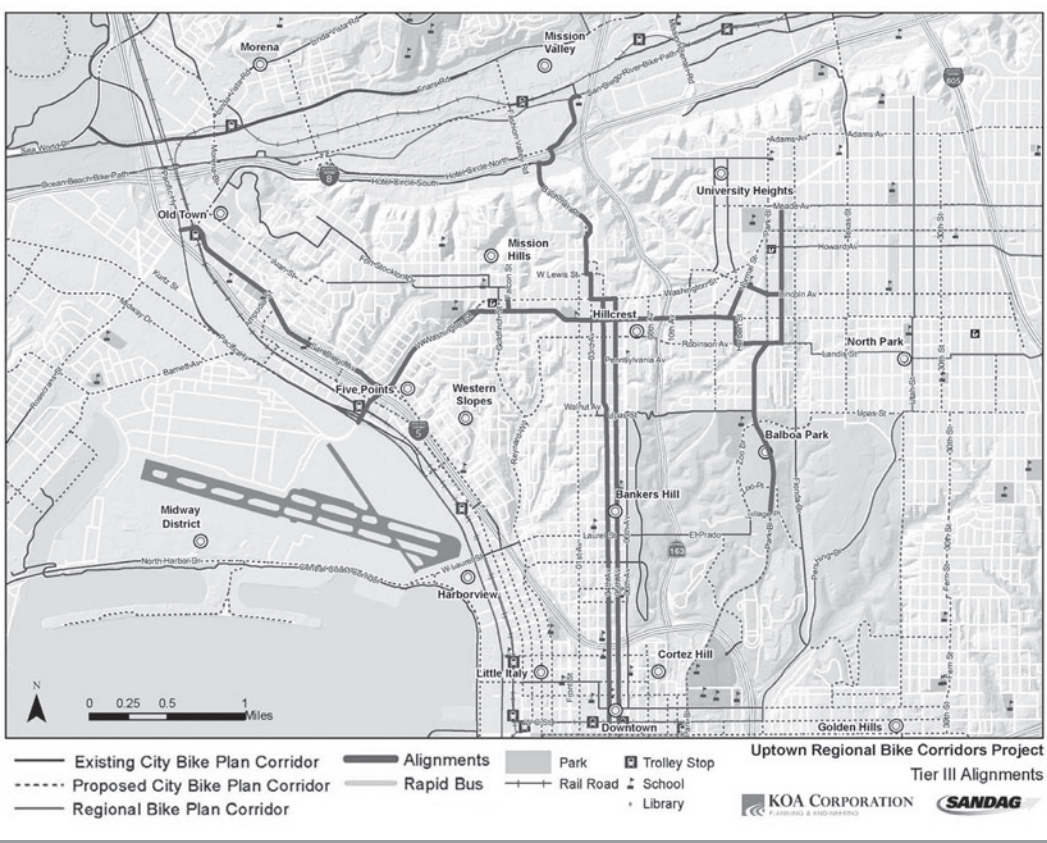
There are four commonly seen types of bikeways in San Diego, each offering a different degree of protection from traffic.

The first is a bike sharrow, or shared-lane markings. The most cost effective in terms of implementation, bike sharrows are the white bicycle and arrows painted onto the street. This indicates to drivers and cyclists that the road is to be shared.

The second is the bike lane. This is a separate lane between traffic and parked cars indicated by two parallel white lines.

The third is the protected bike lane. It's the same as a bike lane, but with an added buffer space between the bike lane and traffic, or between the bike lane and parked cars.

The fourth is the bike corridor, or segregated bike path, which is what will go along University Avenue. Here, the cyclists are completely separated from traffic, often by a physical barrier. If there is parking on a street with a bike corridor, it is between the cyclists and the traffic. ♦



(Courtesy SANDAG)

accommodating both a bicycle corridor and an onramp for Highway 163. Robrahn said SANDAG is now focused on developing a comprehensive, fleshed-out plan that is cohesive with the community, and will look at employees using parking lots,

ber of SANDAG projects that impact City infrastructure, said a spokesperson in the mayor's office through email.

"This is a binding contract, and SANDAG has to comply, especially when building a project such as the Uptown Bike





## Editorial

# The American dream is still within reach

Owning a home can be a challenging and scary prospect, especially with the prices in San Diego. Some may even consider the goal of owning a home in America's Finest City a daunting and unattainable task especially after foreclosure.

It's not impossible for individuals to prepare to purchase a home after going through a foreclosure, short sale or bankruptcy. According to realtytrac.com, since the housing crisis, more than 4.8 million borrowers have lost their homes to foreclosure and 2.2 million in short sales, while in San Diego, foreclosures peaked at 2,004 in the county in July 2008 during the "Great Recession."

Many San Diegans don't realize that individuals who encountered a foreclosure are considered first-time homebuyers after three years, if they haven't owned property during that period. Individuals may also be eligible for a mortgage loan even sooner if the delinquency was due to the loss of a job.

The process may be overwhelming, discouraging former homeowners from reigniting their dream of owning a home, but with the right guidance and coaching the road to home ownership is closer than most imagine.

Here are six tips on how to get on the right track as a future homeowner:

1. Start fresh: Clean-up and re-establish your credit.

2. Reach out and get help: Consult an expert, take a class or work with a housing counselor.

3. Start saving: Set a realistic financial plan and start saving for a down payment.

4. Use S.M.A.R.T. goals: Break down your goal into achievable action steps, making it Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

5. Do your homework: Get pre-approved for a loan.

6. Use technology to stay on track: There are many resources online including apps to help you accomplish every goal and ensure you stick to the financial plan you established. Some of the apps available include: Credit Karma, a free app that provides an estimated credit score; Mint, a free app that tracks and organizes all of your finances in one place; Trulia's mortgage calculator, an app that calculates the price range you should look for when buying a house and Zillow, a free app that helps homebuyers figure out the best housing option.

For San Diegans, Community Housing-Works (CHW) is another resource at their disposal. CHW is a non-profit organization that provides free classes in financial fitness and home buying. CHW's unbiased experts help individuals to create a financial health plan that is best for them. Along with helping individuals and their families purchase homes, CHW also helps future homeowners qualify for the loan to best fit their needs.

Owning a home in San Diego may seem like an impossible task to accomplish, however with the right tools, coaching and determination, owning a home again can be within your reach.



Gabe Del Rio (Courtesy CHW)

—Gabe del Rio is Chief Operating Officer of CHW, a nonprofit organization that helps people and communities move up in the world through opportunities to own, rent, and achieve. ♦

# San Diego Opera to shut its doors

The San Diego Opera will close following the last performance on April 13th, 2014. The closure of this venerable institution after 49 years was decided by a vote of the Board Members, 33 to 1. According to the General Director, Ian Campbell, the closure was necessary to keep the company from going into possible bankruptcy next season. I implore you to look into this.

It is our understanding that the company has no debt. If that is the case, the company could have at least tried to rework their financials. There are alternatives: renegotiate contracts with em-

ployees, do fewer productions, cut back expenses, seek new leadership, etc. None of these ideas were even considered with respect to any of the employees that have worked so many years with the San Diego Opera.

Only one round of voting decided to shut this marvelous company down. There are upwards of 400 people being affected by this decision, which include a combination of full-time staff, scenic studios staff, chorus, principal and supporting artists, directors, conductors, designers, productions staff, stagehands, wardrobe, wig and makeup,

San Diego Symphony players and others. This doesn't even include the local businesses, the Civic Theater and its employees, vendors such as music stores, voice teachers, etc. In addition, San Diego Opera offers educational outreach to thousands of students in our schools — both through attending operas, and through having musicians visit their school. San Diego would also be losing one of the top 10 opera companies in the country, a company we are all so proud of.

It is our fear that if the receivership is allowed to continue at this extremely fast pace, the

assets of the company will be lost with no hope of rebuilding. The loss of this institution to San Diego is incalculable, not only to its patrons and its employees, but to the greater community of San Diego.

We ask that this situation be brought to the attention of the City Council and hope that you will join us in trying to keep this company moving forward. We are also asking that you go to thepetitionsite.com/827/516/648/save-san-diego-opera/ and join us by signing our petition to SAVE SAN DIEGO OPERA.

WE MAKE MUSIC WORTH SAVING.

—A group of concerned patrons ♦

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San Diego Uptown News encourages letters to the editor and guest editorials. Please email both to hutton@sdenn.com. Include phone number and address for verification. We reserve the right to edit letters for brevity and accuracy. Letters and guest editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher or staff.

### SUBMISSIONS/NEWS TIPS

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## Letters

### Call for PSA Flight 182 Memorial

As a former PSA employee who lost dozens of friends on that day, I will be at the meeting and offer my support [see "North Park Planning Group to hear PSA Flight 182 memorial proposal" Vol. 6 Issue 6]. My life was changed on September 25, 1978. It was my first day in the public relations department, moving over from passenger service, and is one I will never forget. We need to work with the City of San Diego and the neighborhood to create a lasting and respectful memorial to those who perished that day.

—Scott Alevy via *sduptownnews.com*

I would attend if I lived closer, I have never been to the crash site, I lost my twin brother on that plane & will never forget that day. Thank you to everyone involved in the memorial

—Kerry Wholey via *sduptownnews.com*

As a long-time employee of San Diego International Airport, where PSA was headquartered through its long and storied existence, I personally support the building of a proper memorial. People who have lost loved ones in such a tragedy need a decent place to gather and remember them at, if they so choose. And as a long-term North Park resident, I feel those who live in this thriving neighborhood deserve to know about this part of our history that, through the tragedy, brought the neighborhood closer together.

—Steven Shultz via *sduptownnews.com*

Hello. My best friend, Maxinne Threat, my bridesmaid, my roommate, was on that flight. She lived in Manhattan Beach, Calif. and was making her last business flight to San Diego. I lost so much that day ... she was a wonderful, creative, intelligent, beautiful, kind person. She was 29 years old. I would love a special monument for all those people lost that day, and all their dreams, also all that loved them.

I can be contacted at 619-543-1446.

—Barbra Rhoda via *sduptownnews.com*

My Dad, Leslie H. Holt was the fire-fighter that had to do the worst of the crash clean up! He was in charge of duties that ruined his entire life, My father passed two years ago, known as Skeeter Holt, I have searched for someone that can help me. My heart and soul go out to the family members. The San Diego Fire Dept, Have many family members, not to mention the still living retired fire men that have to live with what they SAW, FELT & HAD TO DO THAT DAY! My Dad Never got over that day.

I can be contacted @ 619-944-7467

—Marlene L Holt via *sduptownnews.com*

Their approach was not a respectful one. As a homeowner/resident across from this island, all this was planned without our consent and no one came to our house to see if we wanted a memorial constructed. Our parking is already limited and our street is not designed for something like this. There is a perfectly

good spot for public use down the street at Montclair Neighborhood Park. That is an appropriate space for people to visit and it's not right in front of people's homes on a site where the plane did not crash. If they wanted to be respectful they would have discussed this with my neighbors and I prior to holding press conferences, where they only interview the "pro" side as they did today.

—Sam (via *sduptownnews.com*)

### Paul Jameson's pedestrian-friendly Hillcrest

As someone who lived on Fifth Avenue opposite Nunu's for 10 years, I can attest to how dangerous Uptown streets are [See "A street for all of us" Vol. 6 Issue 6]. Traffic travels way too fast on those wide streets like Fourth and Fifth, and guess what, they never have the volume of cars on them they were built for! A bike lane on each of them would be welcome to the residents!

We need to remember that Hillcrest does not have a parking problem, but rather a parking convenience problem. And in our lifetimes, parking is only going to get worse. The one thing we can do about the atrocious parking in Hillcrest, is to get more people out of their cars and onto bikes and sidewalks, and build the kind of city and infrastructure which thousands of Uptown residents want.

Please build these bike lanes already so people in surrounding areas like Mission Hills, Bankers Hill, Normal Heights, etc. can start going to the bars and restaurants of Hillcrest. Those that want to drive, can still do so, in fact with cycling and walking as options soon, parking availability will even free up.

—Belinda Smith via *sduptownnews.com*

As a long time San Diego resident and a new resident of the Uptown area, I strongly encourage the City to redesign the University Avenue corridor through Hillcrest to accommodate all modes of travel as bikes/pedestrians offer a healthy alternative to driving all of the time. Multimodal roadways are the wave of the future and San Diego can set a great precedent by increasing the ridability of its roadways by bicyclists ... similar to how Portland, OR has transformed its City, so too can San Diego. Thank you!

—Michael Greer via *sduptownnews.com*

Excellent opinion piece. Thank you Paul Jameson for your spot on assessment of Hillcrest's hostility to SANDAG's Bike, pedestrian, and street improvements. It's baffling why the community would fight against \$40 Million investment in their community to make it better.

—Walter Chambers via *sduptownnews.com*

I have recently moved to the University Avenue area and I'm contemplating commuting on my bike to work. I come from the UK where I used to commute by bike regularly. At the moment, I am planning on avoiding the University Avenue route as it frightens the living daylight out of me. More bike lanes please!

—Sarah Fox-Greer via *sduptownnews.com*

Here's an opportunity for Hillcrest to reinvent itself and the inject life into its slowly dying streets and the local community groups want no part of it? Am I right in assuming that all members on those boards are 55 years and older? It's a shame that a small group of people with no vision are preventing Hillcrest from reaching its full potential, and for what? Lack of parking? That's just sad. Perhaps SANDAG should bypass Hillcrest and concentrate instead on Golden Hill, South Park, North Park and the Adams Ave. corridor.

—Justin via *sduptownnews.com*

Traffic deaths are always tragedies, regardless of who has obeyed the law or whether proposed changes to roads might or might not have made any difference.

I would like to clarify that it is a Hillcrest Town Council Survey that indicated that loosing 15 parking spots to accommodate a bicycle route down University Avenue seemed to be an acceptable compromise.

I would like to clarify that the Uptown Community Parking District has not explored "legal action against SANDAG to prevent bike lanes." The Uptown Community Parking District is in favor of a world-class bike route through Uptown that enhances transit and minimizes costs to current infrastructure.

The Uptown Parking District works hard to maximize the use of parking meter money to improve Uptown parking and related transit activity and it has recently had a fair amount of success at alleviating some of the severe parking pressures in Uptown.

—Tim Gahagan, Uptown Community Parking District Director via *sduptownnews.com*

### University Heights boundaries

I read with interest your article in the March 14 – 27th issue of the "Uptown News" [See "University Heights community organizations" Vol. 6 Issue 6]. The expanded blue area of the University Heights "sphere of interest" is troubling to me. I live just one block west of Texas Street and block south of Howard Avenue. The only purpose I can see for the [University Heights Community Association's] territorial expansion is to add some critical mass to the influence of a small group of business people might have when asking for government "favors."

My wife and I bought our condominium because it was in North Park. I do not want to be moved out of North Park.

Park Boulevard is the logical and historic boundary for our community and for its planning effort. Moving the line to the east as far as Texas Street serves absolutely no planning function that is beneficial to our household or our neighbors. Texas Street is the aorta of North Park! Our community must maintain absolute control of this vital element of our community and assure its use does not compromise the character that the residents North Park set for our neighborhood. Having the west side of Texas Street planned by UHCA and the eastside by North Park Planning Committee (NPPC) is a recipe for disaster. And what would be the transition south of the Texas and Lincoln

intersection?

Merchants and residents above Washington Street and west of Park Boulevard have traditionally played a healthy role in planning and development deliberations for North Park. That can continue under the present procedures established by the City of San Diego for our neighborhood's planning endeavors.

But this "Balkanization" does nothing to empower the people of North Park, not even those who live in the traditional boundaries of University Heights. The NPPC has ably led our whole community in our dealings with the City of San Diego. It is very active and has a proven track record of achieving the goals of our community. We have a voice that is respected and consulted with by all levels of city government, not only because it is reasoned and articulate but because it represents such a significant number of voters in the 3rd Council District.

I, for one, do not want to give up the favorable real estate appraisals we receive because we are in the vibrant and desirable community of North Park. I do not object to the efforts of a few business owners' attempts to concentrate their investment

dollars in their own puddle as they develop a new little commercial district and to impose their own assessment district on themselves. If those "frogs" want their own little pond with sole croaking rights, that is fine by me, but, please, have them get their water elsewhere! Leave the happy residents of University Heights east of Park Boulevard in the bigger pond traditionally known as "North Park" where they already have a history of effective leadership and where those leaders listen to the residents.

I do recognize the accuracy of your observation that the University Heights Community Development Corporation has its own agenda and has aggressively pursued that agenda. It is their right to do so for the commercial properties that voluntarily enter their assessment district and want to regulate parking and maintenance assessments (actions which can easily be done without leaving the NPPC). But they are a narrow special commercial interest and do not represent me, my neighbors, or long term community planning goals for a healthy, sustainable future for North Park.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Alan Bennett, via email ♦




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# UptownBriefs

## CITY LEADERS CALL FOR INCREASED CDBG SPENDING

Mayor Kevin Faulconer and Councilmember Marti Emerald held a press conference in City Heights on March 7 calling for a dramatic increase in the portion of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding devoted to infrastructure spending. CDBG is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Faulconer's proposal would increase the portion of CDBG funding spent on infrastructure from approximately 7 to 33 percent, or from \$750,000 to \$3.6 million annually, according to a press release from the mayor's office. According to a HUD report, this would put San Diego closer to the national average of roughly 32 percent for CDBG money allocated for infrastructure improvement.

Restructuring how the City spends its \$11 million from the program to focus more on improving sidewalks, streetlights and public facilities is a part of Faulconer's "One San Diego" plan.

## NEW BREWERY TO JOIN 30TH STREET

The relatively new Fall Brewing Company announced it will join 30th Street's growing craft brewery scene in North Park. Fall Brewing Co. is run by Ray Astamendi, formerly of Mission Brewery and St. Archer Brewing Company, serving as the founding brewmaster of the latter.

In April, Fall Brewing will take control of a 5000-square-foot building on the corner of El Cajon Boulevard and 30th Street. Astamendi told Eater that he hopes to open the joint tasting room and production brewery in August.

## CITY LEADERS ANNOUNCE FEDERAL AUDIT OF POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mayor Kevin Faulconer, along with City Attorney Jan Goldsmith and Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman, announced the City will open its doors to a Department of Justice management practices audit on San Diego Police Department (SDPD), which is expected to take approximately six months.

The audit will look at protocol and practices, especially those meant to detect problem officers, and recommend policies and procedures to improve the department. Faulconer stated he looks forward to hearing and implementing the recommendations, also promising to ensure public access to the recommendations.

The audit follows two charges of sexual misconduct by on-duty police officers, one of the two, Anthony Arevalos, was convicted of demanding sexual favors from women after making traffic stops. The other officer is currently being investigated.

Faulconer stated that this audit is key for restoring trust in SDPD.

## ATKINS SWORN IN AS NEW SPEAKER

On March 17, Assembly Leader Toni Atkins was elected as the 69th speaker of the California State Assembly. The Democrat will be the Assembly's first openly lesbian speaker, succeeding current Speaker John

A. Pérez this spring. Elected unanimously by her colleagues, Atkins has been praised for her commitment to social justice, as well as the diversity she brings to the position. In her acceptance speech, Atkins stated a commitment to re-establishing the financial stability and effectiveness of the state government. She also expressed concern regarding the prevalence of homelessness and the scarcity of affordable housing for working families. In addition to these initiatives, she listed water infrastructure, overcrowded prisons and pension obligations as top priorities for the Assembly. The Speaker-elect's colleagues attributed her concerns for the less fortunate to a humble upbringing, citing her childhood home in the Appalachia Mountains of Virginia, which had no running water. When asked how she felt becoming the first openly lesbian speaker, Atkins stated it felt "surreal." Atkins' spouse Jennifer LeSar sat beside her during the vote. Pérez previously stated that he intends to remain Assembly Speaker until the 2014 state budget is approved.

## BALBOA PARK EXPLORER PASS LAUNCHES

On March 17, Mayor Kevin Faulconer and Council President Todd Gloria joined Balboa Park Cultural Partnership at the San Diego Air and Space Museum to announce the launch of the Balboa Park Explorer Pass program. The first-of-its-kind pass provides general admission to all 17 Balboa Park institutions for an entire year. Participating institutions include Centro Cultural de la Raza, Japanese Friendship Garden, Mingei International Museum, Museum of Photographic Arts, Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, San Diego Air and Space Museum, San Diego Art Institute – Museum of the Living Artist, San Diego Automotive Museum, San Diego Hall of Champions Sports Museum, San Diego History Center, San Diego Model Railroad Museum, The San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego Museum of Man, San Diego Natural History Museum (theNAT), Timken Museum of Art, Veterans Museum and Memorial Center and the World Beat Center. The program also offers a special opportunity for San Diegans to get "Charter Explorer" status. Annual Balboa Park Explorer passes purchased by April 17 will receive a three-year price lock upon renewal along with an exclusive insignia "Charter Explorer" printed on their personalized pass. The Explorer Passes are \$129 for adults, \$99 for seniors and students, and \$199 for families of six or less. For more information, visit [balboapark.org/explorer](http://balboapark.org/explorer).

## FAULCONER RESCINDS PROPOSED EMAIL PURGE

Soon after taking office on March 3, Mayor Kevin Faulconer announced he was suspending a recent policy that would delete City emails more than a year old, pending further review. Faulconer then rescinded the highly criticized Administrative Regulation 90.67 on March 18. Council President Todd Gloria first proposed the policy in his final weeks serving as interim mayor. The proposal came after the City switched to a new email archive system in January, which allowed for the preservation of emails for an unlimited amount of time. Concerns arose regarding how the City would maintain such a large amount of data, but Faulconer said his office is now working to develop the most cost-effective way to store City email data permanently. ♦



The Kensington-Normal Heights Library was built in 1936 (Courtesy Lynne Russo)

# The smallest library in San Diego And maybe its biggest success story

On April 12, the Kensington-Normal Heights Library celebrates 60 years of service. The smallest of 35 San Diego branch libraries, long beleaguered or beloved, Ken-NH sits proudly, front and center, atop a small knoll in downtown Kensington surrounded by restaurants, bars, coffee shops and a three-story building under construction at the corner of Adams Avenue and Marlborough Drive. The current Library is a buffed-out 2700 square-footer that started its life as a 1000-square-foot classic Spanish House built in 1936.

I talked to current Librarian, Lynn Russo, along with several other Head Librarians to learn more about the heart and soul of this senior citizen. I have lived nearby for over 40 years, and I'm aware of a stream of rumors that the Library was about to be demolished, closed, added onto or built up, moved, or a bigger worry, forgotten. Russo assures me the Library we love is chugging right along. She reported that Ken-NH's had the highest circulation per square foot of any of the 35 branches. The Mouse that Roared. Her busiest days are Mondays and Tuesdays when 450 users come and go. Many are repeat users for looking for books and magazines, paying fines or checking on holds. Others come to print out boarding passes or look online for jobs. E-books are gaining popularity. Russo has served four years and plans to stay.

"I love the size, the Kensington Park we are part of," Russo said. "I can lunch on a blanket, and the people are so nice and supportive. I may retire here."

Patricia Karnes, Head Librarian from 1993 – 1996 loved her stint in Kensington. During her long career, Karnes served at 13 branch libraries and claimed Ken-NH was the best. She has fond memories of pinecones pelting the roof dropped from surrounding

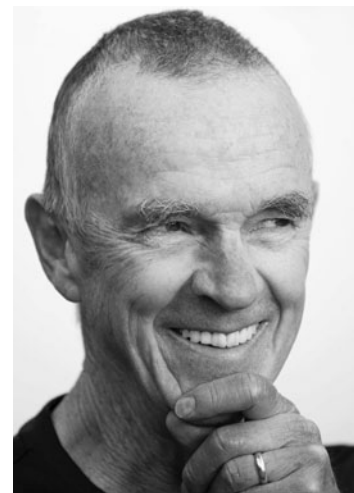
trees and she felt like Henny Penny with the sky falling. Karnes praises the community support, school kids from nearby elementary schools filling the children's section and having the volunteer group, Friends of the Library, supporting her. She loved the place so much, I asked her how come she left. "I had to retire," she explained. I asked why. "I lifted too many books." Pause. Big laugh, 'Gotcha.'

Kathy Askin preceded Lynn Russo; she was nifty. Before she retired, she revamped the children's collection and now is

an avid bike rider. Askin recently rode her bike 900 miles from Portland, Ore. to San Francisco.

So what's happening on their anniversary on April 12th? Zydeco music by the Bayou Brothers, food from Bleu Boehme and maybe a word or two from Councilmember Marti Emerald. Come take a tour. All proceeds go to the library.

When you come, say hello Ms. Karnes, but watch her. ♦



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### Lucky's Breakfast

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Prices: \$1.25 to \$4.30



(l to r) Ham and a trio of eggs; a side of pancakes; and the Denver omelet with hash browns (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

# The nicest guy in NORTH PARK

FRANK SABATINI JR. | Restaurant Review

As a little girl took delight spinning on an old-fashioned lunch stool next to her mother, the man behind the counter asked if she'd like to see a monkey.

"Yes," she replied with a look of enchantment in her eyes.

"Then go look in the window," he quipped before shuffling past an elderly woman who said she wanted coffee.

"Get it yourself," he told her.

And so she did, entering into a disheveled work area strewn with fake flowers and dated Asian décor while grabbing a mug along the way.

Welcome to Lucky's Breakfast, where Hong Kong native, "Lucky,"

does the all of the cooking, serving and bussing without ever losing his impish smile — or the wisecracks that come with it.

Lucky opened the small, corner-lot business 38 years ago as a Chinese restaurant called Lucky's Golden "Phenix." He later converted it to Lucky's Breakfast and currently serves all-American morning fare from 7 a.m. to noon, Monday through Saturday.

You can't help but love the guy. He's witty and nurturing, despite the fact he rarely stands still and makes eye contact with customers as they order their food. With two U-shaped lunch counters filling the space, and a rear kitchen that he fades into periodically, there

isn't time to get overly personal.

Visiting as a twosome for the first time, we waited a few minutes to place our orders. Then, from across the room, and without a pen or paper, Lucky shouted out in a quasi-brusque manner, "Just tell me what you guys want."

Without choice, we responded for everyone to hear.

It becomes obvious when looking at the menu that Lucky runs the diner as a labor of love rather than for profit. And though his breakfast offerings are ultra-basic — bacon, ham, eggs, toast, hash browns and pancakes — his prices are frozen in the early '80s.

A three-egg breakfast with three strips of bacon, hash browns and toast is only \$3.80. Coffee runs 85 cents a cup with free refills if you order food. Otherwise it's 10 cents per top off. The most expensive dish on the menu is a cheese-filled Denver omelet with potatoes and toast for \$4.30.

So what if the omelet arrived slightly overcooked. I was too amused to complain.

My companion chose a slab of

glistening ham steak instead of bacon for his three-egg breakfast. The over-easy eggs were perfectly cooked in this case. And we loved the fluffy hash browns on our plates, which took well to the Valentina hot sauce placed along the counter tops in industrial-size glass bottles.

We also each ordered a side of pancakes (\$2.85 a pair) that were light and thin. Those came out first as Lucky made it appear he had forgotten the remainder of our order.

"Can I get you anything else?" he asked.

Just as we were about to recite again our main orders, he magically pulled the entrees out from behind us, set them under our chins, chuckled and walked away.

A regular customer sitting a few stools down attested that if we ever come back, Lucky won't forget what we originally ordered.

When Lucky later swung past and asked how we were doing with our breakfasts, we gave him a thumbs-up.

"Well when you're hungry,

everything tastes good," he wryly responded, returning a few minutes later to give us souvenir ink pens.

Despite my wobbly bar stool and harsh fluorescent bulbs perched overhead, the diner feels serene and welcoming. It sucks in a lot of natural light and there was soft music playing when we visited. Also, the zigzagging lunch counter puts you generally face-to-face with other customers, which runs a colorful gamut from seniors talking about their doctor appointments to construction workers fueling up on caffeine to young hipsters discovering the joys of non-pretentious dining.

You'd have to venture into rural America to find a place this folksy, although you need only come to Lucky's to be tossed a fortune cookie at the end of your breakfast. ♦



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Chilaquiles Con Huevos: enchilada or tomatillo sauce, sour cream and salsa fresco

Machaca Burrito with Scrambled Eggs: skirt steak simmered slow with peppers, onions and tomato



Mexican Hash: potato, onions, eggs, and spicy peppers - choice of carnitas, chicken or veggie

Chorizo Eggs Benedict with Jalapeno Hollandaise Sauce

Egg, Potato & Cheese Burrito

French Toast topped with Sweet Agave Cinnamon Apples



Seasonal Roasted Vegetable Omelet topped with salsa ranchera, and cheddar and jack cheese

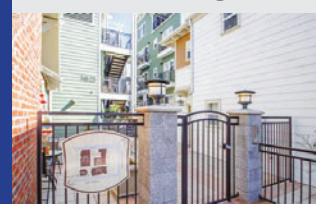
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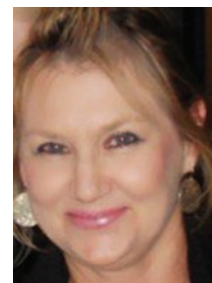
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# Once isn't enough

Eel River Blonde Ale  
and spicy cilantro  
hummus (Photo by Dr. Ink)

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## Come On Get Happy! Dr. Ink

I've been to the moon twice for happy hour. Well, in theory at least when visiting Luna Grill in Hillcrest and Mission Valley.

The ever-growing chain made its earthly landing some 10 years ago in Torrey Highlands before branching out to other locations in San Diego and Orange counties. Bright, clean and colorful inside, you can scarf down a cold brew and hummus plate during happy hour for under \$7 at any location.

Beer choices are limited, however. In Hillcrest, they serve Stone IPA and Stella Artois. The latter is replaced in Mission Valley by organic Eel River Blonde Ale. Each is reduced in price to \$3.50, served ice-cold and in tall glasses.

Wines contained in small split-size bottles are the same price. They normally sell for \$5 apiece. But connoisseurs beware. Your choices are confined to chardonnay or cabernet by Woodbridge, pinot grigio by Bollo and pinot noir by Cavit — basically your everyday supermarket brands that I'll dare say pair okay to Luna's \$3 appetizers such as spicy cilantro hummus, sweet potato fries and herby falafel (served four to an order).

In my latest "Luna" mission

at Mission Valley's Fenton Plaza location, I nursed on the Eel River Blonde Ale. The suds were slightly malty with a super-crisp finish that effectively balanced the spiciness of the cilantro hummus I ordered.

In Hillcrest, I indulged on Stone IPA, although unless the eatery adds some of its flavorful meat kabobs to the happy hour list, the beer's intense hops overwhelm the current discounted nibbles.

This brings me to the conclusion that Luna's beer and wine list can expand by a few notches, considering that the food is made fresh while duly capturing the herby flavors of the Middle East and Mediterranean. Everything I've eaten at either location, during and outside of happy hour, reveals tangy marinades and charry finishes that are deserving of craftier beers and finer wines. Yes, happy hour easily leads you into buying full meals once you get a whiff of the Cornish hen and lamb kabobs flying by, so a bigger drink list would seem fitting.

The design at all locations features bold cherry-red accents with vivid photographs of vegetables overlooking the dining areas, a clue that the salads are also sprightly and satisfying. Also, a sign hanging near the soda machines whimsically reads: "Drink and be refreshed."

I did and I was, but without the help of Coca Cola. ♦



## RATINGS:

### Drinks: 🍷🍷

Two beers are available on tap, Stone IPA and Stella Artois (or Eel River Blonde Ale at the Mission Valley location). The wine selection is generic, featuring Woodbridge and Bolla labels served in small split-size bottles.

### Food: 🍴🍴🍴🍴🍴

Based also on visits outside of happy hour, the meals are fresh and capture the earthy flavors of good Middle Eastern food.

### Value: 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Discounts don't exceed \$1.50 on food and drink items, although regular prices are fairly low.

### Service: 🍷🍷🍷🍷

After ordering at the front counter, the beer came to the table within a minute and the food arrived moments later.

### Duration: 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Happy hour is generously offered for a total of 18 hours between Mondays and Saturdays and for a full day on Sundays, from

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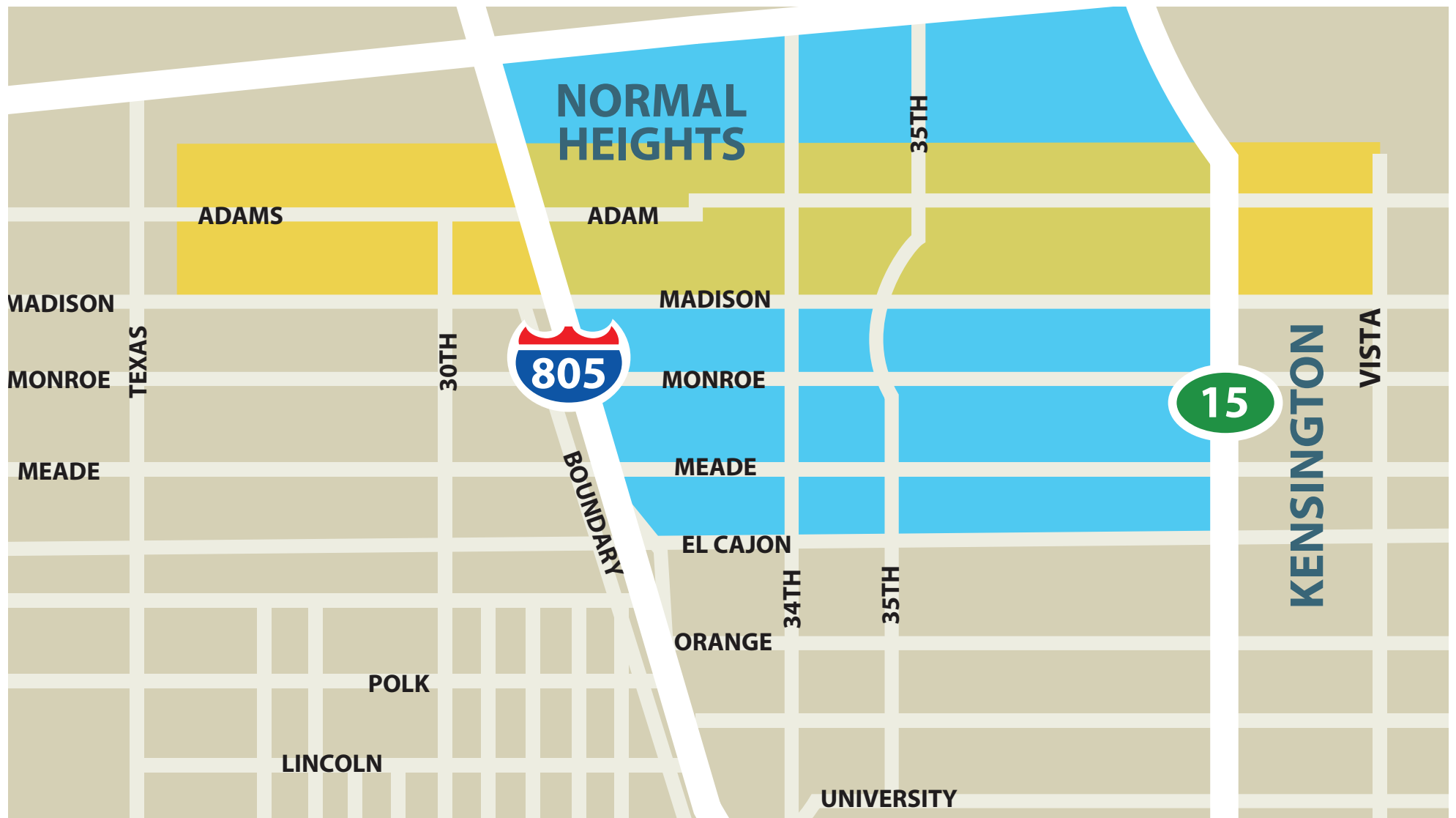
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# Normal Heights Community Organizations



**Normal Heights Community Planning District**

**Adams Avenue Business Association**

Continuing the trek eastward from University Heights, we look now to the most normal of neighborhoods, at least nominally. Normal Heights is a small, mostly residential community surrounding a growingly busy-business district contained almost entirely on Adams Avenue.

It has a diverse demographic thanks to more affordable apartment complexes and a vibrant bar scene attracting a younger crowd to move in alongside the single-unit homes that have long been in the area.

Residents of the area will inevitably refer to their neighborhood jokingly as “Abnormal Heights,” but give us a break and feign a laugh; we’re trying.

—Hutton Marshall, SDUN Editor

## NORMAL HEIGHTS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (NHCA)

On June 30, 1985, a fire shot through the Mission Valley canyons into Normal Heights, resulting in the worst brush fire, at the time, in San Diego history. It destroyed 76 homes, damaged 57 others, and forced over 1,000 people to evacuate.

From the ashes, a renewed energy spurred through the relatively young Normal Heights Community Development Corporation and the Normal Heights Community Association. The NHCA helped lobby the City to allow displaced homeowners to rebuild without restrictive setback regulations passed since their homes were first constructed. They also gave rise to virtually every community organization in the neighborhood that followed it, even reaching across their boundaries to help spawn the University Heights Community Association to the west. The Adams Avenue Post, the neighborhood’s community newspaper at the time, as well as an early form of the Adams Avenue Street Fair, were also byproducts of the NHCA.

The community association was powerfully active, but it dwindled and deactivated near the turn of the millennium. Many of its founders moved away, and others simply felt the organization accomplished what they set out to do in the community. The CDC also retracted, now concerning itself solely with managing the Normal Heights Community Center.

Now, a new group of residents have now taken up the baton, reforming the NHCA in January of 2013 after years of silence. So far, like any young organization, much of their attention has focused on raising awareness and attracting members. They currently have around 100, which is respectable for the group’s age. Their affordable membership fee (\$12, or \$13 online) probably doesn’t hurt.

One of the board’s founding members, Nancy Palmer,

had been attending meetings of the Normal Heights Community Planning Group (NHCPG) when they convinced her, her husband and a small group of residents to try their hand at reviving the organization. She was surprised when 30 residents showed up to the first meeting, citing it as evidence of demand for a community association in the neighborhood.

She said that while the NHCPG and the Adams Avenue Business Association (AABA) — which we’ll get to shortly — are tremendously active, the scope of what they can do is limited by the nature of their organizations. CPG’s are ultimately restricted to land use, and business associations have an obligation to align with the needs and interests of their businesses. Being a community organization allows them freedom to tackle any project they choose, Palmer said.

So far, they’re planning a summer movie night series in conjunction with the local Methodist church and the AABA, but the \$400-per-movie permit is already looming over them.

With AABA handling the neighborhood’s big events like Adams Avenue Street Fair and Unplugged, and NHCPG tackling land-use issues like improving Ward Canyon Park, the NHCA are careful not to constrain themselves, so they can tackle any miscellaneous issue the community needs it to. Among these were community potlucks, neighborhood-wide garage sales and safety fairs — things that “bring the people of our neighborhood together,” Palmer said.

## NORMAL HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP (NHCPG)

Created in 1990, the Normal Heights Community Planning Group oversees one of the smaller planning districts in the city, but they do so efficiently and with little contention. Board Chair Jim Baross will term out on the board after serving for eight years, and he’s protected the community’s interest aggressively throughout his tenure. One example is how the NHCPG reacted when the I-15 began being constructed directly through Normal Heights. With former City Planners on the board, the NHCPG successfully leveraged the construction to the community’s advantage, using the money for the project to construct more park space in Normal Heights and the only block of covered highway in California, they say. The board even lobbied for a light rail running down the middle of the 15, and they weren’t entirely unsuccessful. The 15 was built with an expanded median to allow for potential transit. Now, a rapid bus line is planned to run through that space.

They also successfully advocated for the creation of Normal Heights elementary, which was the result of a

lengthy process working with San Diego’s school board.

Located in one of the few neighborhoods in Uptown News’s coverage area that isn’t in the middle of a community plan update, the NHCPG’s agenda is a little less harried than others, which frees it up to focus on projects of their choosing.

The top priority is revamping Grant Park, turning the dead-end street at its east end into a dog park and community garden, and constructing a new on-site community building. Beyond that, bike lanes, street lighting and crosswalks are all things the NHCPG hopes to see more of this year.

## ADAMS AVENUE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (AABA)

The AABA represents 600 businesses along a two-mile stretch on Adams, and since incorporating in 1985, it’s become extremely good at doing so. It operates the Maintenance Assessment District and the Business Improvement District in the area, and it runs San Diego’s biggest, free street fair each year. The AABA technically spans from Kensington to the outskirts of University Heights, although its heart — just like its geographic majority — appears to lie in Normal Heights.

Since its inception, the AABA has played a unique role in the community compared to most business associations, in that it acts almost as much like a community association as an organization promoting local businesses, although Executive Director Scott Kessler would tell you the two go hand in hand.

Operating out of the Normal Heights Community Center on Hawley Street and Adams Avenue, the AABA sits across the street from the San Diego Global Vision Academy, a \$1.2 million charter school it constructed in 1999, which continues to meet capacity each year. Kessler said it’s the only time he’s heard of a business association developing a project like this.

Of course, much of the AABA’s attention is devoted to the Adams Avenue Street Fair, which brought in roughly half of the AABA’s \$453,000 2013 revenue. Kessler said he’d like to see the many other events grow larger as well, especially their current focus: Adams Avenue Unplugged. The free, two-day acoustic festival hasn’t turned much of a profit in years past, but the AABA is opening up four revenue streams this year in order to change that. One of which is the recently launched Kickstarter campaign, which as of 2:49 p.m. on Thursday, March 27 had raised \$2,501 of its \$10,000 goal. Want to help them reach the goal? Turn to the calendar on page 22 to find details about the fundraiser Blind Lady Ale House is hosting on Sunday, March 30.

Next week, we look at the community organizations that comprise Kensington and Talmadge. ♦





A crowd gathered at Comedy Heights for weekly standup on Saturday nights in University Heights. (Photo by Maria Herman)

# Priceless laughs shake the local comedy scene

By Erik Dobko  
SDUN Reporter

In a world where comedy clubs sell mandatory, overpriced drinks in order to deceptively inflate ticket prices, only one show has the audacity to charge nothing whatsoever.

Liposuctioning the formalities from the typical stand-up venue model, Comedy Heights hosts a weekly Saturday night comedy event with a refreshingly comfortable atmosphere. Located next door to Twiggs Coffeehouse in University Heights, the show features family-friendly material from a variety of headliners that, despite the filter on vulgarity, is pretty damn funny. The homely ambiance, combined with the ceasefire on your wallet, make for a satisfying sanctuary of side-splitting stand-up.

“This is one of the more enjoyable rooms because of the people that actually want to come out to comedy,” said comedian Adam Connie. “I do some shows where a comedy show is kind of sprung on them or sneaks up on them, and you end up talking to people who are trying to ignore you. But this is a great room in a pleasant, very friendly neighborhood.”

In addition to supplying the community with such a down-to-earth show, Comedy Heights producers Al Gavi and Maria Herman have created a place where comics can practice their material without the grueling hunt for stage time. In Los Angeles, the dog-eat-dog environment can make landing a gig nearly impossible for the majority of those trying to make it.

“There’s a huge difference between the dynamic between what’s happening here in San Diego with comedy and what’s happening in L.A.,” Herman said. “Our neighbors up there, they’re fighting for stage time. They’re willing to go out and get three minutes at 10 o’clock at night because that’s all they can get. You would never get into a club like this in Los Angeles and get this star quality of comics on one show, because it’s so cutthroat up there.”

Headliner Aaron Hughes expressed his deep appreciation for the valuable comedic exercise that the room provides.

“I get to perform at The Comedy Store, but they’re smaller sets,” Hughes said. “I think I just did about 30 minutes, so it’s an opportunity to really work on some stories, to pace yourself — you know, develop your material.”

Because the show is financed strictly by donations, it doesn’t come with the sense of entitlement that crowds often have. The incomparable therapy of laughter is often hindered by the unreasonable price tag that comes with a ticket and its two-drink minimum; people often have this detrimental mindset that are owed their laughs, and that they better get their money’s worth.

“If you Yelp some of the other clubs around here, you’ll find that’s one of the big complaints: that they really shake you down for your two-drink minimum and your ticket and all that — the money,” Gavi said. “Because of our business model, we don’t have to shake down the customer, and we don’t have to put all these clamps down on our comedians. ... We’d rather have people enjoy themselves and pay the value that they’re getting from the show.”

So what’s it all about? Why do all these strangers gather together in an intimate green room to file into rows and howl like dying hyenas? Are they all on drugs?

According to Gavi, they very well may be.

“It’s just that good-natured feeling you have when you have a good, hard laugh,” he said. “And to hear that from a crowd, it just energizes you. I want to have more of it — it’s an addiction, I would say.”

Without the judgmental herd of condescending yuppies, the comedians can be at ease, and as a result, so can the crowd. Swing by Park Avenue at 8 p.m. on Saturdays to visit these altruistic laugh addicts at Comedy Heights, and double check that there’s no check to check out before you’re about to check out. ♦

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The Brothers Weiss will tour California and Baja in April, ending at Soda Bar on the 11th. (Photo by David Rumley)

## The growing ambitions of Weiss

The Brothers Weiss depart on California, Baja tour

By Jen Van Tieghem  
SDUN Reporter

Fans of local band Brothers Weiss may have to learn how to share. The trio, who are already popular in San Diego, will soon branch out to tour California and Baja Mexico in April. Their easily accessible alt-rock sounds will inevitably earn them admirers along the way, and if not, their flowing rock-god manes will do the trick.

But it's not just a matter of packing the right conditioner and hitting the road. Booking out-of-town dates is tricky business. Singer/bassist Miguel Ramirez, guitarist Ryan Weiss and drummer Kevin Weiss have learned to leap the hurdles with positive attitudes and crossed fingers.

"The biggest challenge for booking shows outside of San Diego is to get a response from venues. Some of them will not even give you the time of day," Ryan explained.

After recovering from the initial headaches, the band was lucky enough to build their first tour by relying on established friendships with out-of-town bands.

"The initial goal for our first tour was to try to book shows

with bands we know in each town, [then] to contact all our friends and fans in each town to see if they can rally their friends to come out to the show," Ryan said of their tour strategy. "Also, we recently hired a publicist [who] is reaching out to contacts in local radio, blogs and other local media outlets in each city we are playing in."

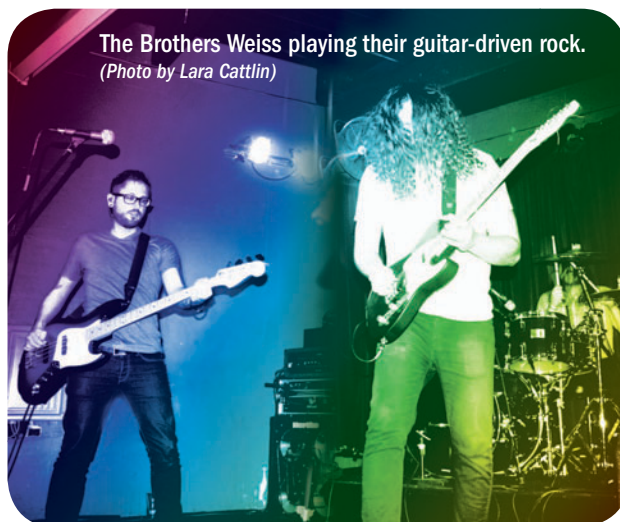
"We try to keep things interesting, there may or may not have been talk of some acoustic versions of our songs coming out," Ramirez teased. "After the tour, we're hoping to catch our breath and do some more writing. But one thing at a time you know? We'll still be playing around San Diego ... we've been playing about

once a month here. I guess it's just right for now, it's spread out enough for each show to feel like something special, but often enough for us to always have something going on."

Rest assured San Diego fans, after shows in Palm Springs, Tijuana, San Francisco and other cities, Brothers Weiss returns to town on April 11. That show finds them back at Soda Bar, the site of both their first public performance and the

band's January record release of their debut EP, "Conversations."

"[Soda Bar] has treated us very well from the beginning," Kevin added. "They greet us as friends and provide the right vibes for the night. We have always drawn well there, and I think it will be good times on a Friday night ... homecoming celebration." ♦



The Brothers Weiss playing their guitar-driven rock. (Photo by Lara Cattlin)

And what a show it is: From Ramirez' belted vocals on indie rock anthems to the deftly maneuvered guitar antics of Ryan Weiss, to the crushing rhythms of his brother, Kevin Weiss — it's clear that these guys give it their all; their music blends catchy rock hooks with thought-provoking lyrics while weaving in and out of several musical styles.

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By J.B. Priestley

Directed by Rebecca Taichman

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Album Review

“Lost in a Dream” by The War on Drugs

By Hutton Marshall  
SDUN Editor

In early March, The War on Drugs released their third studio album, “Lost in a Dream,” to a pent-up wave of critical acclaim for the band’s saturated “heartland” rock. Pent up, because, like most of the group’s work, it took a while to get here. Under the creative control of the notoriously meticulous singer/guitarist Adam Granduciel, the recording process reportedly consisted of the usual scrutiny their previous two endeavors endured.

Arbiters of hipster sentiment such as Pitchfork, NPR and the Guardian have praised the new release though, appearing to validate the tedious, some would even say neurotic efforts of Granduciel. Indeed, the album is well refined, and its songs, although still elusive and spacey, feel more deliberate than their early work. Both lyrically and musically, “Dream” is much more concise, and I cringe to say, accessible, without losing the introversion and reflection that makes Granduciel’s work magnetic.

For those unfamiliar with the Philadelphia indie rock group, they formed in 2005, as the product of a musical partnership between Granduciel and now-popular solo artist Kurt Vile, who is perhaps still responsible for much of his former band’s name recognition, despite having left the group shortly after their first album release in 2008.

The group went through several lineup changes since then, with Granduciel being the only consistent name in the rotation. Closing the gap between Vile’s comparative stardom, their 2011 album, “Slave Ambient,” received praise for its blend of lackadaisical, mild psychedelia and Bruce Springsteen-esque rock.

“Dream” has piled on even more notoriety for the group, and stylistically, it further distances them from Vile’s work, which is probably to their advantage, but it isn’t why the band’s success is mounting. Live performers fall into two categories: those



Adam Granduciel of The War on Drugs (Photo by Dusdin Condren)

we watch with awe, and those we see ourselves in. Lady Gaga, Andrew W.K., Mick Jagger – larger-than-life stars – are captivating by being what 99.9 percent of the population never imagines being. They are shock and awe. On the other hand, artists like Granduciel, singing about everyday anxieties and broadly felt sensitivities, are entralling because it’s us singing those songs, or at least it might as well be. Our ability to relate to them draws us in, and Granduciel embodies that.

This album was written and recorded as he trudged through a flamed-out relationship and isolation at home resulting from his new-found success. With track titles like “suffering,” “red eyes,” and “The Haunting Idle,” past pain is evident, but musically, it’s a surprisingly warm, drifting rock album. Just as Beach Boys’ “Pet Sounds” juxtaposed the sad, thoughtful lyrics of post-nervous breakdown Brian Williams with bright, off-color pop music, The War on Drugs creates a similar effect to make “Dream” both catchy and revealing of Granduciel’s inner turmoil. It’s not something to miss.

The War on Drugs plays at the Casbah on Sunday, April 6 with White Laces. ♦

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

**Uptown's Sudoku Puzzle**

Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must every 3x3 square.

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**Sudoku** Answer key, page 18

Uptown Crossword

Oh, Oh

	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13						14					15			
16						17					18			
19						20					21			
22						23					24			
						25					26	27		28
						29					30			
						31	32				33			
						34					35			
						36					37			
						38					39			
						40					41	42		
						43					44			
						45					46			
						47					48	49	50	
						51	52	53			54	55		56
						57					58			59
						60					61			62
						63					64			65

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

**ACROSS**

1 Wire nail FEB0990  
5 Vale  
9 Pet of 54 Down  
13 Actress \_\_\_\_ Lyn Bauer  
14 Draft classification  
15 Kind of hockey shot  
16 “The hiss was now becoming \_\_\_\_”: Aiken  
17 Holliday, *et al.*  
18 Purpose  
19 O  
22 USNA grad.  
23 One of a pair  
24 Understand  
25 Loser to DDE  
26 Film in Flanders  
28 Pindar product  
31 O  
35 Ex-Dolphins quarter-back  
36 15 Across exponent  
37 Engage  
38 O  
43 \_\_\_\_ canto  
44 Part  
45 Prevailed  
46 Kinsman

**DOWN**

1 The Red \_\_\_\_  
2 Funny people?  
3 Oriental nurse  
4 Mocked  
5 City of *Guns*moke  
6 Sufficient, in poesy  
7 Walesa of Poland  
8 Pasta dish  
9 Plus  
10 Bulgar, e.g.  
11 “\_\_\_\_ my wife \_\_\_\_ please!”  
12 Mimic  
13 “Me Tarzan, you \_\_\_\_”  
20 \_\_\_\_ *prius*

By Charles Preston

47 Captured GI  
48 Bible bk.  
51 O  
57 Notion  
58 City in Italia  
59 Riveter of song  
60 Thin strip  
61 \_\_\_\_ *bien*  
62 City near Minneapolis  
63 Place for a chapeau  
64 Sound  
65 Finished

21 Youngster  
25 Part of UAR  
26 Perform holiday chore  
27 Cross letters  
28 Buckeye state  
29 Bruce of the movies  
30 Uncle: Scots  
31 Spouse  
32 Spoken  
33 Coward  
34 Sparse  
35 Gang  
39 Soft cheese  
40 Mr. \_\_\_\_  
41 MP quarry  
42 Rose above  
46 Condition  
47 Step  
48 “\_\_\_\_ the bag!”  
49 Net  
50 Rug type  
51 Tyson weapon  
52 Engine purr  
53 Achievement  
54 Nick’s spouse  
55 Feds  
56 Fuss

**Oh, oh** Answer key, page 18

5over2

Five local shows over the next two weeks



By Kevin Smead  
SDUN Reporter

**Nobunny, Hunx and His Punx, and Shannon and the Clams @ The Irenic**  
Fri. March 21, 7 p.m.  
\$15

If you’ve never heard of Nobunny, a quick YouTube search would do you well. Nobunny is the musical, rabbit-masked persona of one Justin Champlin. It might be oversimplifying things, but think of Nobunny as Andrew WK meets Lady Gaga. Nobunny’s tunes have a heavy traditional punk influence, but also play on pop music tropes, producing a really energetic, catchy sound.

Of course, openers Hunx and his Punx and Shannon and the Clams are great as well with their heavily ‘60s-influenced sounds. Get there early for all three bands.

**The Widows, Neighborhood Rats, D.P.I., and Pissed Regardless @ Soda Bar**  
Sat. March 22, 8:30 p.m.  
\$7

The Widows play punk as you’ve heard it before, and that’s in no way a bad thing. Sure, its music has the familiar sound of crunchy power chords and choruses you’ll be singing the words to the second time they come around, but they imbue their tracks with a certain energy that can only be found playing this kind of music. You can’t help but feel the need to get wild and rebel against an undefined authority figure, even if you’re planning on making it to church the next morning.

**Tijuana Panthers, The Districts, and Golden Beaches @ Soda Bar**  
Sun. March 23, 8:30 p.m.  
\$10

I saw Tijuana Panthers a few years ago at FYF Fest in L.A. and it was definitely something I knew it’d get into. They sort of fall into group of bands I categorize that play surf-inspired music that has absolutely nothing to

do with surfing (see also: Beach Fossils, The Growlers). For me, the other standout on this bill is The Districts. The group has a rad Neil Young kind of vibe that really works.

**jungles!!!, Vampillia, ZARIGANI\$, HAPPY, and The Touchies @ Til-Two Club**  
Sunday, March 23, 7:30 p.m.  
\$10

In full disclosure, even though I love writing about music, I don’t make it to nearly as many shows as I’d like to. This one, however, I will absolutely be at. If the band names sound a bit, well, unusual to you, it’s because for the first time, Benten Tokyo and SXSW Asia’s Japan Nite tour is making a stop here in San Diego. Every group except for The Touchies are from the land of the rising sun. However, every band on this bill is flat-out awesome. Seriously, check out all the groups — my favorites being jungles!!! and ZARIGANI\$ — and get out to this thing. I’ll see you there!

**Rats in the Walls, The Grim Imperials, At Fault, and Bat Lords @ The Tower Bar**  
Tues. March 25, 9 p.m.  
\$5

Punk, punk, and more punk. I feel like sometimes that’s all I even want out of life. Luckily, The Tower Bar’s got me covered on that front. Rats in the Walls features members of Leftover Crack and sports the same punk attitude, but with 100 percent less ska influence. This is more ‘80s-style hardcore punk. And aside from having one of the coolest band names I’ve heard in a while, Bat Lords have a very unique set of tracks that seems to span several different offshoots of punk. It’s a solid night, especially for a usually boring Tuesday. ♦



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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Sudoku  
Puzzle from page 17

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

Oh, oh  
Crossword from page 17

B	R	A	D	D	E	L	L	A	S	T	A
J	A	I	M	E	O	N	E	A	S	L	A
A	R	O	A	R	D	O	C	S	S	A	K
N	O	T	H	I	N	G	W	H	A	T	E
E	N	S	D	I	E	G	E	T			
		A	E	S	C	I	N	E	O	D	E
W	O	R	D	I	N	A	N	A	N	T	H
M	I	R	A		O	R	R		H	I	R
O	F	A	B	B	R	E	V	I	A	T	I
B	E	L		R	O	L	E		W	O	N
		S	I	B		P	O	W		I	S
F	I	F	T	E	E	N	T	H	L	E	T
I	D	E	A		R	O	M	A		R	O
S	L	A	T		T	R	E	S		E	D
T	E	T	E		S	A	N	E		D	O



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# Why would I want my kids to play sports?



**Andy Hines**  
Parenting

I remember, when my twin girls were not yet one year old, parking the stroller near one of the baseball diamonds at Morley Field to watch the little kids play tee-ball. It was so adorable to me, and so amazing that these squirrely rugrats could keep it together to participate in a team sport that involved skills and rules and cooperating with their friends, that it almost brought a tear to my eye. I imagined my kids playing on a team some day, practicing sportsmanship, growing physically and mentally tough, and perhaps becoming confident leaders among their peers.

Another family I knew from the neighborhood sidled up alongside us. The dad had their six-month-old strapped to his chest in a sling, and we engaged in the standard small-talk of new parents: baby sleep habits, baby eating habits, baby screaming habits, baby defecation habits, etc. Once we had caught up on one another's latest trials, we all shifted our gaze to the four-year-olds on the ball field, who seemed so big and independent relative to

our little bundles of need.

"So cute, right?" I said, nodding toward the young athletes. "Can you imagine that our kids will probably be doing stuff like this in just a few years?"

I felt like I was verbalizing what we were all thinking.

"Really?" said the dad. "You would let your kids be involved in this kind of fascist brainwashing?"

The mom, too, could hardly disguise the shock and disgust at what I had just said.

"Well," I stammered, "you know ... teamwork ... um ... sportsmanship ... that kind of thing. It's supposed to be good for kids, isn't it?"

The truth was, though, that I wouldn't really know about that. Not first-hand, anyway. It was all theoretical to me.

I grew up as an "Army brat," and we moved frequently, so I had fewer opportunities to settle into any extra-curricular activities than my civilian friends. The longest my family ever lived in one place was on a tiny base in Bavaria, close to the Austrian border. On a good year, elementary school enrolled about eighty students. There was an organization that sponsored after-school activities for military kids like hiking, skiing and shivering in the frigid water of a nearby medieval monastery's swimming pool, but there wasn't much offered in the way of team sports.

There was, however, a baseball team. It was part of a league that included two other teams from other American bases that, while tiny, were not as miniscule as ours. Our community was so small that not enough boys went out for the team. So the coach went out recruiting to fill out his roster. When he had run out of boys who were the right age and interested in baseball, he went after the boys who weren't necessarily interested, but were willing

to give it a shot. Then he went for the boys who were interested, but technically too young. After he had drained that pool, he went after me.

I would have been six or seven then, on the small side, and a day-dreamy little kid who liked to run around in the woods, build forts, make up gibberish languages to communicate with my friends and sew clothes for my GI Joe. I also liked to throw a baseball around, hit it with a bat, and run. I was fairly good at those things, but the idea of organizing those discrete activities into a structured "game" had never occurred to me. I suppose I was flattered to be recruited, and so I accepted the coach's offer.

So there I was, the last-picked player on the worst team in the most rinky-dink Little League in the Western World. I literally picked daisies while covering right field, where I don't remember a ball ever entering the airspace during my career, which is probably good since I wouldn't have known what to do with it. At bat, I never hit the ball, although I did get walked a few times because I presented such a small strike zone, swimming, as I was, in my three-sizes-too-big uniform. We never won a game. Our team was a joke. The other teams jeered at us, and the big kids on my team took it out on the smaller kids: the smallest, of course, being me.

I started hiding from the bus when it would come by our house to pick me up for away games. The coach would chase me down; one time, I just told him I wanted to quit. He tried to talk me out of it, and then my mom tried to talk me out of it, and then my mom tried to talk my dad into talking me out of it. "Go on," she told him. "Tell him about the importance of sticking to it, being a good sport, getting back on the horse."

"Well," my dad said, "it sounds pretty miserable to me. If I were him, I wouldn't want to play either."

And that was the last time I played a team sport. It was back to running around in the woods for me, and I couldn't have been happier.

When we moved back to the States, there were kids who had been playing league sports for their entire childhoods: soccer, baseball, football, lacrosse, you name it. I had been skiing and hiking for the past four years. Had there been a ski team at my school in the Washington, DC suburbs, I might have tried out for it. But I didn't feel like I had a chance playing in the traditional sports, and my bad baseball experience solidified my lack of interest.

Lack of interest turned to disdain as I found my place in the hierarchy of American high school. Jocks were on top; weird artsy kids like me were down there with Dungeons & Dragons nerds and recent immigrants. I probably referred to jocks as fascists several times a day.

So when the dad at Morley Field used that language to describe the culture of sports, it resonated with my inner twelve-year-old.

But strangely, I still feel like I missed out by never being on a team after the Little League Debacle of '77. I'm not as comfortable working with a group as I could be. I'm not always sure what role to take on and the extent to which I should try to lead. I struggle with maintaining any interest in things that I'm not already good at, and I'm a poor loser. I'm painfully awkward in locker rooms.

Like most parents, I want my kids to sail confidently right through their schooling and into rewarding careers and lives. A part of me has bought into the idea that team sports set the groundwork for that, and I want my kids to at least give it a try. There are so many options for them these days, in this area, that even if they end up as artsy weirdos, they will have learned to lose a game gracefully. And maybe even win one. ♦

## FROM PAGE 3 OPERA

Money already collected for future subscriptions is in escrow and will be refunded. Pensions are held by staff members in individual 403B retirement plans to which both they and the opera contributed.

"We don't have the money to go forward," Campbell said. "You read in the newspaper 'They have \$16 million in assets.' Of course we do. The asset is the money you owe us two years down the track that you've pledged. We don't have the cash. It's an asset. We have the scenic studio. We have this furniture. We have the computers. It's not workable cash in many cases. People don't understand what those terms mean."

The majority of the staff will leave April 14 with a skeleton staff remaining to file reports, return orchestra scores and hopefully sell the scenic studio. Then an assignee will come in. He will own all the physical assets and negotiate their disposal.

The worldwide opera world on both sides of the Atlantic is shaken. Here are quotes from a few players on this side of the pond:

Opera director and Old Globe Artistic Director Emeritus Jack O'Brien, who was slated to direct Jake Heggie's "Great Scott" in a future season: "The increasingly dire situation of the arts and arts support in our country grows to endemic proportions. The loss of the San Diego Opera is incalculable and as such, brings to a close one of the great, enduring, and most valuable sources of civic pride in the country. We're all in mourning!"

Long Beach Opera Artistic/General Director Andreas Mitisek: "How sad to hear that the oldest company in Southern California will be closing. What does that say about us, our communities, and our investment in the arts?"

David Gockley, San Francisco Opera (reported by Janos Gereben in San Francisco Classical Voice): San Diego "was one of the best-run companies in the country for decades — it sends shudders through me and my staff that this happens to a good company, not a New York City Opera."

Opera News Editor F. Paul Driscoll: "The closure of San Diego Opera represents a great loss — not only to the people of San Diego and the people of Southern California, but to opera lovers and opera professionals throughout the United States. San Diego Opera was an important company with a distinguished history that was a vital part of the American opera scene. It will be sorely missed."

According to U-T San Diego, ten other once-thriving operas have closed their curtains in the past six years in North America, including: Baltimore Opera in 2008; Opera Pacifica, Orange County, also in 2008; Connecticut Opera in 2009; Cleveland (Oh.) Opera and Spokane (Wash.) Opera in 2010; Opera Boston and Lyric Opera of San Diego in 2011; San Antonio Opera in 2012; New York City Opera in 2013; and Opera Hamilton, Canada in 2014.

—Between 1965 and the close of this season, Charlene Baldrige saw all but one of San Diego Opera's productions. She can be reached at charb81@cox.net. ♦

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A scene from "Cats" at the North Park Theatre (Photos by Ken Jacques)

# No Dogs in North Park

By Charlene Baldridge  
Theater Review

How does one address a cat? According to T.S. Eliot, by its name, but only after first bowing. And by the way, "a cat is not a dog."

Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical, "Cats" (based on Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats," may take a deep bow for the current James Vasquez-directed, San Diego Musical Theatre-produced edition, which opened at the North Park Theatre on Webber's birthday, Saturday, March 22 and continues through April 6.

The children in the audience, especially those on the aisles, were entranced as the bewhiskered company scampered up and down. Vasquez assembles an exemplary company that made at least

one person scratch her chin in advance. Kürt Norby as Old Deuteronomy? He was brilliant indeed, making every word understood and contributing to one of the best-sung productions of "Cats" in memory. And speaking of "Memory" (the show's hit tune), musical theater veteran Debbie Prutsman is cast as Grizabella the Glamour Cat, who is well beyond her days of beauty and youth. Prutsman is fondly remembered for her performance as Hesione in Starlight's 2004 production of "Triumph of Love" in Balboa Park.

All the Jellicle Cats gather for the Jellicle Ball, which culminates in Old Deuteronomy's selection of one cat to go on the journey to the Heaviside Layer, where another life awaits. Each cat tells his or her story as a kind of audition for the honor. The result is an evening of catlike behavior, dance and song, heavy



"Cats" runs through April 6 at North Park Theatre. (Photos by Ken Jacques)

on the dance.

After nearly 40 years of "Cats" experiences, Webber's music as well as Elliot's premise grow familiar and dear and with the passing of the years become more profound than treacle-laden. The climax of "Memory," in which Prutsman lets loose the emotion the outcast Grizabella's been guarding all evening, threw this listener to the back of her seat. It was a splendid moment in an evening of splendid moments, and Prutsman deserves the ovation she received at the curtain call.

The ensemble's sound — incredibly articulate and high-flying and all important — is enhanced by music director and conductor Don LeMaster's inclusion of four pit singers, Janie d'Avignon, Athena Espinoza, Doug Schmitt and Chris Tweedy. It's a treat

to remain in place at the end of the show to hear the 16-piece orchestra's play-out music. The choreographer, Janet Renslow, complements Vasquez's solid, insightful staging. Other production artists are lighting designer Matthew Novotny and costume coordinator Janet Pitcher. The set comes from Fullerton Civic Light Opera.

Others in the company are Cody Walker (Munkustrap), Justin Ray (Rum Tum Tugger) and Jeffrey Scott Parsons (Skimbleshanks), who are ably supported by dancer/singers Danielle Airey, Liz Daniels, Alexis De Donato, Deborah Fauerbach, Courtney Fero, Max Cadillac Gidaley, Krysten Hafso-Koppman, Kyle Hawk, Dylan Hoffinger, Keith Johnson, Aurore Joly, Arielle Meads, Joy Newbegin, Michael Parrott, Steven Rada, Bailey Sonner and Eric Taylor.

Readers are urged to support these fierce felines. ♦



## "Cats"

**WHEN:** Through April 6 at 7:30 p.m. Thurs., 8 p.m. Fri., 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sun.,

**WHERE:** North Park Theatre, 2891 University Avenue, North Park

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## Calendar of Events

### FRIDAY, MARCH 28

**Preschool story time:** Every Friday, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Cinema Under the Stars:** 8 p.m. screening of "The Wolf of Wall Street," 4040 Goldfinch St., tickets start at \$14.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 29

**Golden Hill Farmers' Market:** 8 a.m. – noon every Saturday, B Street between 27th and 28th streets, free.

**Gentle Bike Ride:** 8:30 – 10:30 a.m., join fellow cyclists every Saturday morning for a ride through Balboa Park. Meet at the small parking lot on the left-hand side as you enter the park from Sixth Ave. and Upas St., free.

**Classical Melodies in Balboa Park:** 8:45 a.m. – 7:15 p.m., every Saturday and Sunday the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory ensembles fill Casa del Prado with classical music, 1549 El Prado in Balboa Park, free.

**University Heights Open Aire Market:** 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. every Saturday, 4100 Normal St., free.

**Children's craft time:** 10 a.m., Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Emei Qigong Practice:** 10 – 11 a.m., "Master Wendy" leads a weekly Wuji Gong practice group at the WorldBeat Cultural Center, 2100 Park Blvd., free.

**Comedy Heights:** 8 p.m., comedy show every Saturday night featuring local comedians, ages 13 and up welcome, Comedy Heights, 4590 Park Blvd., free.

**Exhibition Opening:** 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., "Spanish Sojourns" will be the first museum exhibition dedicated to the Spanish paintings of Robert Henri, one of the most influential American artists of the twentieth century, San Diego Museum of Art, 1450 El Prado, free for members.

**Pints for Patriots Pub Crawl:** 1 – 5 p.m. San Diego Coastal Rotary Club presents this four-pub event supporting Warrior Foundation~Freedom Station beginning at Toronado, 4026 30th St., \$25. For tickets and info, visit sdrotarypubcrawl.org.

**Cinema Under the Stars:** 8 p.m. screening of "The Wolf of Wall Street," 4040 Goldfinch St., tickets start at \$14.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 30

**Hillcrest Farmers' Market:** 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., every Sunday under the Hillcrest Pride Flag at the intersection of Harvey Milk and Normal streets, free.

**Family Day at the San Diego Science and Engineering Fair:** 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., bring the whole family out for science presentations/ demonstrations, guest speakers, raffles, games and more for the final day of the 60th Annual Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair at Balboa Park Activity Center, 2145 Park Blvd., free.

**Classical Melodies in Balboa Park:** 1 – 5 p.m., every Saturday and Sunday the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory ensembles fill Casa del Prado with classical music, 1549 El Prado in Balboa Park, free.

**Organ Concert:** 2 – 3 p.m., music by organist Carol Williams, Spreckels Organ Pavilion, Balboa

Park, free.

### MONDAY, MARCH 31

**William Tyler:** 8:30 p.m., respected Nashville guitarist William Tyler performs at Soda Bar, 3615 El Cajon Blvd., \$10.

### TUESDAY, APRIL 1

**Old Town Parking Committee:** 10 a.m., monthly meeting occurs on the first Tuesday of the month at the Hacienda Hotel, 4041 Harney St.

**Old Mission Rotary:** 12 p.m., regular weekly meeting of the Old Mission Rotary Club, Best Western Seven Seas, 411 Hotel Circle South.

**Hillcrest Business Association Beautification Committee:** 2 p.m., monthly meeting occurs on the first Tuesday of the month at 1419 University Ave. Suite D.

**"Famous Book" Club:** 3 – 4 p.m., the club will discuss "Excellent Women" by Barbara Pym. Newcomers are welcome. Books are available at the circulation desk while supplies last and are recommended to be read beforehand, Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Curbside Bites:** 5 – 8 p.m., weekly gathering of gourmet food trucks at 3030 Grape St. in South Park, free.

**North Park Main Street Design Committee:** 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., monthly meeting on the first Tuesday at North Park Main Street Office, 3076 University Ave.

**Normal Heights Community Planning Group:** 6 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at the Normal Heights Community Center, 4649 Hawley Blvd.

**Uptown Planners:** 6 p.m., on the first Tuesday of the month at Joyce Beers Community Center, 3900 Vermont St.

**Tasty Truck Tuesdays:** 6 – 9 p.m., every Tuesday night Smitty's Service Station hosts several food trucks under their well-lit shade structure, live music, 3442 Adams Ave, free.

**Pajama Story Time:** 6:30 – 7 p.m., every Tuesday children are invited for story time fun with books, singing and puppets. Feel free to come dressed in your

pajamas! Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Friends Chill:** 9 p.m. – 2 a.m., board games and mellow grooves every Tuesday at Whistle Stop Bar, 2235 Fern St.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

**LEGO play time:** 5 – 6 p.m., children are invited to get creative with LEGOs, Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Stars In The Park:** The San Diego County Astronomy Association hosts a telescope viewing session at dusk by the fountain in front of the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, 1875 El Prado, free.

**Wednesday Jazz Jam Session:** 7:30 p.m., Gilbert Castellanos hosts the Wednesday Jazz Jam Session with special guest musicians and surprise guests at Seven Grand, 3054 University Ave, no cover charge.

**Dynamic Night:** 8 – 10 p.m., a weekly open mic night for musicians at The Merrow, 1271 University Ave., free.

**ODESZA:** 8:30 p.m., 21+, catch electronic duo, ODESZA, along with D33J and Kodak to Graph at the Casbah, 2501 Kettner Blvd., tickets start at \$10.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 3

**Mission Hills Community Garage Sale:** 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., huge community garage sale throughout Mission Hills. Maps and addresses of participating homes available at Coldwell Banker, 1621 West Lewis Street. For more information, call 619-800-1103.

**Mission Hills Book Group:** 10 – 11 a.m., the group will discuss "The Round House" by Louise Erdrich. New members are welcome but requested to read the book beforehand, which is available at the circulation desk while supplies last, Mission Hills Books & Collectibles at 4054 Goldfinch St., free.

**North Park Farmers' Market:** 3 – 7 p.m. every Thursday, parking lot behind CVS at 32nd St. and University Ave., free.

**Kirtan musical meditation:**

seeCalendar, page 23

## Adams Avenue Unplugged Blind Lady Ale House Fundraiser

On Sunday, March 30, the local epicenter of craft brews, Blind Lady Ale House (3416 Adams Ave., Normal Heights), will host a fundraiser for the Adams Avenue Unplugged. The annual acoustic festival returns on April 26 and 27, and to make sure the event returns in full force, the Adams Avenue Business Association (AABA) has started a kickstarter campaign, which so far has raised \$2,501 of its \$10,000 goal. Blind Lady will donate 20 percent of all sales that day to the Kickstarter campaign. Adams Avenue Unplugged has always paid musicians at the festival, and this fundraising campaign is vital in keeping it free. For more information and to find the Kickstarter campaign, visit [adamsavenueunplugged.com](http://adamsavenueunplugged.com).





FROM PAGE 22  
CALENDAR

8:15 p.m. every Thursday chant and sing contemporary mantras celebrating love and life at Pilgrimage of the Heart yoga studio, 3301 Adams Ave, free.

FRIDAY, APRIL 4

**Preschool story time:** Every Friday, 10:30 – 11 a.m., Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Drew Decker:** 7 – 10 p.m., multi-instrumentalist Drew Decker hosts an evening of music with his talented friends at Rebecca's Coffee House, 3015 Juniper St.

**Cinema Under the Stars:** 8 p.m. screening "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues," 4040 Goldfinch St., tickets start at \$14.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

**Golden Hill Farmers' Market:** 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. every Saturday, B Street between 27th and 28th streets, free.

**Gentle Bike Ride:** 8:30 – 10:30 a.m., join fellow cyclists every Saturday morning for a ride through Balboa Park. Meet at the small parking lot on the left-hand side as you enter the park from Sixth Ave. and Upas St., free.

**Children's craft time:** 10 a.m., Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Emei Qigong Practice:** 10 – 11 a.m., "Master Wendy" leads a weekly Wuji Gong practice group at the WorldBeat Cultural Center, 2100 Park Blvd., free.

**Read to Speedy, the Therapy Dog:** 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., every Saturday kids can develop their reading skills in a supportive environment by reading aloud to a therapy dog named Speedy, Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Knitting in the AM:** 11 a.m. – 12p.m., learn how to knit, crochet or cross stitch, University Heights Library, 4193 Park Blvd. BYO yarn and needle, free.

**Cinema Under the Stars:** 8 p.m. screening "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues," 4040 Goldfinch St., tickets start at \$14.

**Comedy Heights:** 8 p.m., comedy show every Saturday night featuring local comedians, ages 13 and up welcome, Comedy Heights, 4590 Park Blvd., free.

**Black Lips:** 8 p.m., 21+, idiosyncratic and folk-inspired rock bands Black Lips and The Coathangers perform at the Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros Ave., tickets start at \$20.

**Tai Chi Chuan:** 9:30 p.m., Qi Gong/Taoist meditation classes

on Saturdays, as well as Mondays and Wednesdays at 6 p.m., Taoist Sanctuary of San Diego, 4229 Park Blvd.

SUNDAY, APRIL 6

**Hillcrest Farmers' Market:** 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., every Sunday, Hillcrest DMV, 3960 Normal St., free.

**Southern California Plumeria Cutting Sale:** 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, extensive selection of plumeria-care and -related products, Casa del Prado, 1800 El Prado, Room 101, free.

**Folding Mr. Lincoln:** 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., enjoy brunch and a drink with Folding Mr. Lincoln at Rebecca's Coffee House, 3015 Juniper St.

**Organ Concert:** 2 p.m., music by organist Carol Williams, Spreckels Organ Pavilion, Balboa Park, free.

**Lime Cordiale:** 8:30 p.m., 21+, one of Australia's hottest rock bands, Lime Cordiale, performs at Soda Bar, 3615 El Cajon Blvd., tickets start at \$8.

MONDAY, APRIL 7

**Signing Storytime:** 1:30 – 2:15 p.m., every Monday teach your baby to sign, Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 Washington St., free.

**Bankers Hill Parking Committee:** 5 – 6:30 p.m., monthly meeting occurs on the first Monday of the month at Merrill Gardens, 2567 Second Ave.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8

**North Park Main Street Promotion Committee:** 11 a.m., regular meeting occurs on the second Tuesday of each month, 3076 University Ave.

**Old Mission Rotary:** 12 p.m., regular weekly meeting of the Old Mission Rotary Club, Best Western Seven Seas, 411 Hotel Circle South.

**Curbside Bites:** 5 – 8 p.m., weekly Tuesday night gathering of gourmet food trucks at 3030 Grape St. in Southpark.

**Tasty Truck Tuesdays:** 6 – 9 p.m., every Tuesday night Smitty's Service Station hosts several food trucks under their well-lit shade structure, live music, 3442 Adams Ave.

**Pajama Storytime:** 6:30 – 7 p.m., every Tuesday children are invited for story time fun with books, singing, and puppets. Feel free to come dressed in your pajamas! Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Hillcrest Town Council:** 6:30 – 8 p.m., regular meeting occurs on the second Tuesday of

each month at the Joyce Beers Community Center, in the Uptown Shopping Center on Vermont St.

**Friends Chill:** 9 p.m. – 2 a.m., board games and mellow grooves every Tuesday at Whistle Stop Bar, 2235 Fern St.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9

**University Heights Maintenance Assessment District:** 4:30 p.m., regular meeting occurs on the second Wednesday of each month at the University Heights Community Development Corporation, 4452 Park Boulevard, Suite 104.

**LEGO play time:** 5 – 6 p.m., children are invited to get creative with LEGOs, Mission Hills Branch, 925 W. Washington St., free.

**Uptown Parking Advisory Meeting:** 5 p.m., regular meeting occurs on the second Wednesday of each month at Joyce Beers Community Center, 900 Vermont St.

**North Park Planning Public Facilities, Transportation, Parks & Public Art Meeting:** 6 p.m., regular meeting on the second Wednesday of each month, North Park Recreation Center, 2719 Howard Ave.

**Kensington-Talmage Planning Group:** 6 p.m., monthly meeting held on second Wednesday of the month at Franklin Elementary School, 4481 Cope-land Ave.

**Young Lions Music Series:** 7 p.m., featuring a new "young rising star" chosen by Gilbert Castellanos every Wednesday. Castellanos will also join in during the first set, the Expatriate Room, Croce's Park West, 2760 Fifth Ave., Bankers Hill, \$5 cover.

**Wednesday Jazz Jam Session:** 7:30 p.m., Gilbert Castellanos hosts the Wednesday Jazz Jam Session with special guest musicians and surprise guests at Seven Grand, 3054 University Ave, no cover charge.

**Dynamic Night:** 8 – 10 p.m., a weekly open mic night for musicians at The Merrow, 1271 University Ave., free.

THURSDAY, APRIL 10

**North Park Farmer's Market:** 3 – 7 p.m. every Thursday in the parking lot behind CVS at 32nd St. and University Ave., free.

**Mission Hills Town Council Trustees Meeting:** 6 p.m., the regular meeting occurs on the second Thursday of each month at Francis Parker Lower School, 4201 Randolph St.

**Kirtan musical meditation:** 8:15 p.m. every Thursday chant and sing contemporary mantras celebrating love and life at Pilgrimage of the Heart yoga studio, 3301 Adams Ave, free. ♦

FROM PAGE 1  
WAGE

among the groups least likely to have access.

At \$8 per hour, California is one of nearly two-dozen states with laws that call for a minimum wage higher than the federally mandated \$7.25 according to the National Association of State Legislatures. On July 1, California's minimum hourly wage will rise to \$9 and then \$10 on Jan. 1, 2016. Currently, San Francisco has the highest minimum wage of any United States city at \$10.74 an hour.

"Almost 40 percent of all working age households in San Diego County cannot afford to meet basic needs without public or private assistance. This figure was 30 percent in pre-recession 2007. We're going in the wrong direction," Gloria stated in the release. "No one who works hard at a full-time job should be unable to pay for their shelter or food."

In an emailed statement, Mayor Kevin Faulconer differentiated between raising the minimum wage federally and in San Diego.

"I agree with the federal plan to raise the nation's minimum wage," Faulconer stated. "I believe this approach will benefit San Diego small businesses and protect jobs by ensuring our city remains on a level playing field with the rest of the country. I have concerns about any proposal that puts our city at a competitive disadvantage against other cities and believe any local proposal should undergo an independent

3rd party economic analysis to evaluate its impacts to our ability to attract, retain, and grow jobs on San Diego."

While many agree that alleviating poverty is an important goal, there are those who argue that raising the minimum wage will ultimately raise prices, harm employees and drive business away from San Diego.

"They're doing the wrong thing, because when companies go out of business there will be a tax base problem," said Arne Holt, proprietor of Caff  Calabria in North Park, who employs 33 people in three different companies. "We will survive, but employees will absolutely get laid off and customers will have to pay higher prices."

Joseph Sabia, an associate professor in San Diego State's economics department espoused a similar theory in a March 2014 paper published by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

"The minimum wage fails to reduce net poverty because of its adverse effects on employment and poor ability to target workers living in households below the poverty threshold. Worse, focusing on minimum wage increases to alleviate poverty diverts attention from public policies that promote employment and incentivize human capital investment that are far more effective ways to raise incomes and alleviate poverty,"

The Council President's report and related documents are available online under Item 2 at docs.sandiego.gov/ccagenda\_edir/edir140324.pdf. ♦



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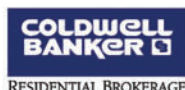
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