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San Diego Uptown News



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San Diego Community News Network



(l to r) Erin Falvey, Christie's Place's clinical director, and Jay Blount, peer navigator; woman in the photo behind them is Christie Milton Torres (Photos by María José Durán)

Empowering women with HIV

Christie's Place helps families affected by the disease

By María José Durán

“I was a drug addict and a prostitute and I knowingly slept with a man that I knew had AIDS because I wanted to get high.”

That, Jay Blount said, is why she became diagnosed with AIDS 20 years ago. Today, she helps other women living with HIV while working as a peer navigator at Christie's Place, a nonprofit organization in Bankers Hill.

Women often put the needs of their families before themselves. For females living with HIV, this can be dangerous. “[My job] is about empowering, training and teaching women that they should come first, especially in

their health care,” Blount said.

Medical advances can now ensure that HIV patients live long lives and have an undetectable amount of virus in their blood. If the woman adheres to medication, she won't develop AIDS and the virus is very unlikely to be transmitted.

Erin Falvey, Christie's Place's clinical director, works to accomplish that.

“It's really important from a public health standpoint. That's why we want people with HIV to be retained in health care and medication because then the virus is not being spread,” Falvey said.

Around 20,000 people in San Diego live with HIV, and women make up only 10 percent of that total. Although this number has increased since the beginning of the epidemic in the early 1980s, the care is traditionally centered around men.

“Some of the service providers are more organized to

see Christie's, page 8

Room at the inn

Kensington House provides alternative to having houseguests

By Margie M. Palmer

Those who live in, work in or frequent the Kensington neighborhood agree that the mid-city community is somewhat of a hidden gem, but the smaller-style construction design of many of the area's homes sometimes makes it difficult for locals to accommodate houseguests.

But thanks to Regina and Reggie White, owners of Red Door Investment and Management, residents have a local housing option for short and long-term visitors: Kensington House.

“I'd had the idea in the back of my head for years because this neighborhood has so many beautiful homes but there isn't always room for people to come, stay and visit,” Regina White said. “That's when I decided to start looking at properties, with the idea that if I found the right place I'd turn it into a guest house.”

Eventually she found the perfect location — a charming 1940s duplex in the heart of historic Kensington.

“I bought the property from this really cool older hippie couple who had a beehive, a garden and free-range chickens in the yard. It had a local reputation for being the chicken house, so I wanted to keep the chicken theme,” she said. “There is lots of chicken wire and

see Kensington House, page 9

Looking up: North Park's future coming into sharp focus

Ken Williams | Editor

Dozens of San Diego residents recently peered into the future and saw a vision of North Park, circa 2035. Most seemed to like what they saw: higher density mixed-use projects along the transportation corridors of Park and El Cajon boulevards, and preservation of the historical character of this hipster neighborhood.

After more than six years of diligent, time-consuming work by the North Park Planning Committee and other stakeholders, key parts of the final draft of the North Park Community Plan update were unveiled to the public at the Jan. 19 meeting of the local planning committee.

Speaker after speaker praised the update, but a couple of people spoke against the changes.

“This planning group has done a great job,” said North Park resident Omar Passons, a community activist who formerly served on the committee. He applauded the proposed Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) density bonus program that would mandate a Process 4 Planned Development Permit, which requires the

see North Park, page 20



Artist rendering of H.G. Fenton's mixed-use complex planned on the northeast corner of Florida Street and El Cajon Boulevard. Commercial businesses would be located on the ground floor with apartments above, a model for future growth along Park and El Cajon boulevards. (Courtesy of H.G. Fenton Co.)

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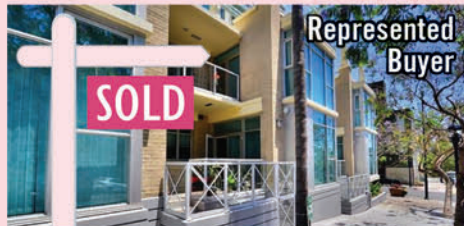


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Hillcrest Town Council update

By Benny Cartwright

The Hillcrest Town Council kicked off the new year with a lively set of discussions at the Jan. 12 meeting. There were several interesting updates from our community representatives, a discussion about a controversial project slated for Mission Valley, and an open forum on what community members would like to see from the town council in 2016.

Our next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 9 at 6:30 p.m., also promises to be another packed agenda, full of great community information and discussion. The meeting will include a presentation by Elizabeth Hannon of the Uptown Community Parking District, who will make a few announcements about some projects her organization is working on.

Representatives from several community organizations and elected officials will give updates on neighborhood issues and answering questions. We encourage all Hillcrest residents — whether renters or owners — to attend meetings, ask questions, and most importantly, let us know what issues are important to you so we can continue to make Hillcrest be the best it can be.

We also invite everyone to help us make Hillcrest shine a little brighter at our next Clean T.E.A.M. event, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 27. We need lots of volunteers to help us pick up trash and debris around the neighborhood, starting at Park Boulevard

your neighborhood voice

HILLCREST

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HillcrestTownCouncil.com

and Upas Street. We'll provide all the supplies, and ask that volunteers wear an orange shirt if possible.

Our community cleanup events are always a lot of fun, and will be followed by a "Talking Trash" celebration at a local pub. For more information or to sign up, contact David Coben at hillcrestclean-team@gmail.com.

Also, if you're looking to get more involved in the neighborhood, the Hillcrest Town Council will have two board seats open during elections in March. I can say from experience that serving on the HTC board is a lot of fun and is a way to engage in the community in ways you may have not imagined before. If you want more information about the election process, open seats or just have questions, contact HTC chair Luke Terpstra at luketerpstra@cox.net.

Finally, the Hillcrest Town Council voted to send a letter of opposition to the Morris Cerullo International Legacy Center project being proposed for Mission Valley. Cerullo's ministry hopes to build the

massive project along Hotel Circle, right at the bottom of Bachman Street (a major access point into Uptown and the Hospital District). Not only do we believe the project will generate a considerable amount of traffic and environmental impact on the valley and surrounding areas, the ministry's anti-LGBT stances do not line up with the values of the HTC and San Diego. We'll be sending the letter to the Mission Valley Planning Group, which is scheduled to vote on the project on Wednesday, Feb. 3, as well as Mayor Kevin Faulconer and the full City Council. Read more about the proposed project here: sduptownnews.com/?s=CERULLO.

We look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, Feb. 12, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., at the Joyce Beers Community Center, located at 3900 Vermont St. in the HUB Shopping Center. More information about HTC is online at hillcresttowncouncil.com.

—Benny Cartwright is secretary of the Hillcrest Town Council. ✧



Kensington Brewing Company officially opened on Jan. 23, although it has been around for a while. (Photo by Cody Thompson)

Kensington Brewing Company is not where you think

Suds in the City
Cody Thompson

In this exciting and ever-growing craft beer scene in San Diego, not a day goes by without plans being written about the next up-and-coming brewery. Star brewers of tomorrow are plotting their plans of attack on the San Diego beer scene today. That being said, what would appear to be the newest kid on the beer block officially opened its doors Jan. 23, although looking into their past would prove they have been working hard on making their mark in the local beer world for quite some time.

Owned and operated by Zack Knipe and business partner Andy Rogers, Kensington Brewing Company (which is surprisingly located at 5839 Mission Gorge Road in the Mission Gorge/Grantville area) actually has been operating under the

radar of thirsty beer fanatics for over two years. What started in Knipe's garage has now become a full-fledged tasting room and production facility. This facility gives Kensington Brewing the ability to grow and produce more of their Old World style, malt forward beers for their fans. When Kensington Brewing opened to the public on Jan. 23, they started with a three-barrel, direct-fire system with the ability of producing 105 barrels of beer in the coming year.

"Kensington Brewing Company was started in my garage in Kensington. (We) sought after some space on Adams Avenue, but with space being so hard to come by, we expanded the area we were looking in to at least get us started with the idea that we would always try to circle back and establish a tasting room in the heart of Kensington," Knipe said.

"We love our location's proximity to Kensington and a few of San Diego's other great beer brewers."

For those who may not often make the trek out to Mission Gorge/Grantville area, rest assured that a visit to Kensington Brewing Company also opens up a stop at other breweries, including Groundswell Brewing and local favorite Benchmark Brewing Company.

Kensington Brewing Company owners boast a fondness for Old World- and English-style beers.

"I was always interested in different beers," Knipe said. "In college when 99 percent of people would bring Bud Light to parties, I was well-rooted in many beers from other countries because they tasted so much better. So our beer style tends to lean more towards Old World-style recipes with lots of hop/malt balance and characteristics that tend to be more true to style."

Upon opening day, the beer board displayed multiple styles ranging

see Beer, page 15

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Uptown Democratic Club endorses 2 candidates, hears marijuana pitch

Tori Hahn | SDCNN Intern

The Uptown Democratic Club endorsed two candidates at its meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 26, and welcomed guest speaker Michelle Sexton in a discussion about the potential legalization of recreational marijuana for adults.

Club members voted 22-0 to endorse Barbara Bry for the City Council District 1 seat after her three-minute speech expressing her focus on keeping San Diego neighborhoods safe, clean and prosperous. The high-tech entrepreneur will take on Republican candidate Ray Ellis in the race to replace termed-out District 1 Council-member Sherri Lightner, who also serves as council president.

The club also voted 21-1 to back Todd Gloria and his bid to represent District 78 in the California Assembly. He hopes to replace termed-out Assemblymember Toni G. Atkins, who is currently the Assembly Speaker. Gloria, who has termed out of his City Council District 3 seat, served as Interim Mayor from August 2013 to February 2014 after then-Mayor Bob Filner resigned amid a sexual harassment scandal.

Gloria explained why he wanted to serve in the Assembly. He said he hopes to continue his work to increase affordable housing and improve the public transportation systems in California. Gloria currently serves on the Transportation

Committee of SANDAG.

During his talk, Gloria told club members that the District 1 race was crucial to local Democrats. The race will likely decide whether the Democrats continue to hold a 5-4 majority on the City Council. An Ellis win would likely flip the majority to the Republicans, 5-4.

"It is arguably the most important race — other than the presidential election — of 2016 in San Diego," Gloria said.

California's primary election will be on June 7, and the general election will take place on Nov. 8.

The Uptown Democratic Club also heard from guest speaker Michelle Sexton, a naturopathic doctor and executive medical research director at the Center for the Study of Cannabis and Social Policy.

Sexton discussed a number of California ballot initiatives for legalizing recreational marijuana use for adults. At least 10 initiatives are being circulated for signatures, Sexton said.

One initiative — the California Control, Tax and Regulate Adult Use of Marijuana Act, or AUMA — has enough money and support behind it to be taken seriously and Californians could be voting on it in November, Sexton said.

"California is a swing state for cannabis and San Diego is a swing county for California," she said.

Sexton said legalizing marijuana could finally allow researchers to focus on studying the medical and



Naturopathic doctor Michelle Sexton, executive medical research director for the Center for the Study of Cannabis and Social Policy, said more than 10 marijuana regulation initiatives are being circulated in California. (Photo by Ken Williams)

healing aspects of the drug. She said positives for marijuana regulation could include a big increase in tax dollars for the state, improved treatment of sick patients, and fewer incarcerations for minor drug offenses.

"It's a relatively harmless drug in comparison to many other street drugs ... even prescription drugs," Sexton said.

Club members responded with questions and several people expressed reservations concerning legalization.

Questions included whether marijuana acted as a "gateway drug" to more lethal substances (Sexton said no) and the safety of

driving while under the influence (Sexton said research is ongoing).

Another member questioned the security of San Diego due to the city's proximity to the Mexican border and the crime resulting from drugs being brought here illegally. Sexton responded that to not impose any regulations only enables the war on drugs that compromises border safety and allows the black market to continue thriving.

In other news, two other candidates in the upcoming elections got their three minutes to speak in front of the club.

Sam Bedwell, a member of the Uptown Democratic Club, is one of seven candidates running for the District 9 City Council seat. Bedwell emphasized investing in police, affordable housing and infrastructure in a city that "our children can't afford."

Business professor Kevin Alston advocated a "students first" policy in his campaign for the District D seat on the San Diego Community College District Board of Trustees.

Alston said he wants to focus on inclusion in the community college system, as well as obtain affordable education for students by getting rid of hidden fees.

John Hartley spoke briefly about the Clean Elections Ballot Initiative, which, if qualified for the November general election and enacted, would "level the playing field" and allow more individuals of different backgrounds to run for office.

The Uptown Democratic Club will next meet on Feb. 23 at the Joyce Beers Community Center in Hillcrest, with a full slate of endorsements scheduled.

—Tori Hahn is an intern with SDCNN and a senior majoring in journalism at San Diego State University. ❖

Block withdraws from re-election bid

By SDCNN Staff

State Sen. Marty Block announced via his Facebook page on Thursday that he was no longer going to seek re-election to the District 39 seat, leaving Toni G. Atkins the heavy favorite to win the Democratic nomination.

Atkins, the outgoing Assembly Speaker who is termed out, has said that she was running for the Senate seat because Block had promised her that he would only serve one term. Block apparently changed his mind over the summer, before withdrawing on Jan. 28.

Block wrote on Facebook:

"We have obtained the endorsements of the majority of Democratic Clubs that have weighed in on the race and we feel that we have the number of delegates we would need to secure the Democratic Party endorsement.

"That said, our debates repeatedly demonstrated that Speaker Atkins and I have very similar progressive positions on issues. It logically follows that we can best advance a progressive Democratic agenda both in San Diego and in the Capitol by working together. In the last few days since our most recent debates, this has become clear to me. Therefore, this morning I announced on the Senate floor that I will not file for re-election next month.

"As a loyal Democrat and elected official fighting alongside you for 30 years, my priority is to ensure that our values and policies are moving forward. I remain committed to serving as your State Senator this year with an aggressive legislative agenda to combat human trafficking, secure additional education funding, protect our environment, assist our homeless population, and more."

As of press time, the office of Speaker Atkins has not issued a statement.



Marty Block

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Mon - Mar 7; 5:00-6:30 PM
Merrill Gardens - 2567 Second Ave

Hillcrest Parking Committee

Thu - Jan 28; 3:30 - 5:00 PM
Thu - Feb 18; 5:00 - 6:30 PM
HBA Office - 3737 Fifth Ave #202

Five Points / International Restaurant Row Parking Committee

Fri Feb 19; 9:00-10:30 AM
Shakespeare Pub & Grille - 3701 India St

Mission Hills Parking Advisory Committee

Wed Feb 3; 3:30-5:00 PM
Wed Feb 17; 3:30-5:00 PM
United Methodist Church, Parlor - 4404 Lark St

Bankers Hill | Hillcrest | Int'l Restaurant Row | Mission Hills

Letters to the editor

About affordable housing

Re: “Affordable housing: Is the city about to get serious about the problem?” [Volume 8, Issue 2 or bit.ly/236SRhU]

Thank you for publishing this piece on affordable housing, and highlighting the efforts of the North Park Planning Committee to address the problem. Adding density along the El Cajon Boulevard transit corridor makes sense, considering SANDAG’s Rapid Bus (and future trolley line) investments there.

What a contrast between the planning chairs of the North Park and Ken/Tal community planning groups. As a resident of Kensington, I was embarrassed to read why our planning chair opposes new housing. Mr. Moty mentions a lack of “infrastructure” four times, yet never explains what that means. Do the huge public transit infrastructure investments in the El Cajon Boulevard and SR-15 Rapid Buses not count?

I’m afraid that for Mr. Moty, only widening and adding more roads count as infrastructure. This just creates more traffic, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, which contradict the city’s Climate Action Plan. And how do we widen roads without tearing down existing housing?

—Paul Jamason via our website, sduptownnews.com

Rent control is the only practical solution, there is no way in our region to build our way out of this crisis. Demand will always exceed supply in our little slice of paradise.

—Bruce Coons via our website

Thank you for the article about San Diego’s high housing costs. Why, however, is there no mention at City Hall/City Council about rent control?

I lived in Los Angeles 1979-1988. If it hadn’t been for rent control, I would have been even hungrier than I already was, since jobs in the entertainment field were sporadic.

With rent control, landlords can raise the rent periodically, using a certain percentage rate. After the tenant moves out they can raise the base rent.

Rent control has the benefit of encouraging long-term tenants, which saves landlords from expensive turnovers. Plus, we got to know our neighbors! People stayed long enough to get acquainted and feel a sense of community — a big plus in a huge city.

—C. L. Morgan of San Diego, via email

I find Ms. Granowitz’s comments disingenuous. At its meeting on Jan. 19, the North Park Planning Committee “approved in concept” the city’s proposal for increasing the base density along El Cajon and Park boulevards to 109 dwellings per acre with a density bonus of up to 145 dwellings per acre. The proposal does not include any requirements for affordable housing. For more information, visit bit.ly/1SIz9rC.

—Kristin Harms via our website

Doing this just right

My name is Tom Barb. I am a 19-year resident of Talmadge, living on Adams Avenue. I just wanted to give you some personal feedback.

I truly enjoy seeing the Uptown News when it gets delivered

to our front yard. I like the paper and its contents everything from the local news, opinion, politics, dining, classifieds, fitness, and community voices.

It is nice to see truly local neighborhood news in a format that is easy to follow and interesting to many different readers here in the “uptown” area of San Diego. It’s not too much and it’s not too little. Just right in my opinion.

Keep up the great work!

—Tom Barb, chair of Talmadge Community Council, via email

Reaction to opinion column

Re: “Buy small, build big, hold for the return” [Volume 8, Issue 2, bit.ly/1T9imuK]

Uptown News is always full of useful information and we look forward to reading the news of local politics and the neighborhoods.

In the January 15-28 edition, I was surprised to read an editorial brazenly titled “Buy small, build big, hold for the return” calling on investors to buy and demolish single family homes in City Heights for replacement with apartment buildings.

Accompanying the article was a photo of a charming, smallish Craftsman house, perhaps needing paint, but certainly with a century of beloved use by San Diego families in its past, remaining a handsome, character-filled and desirable house today. Such houses and neighborhoods have served San Diegans well for nearly a century. Older housing and walkable commercial districts make our neighborhoods beautiful, historic, unique and increasingly desirable.

Author Eric Domeier says such older housing stock represents an “opportunity” for the small investor to cash in by taking advantage of zoning to put four units on a lot currently occupied by a single older house. The consequences of such greed and shortsighted opportunism are familiar and on display already in neighborhoods throughout the city. Investors cash in but future blight beckons.

San Diego’s mid-city neighborhoods have been down this road before in the 1970s and 1980s when thousands of perfectly livable houses were demolished to make way for the ubiquitous, ugly box apartment buildings with parking on what had once been front yards. These buildings replaced modest Craftsman and Spanish-style houses that, had they survived, would now sell for upwards of \$500,000 in North Park, Normal Heights and Talmadge. Instead, the neighborhoods are permanently blighted by ugly apartment buildings that are widely recognized to have been disastrous for the livability, beauty and long-term value of our neighborhoods.

Architectural critics have derided these structures as “Huffman six-packs.” If developers want to build infill, why not replace the ugly apartment buildings of the 1970s, instead of destroying the original houses of the 1920s?

San Diegans should stand together to preserve and protect the long-term public value of our vulnerable neighborhoods from the blight and greed of short-term private opportunism. Once our charming neighborhoods are gone, they are gone for good.

—Michael Provence of South Park, via email to ken@sdcnn.com

[Editor’s note: The final draft of the North Park Community Plan update specifically encourages developers to target the “Huffman six-packs” in North Park, many of which were built between University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard. Read the cover story about the update plan for more details on the incentive program called Pedestrian-Oriented Infill Development Density Bonus.]

Excellent article and a true motivator to the small developer. Thank you I look forward to reading more from Eric.

—Ed Badrak via our website

These properties may be zoned for more density than they are currently utilizing. But, that doesn’t make them necessarily good candidates for residential makeovers. Isn’t there a need for a critical mass of commercial services and goods? Not to mention public areas for recreation and open spaces for relaxation? Just building up without partnering in these other requirements for habitation is the equivalent of building rows and rows of suburban tract homes that have no civic center. Potential needs to be aligned with reality.

Some of what you might consider denser housing has been done before in the form of “Huffman six-packs.” Obviously, these are a scourge and just look ugly. Developers took the small lots and went for the greatest gross square footage possible.

This kind of blight might not happen again, but I sincerely doubt the selflessness of the newest form of developer and devotee of the pro forma model of housing. Just because something looks good on paper doesn’t mean that it will be realized in the third dimension as quality construction. We live in a capitalist society that sees dollar signs in just about every human endeavor including the built environment.

—reisubrocel via our website

Spreading the love

Re: “Behind the imperial façade” [Volume 9, Issue 2 or bit.ly/1TdtEOZ]

Love this restaurant [Chop Suey | Peking Restaurant in North Park]. I have friends that have gone there for lunch every Friday for more than 30 years.

—Char-Lou Benedict via our website

Against massive project

Re: “Hillcrest Town Council opposes televangelist’s project” [Volume 8, Issue 2 or bit.ly/1OLLaUz]

This project [Morris Cerullo International Legacy Center] will have a detrimental impact on Mission Valley! Also, this type of ministry that does not believe in equality for all people is not welcome in San Diego!

—Benny Cartwright via our website

Against North Park store

Re: “Smart & Final Extra! concept explained” [Volume 7, Issue 26, or at bit.ly/1QX2R9b]

If they aren’t going to offer a bakery, deli or meat department what good will it be to the neighborhood? Too many grocery stores have been closed recently. This deal should be squashed.

—Mark Dahl via our website

Comments on bicycling

Re: Comments made on “Metro San Diego CDC supports separated

bicycle lanes” [Volume 7, Issue 22 or bit.ly/1P3rzSK]

Great comments W.D. Snell! I’ve commuted by bicycle to work daily for the past eight years.

I fully agree with all your four suggestions.

I moved here from Washington and at first I was surprised at the number of cyclist flagrantly breaking laws. I’ve almost had two collisions with cyclists that failed to stop at four-way stop signs. It’s time to start aggressively citing dangerous cyclists.

Likewise, there is a non-trivial percentage of aggressive drivers that endanger cyclists — trying to “beat cyclists” when making right turns; turning left in front of oncoming cyclists, bike lane violations; failure to provide 3 feet when passing — that I experience daily. I would add a fifth suggestion — issuing citations to drivers needlessly endangering cyclists.

—J. Cherry via our website

Missing a piece of history

Re: “Hip and historic North Park” [Volume 6, Issue 20 or bit.ly/1VejxYd]

A well-known and historically significant business that seems to be missing from the recent history books is Zumwalt’s North Park Cyclery. The bicycle shop operated in the heart of North Park for 66 years at 2811 University Ave., across from the old Palisade Skating Rink.

It originally opened in 1930 as a small lawn mower and bicycle repair shop a few blocks to the west. My dad Bob Zumwalt Sr. and his father Leslie Zumwalt relocated to the much larger permanent location on Sept. 1, 1931 — just one day before my father’s 18th birthday. In the late 1940s, my Dad bought my grandfather’s share of the business and renamed it Zumwalt’s North Park Bicycle Co.

From that day forward, our entire family worked in the shop — my mother, my uncle Bob Haynes, my brother Bob Jr., my sister Donna, and myself (Shirlee). As children, we literally grew up in that shop. We all have great memories of Zumwalt’s,

the location, the schools and all of the other businesses in that area.

In 1982, my brother Bob and I bought the business from my father. We ran it together until 1989, when I bought my brother’s share of the store. My brother and his wife moved to Oregon, where they still live. I ran the shop, mostly with the help of my sons Todd and Brian. In 1995, Todd opened his own shop, Zumwalt’s College Cyclery on the 6400 block of El Cajon Blvd. He is still in business there — doing very well. My other son, Brian, is also still in the bicycle business working at Haro Bicycle Co. in Vista, California. I closed the North Park store in 1996.

There is so much history surrounding the shop and the family. My Dad was a prime mover in constructing San Diego’s first velodrome in Balboa Park. He sponsored many bicycle riders and events for many years. My brother Bob was a national junior racing champion. His memorabilia is still in the San Diego Hall of Champions. At 78 years old, he still rides centuries and competes in races. He can still outride a lot of younger men.

My question is: Why is Zumwalt’s missing from then current history books and articles about North Park? It is such a well-known name to many thousands of San Diegoans. Many generations remember Zumwalt’s as where they got their first bicycle. Very few family businesses have a longer local history — 86 years old in September. And yet, I don’t see it mentioned in past or current North Park history books. Yes, that hurts, a tad. Nevertheless, I am proud to say that through my family and my son Todd, Zumwalt’s is in their fourth generation of bicycling and serving San Diego and plan to continue to for years to come. Thank you for your time and interest.

—Shirlee (Zumwalt) Geiger via our website

—Send letters to the editor to ken@sdcnn.com or via the San Diego Uptown News website or our Facebook page. ❖



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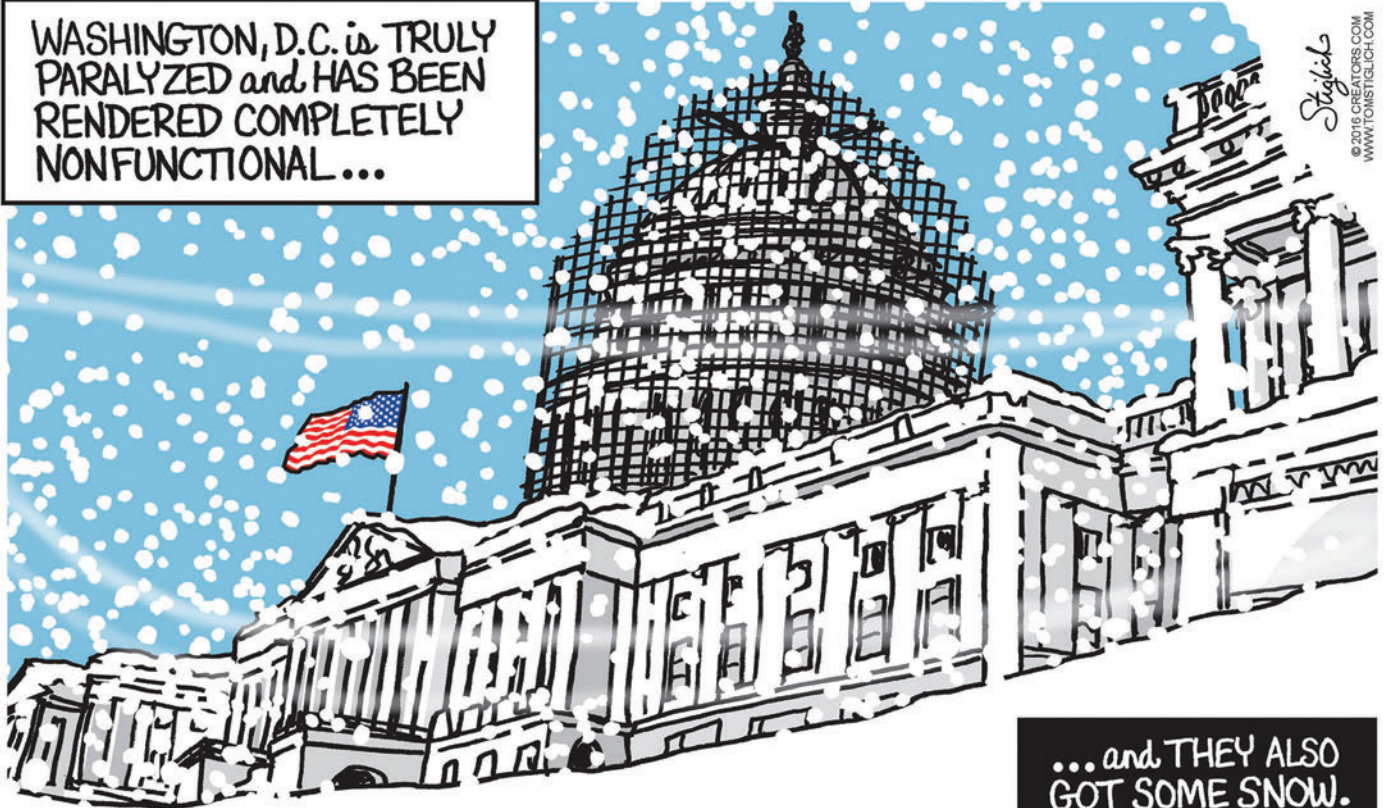
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...and THEY ALSO GOT SOME SNOW.

GUEST EDITORIAL

A tidal wave is about to hit Hillcrest

By Mat Wahlstrom

The San Diego Planning Department wants to increase building height limits in Hillcrest by 100 percent and building density by 66 percent.

Meanwhile, a group of absentee landowners called the Hillcrest Gateway Council [bit.ly/1NvXXsu] has hired Atlantis Group, the lobbyist behind One Paseo, to push the Planning Department further, to increase allowed height by 400 percent and density by 500 percent.

Right now, all the neighborhoods of Uptown are in the process of updating the Community Plan to replace the one approved in 1988. For the next two decades, this document will control every aspect of what can and cannot be done with land use, mobility, urban design, public safety, recreation, conservation, noise, and historic preservation. It is intended to protect residents and business owners from arbitrary decisions on these topics. It also protects property owners and developers by providing a definite framework for them to plan and build new projects.

Hillcrest already allows some of the highest building heights and densities in San Diego — over twice the limits of the beach communities and La Jolla.

Currently, we have height limits of 50 feet allowed automatically and 65 feet allowed by review. The city is proposing 65 feet automatic and 100 feet by review. Likewise, upper density in Hillcrest is 30 to 44 dwelling units per acre. The city intends to make it 45 to 73 dwelling units. Note that density is a strict range: If it is set at 45 to 73, then no one can build anything below 45 dwelling units per acre.

The city wants these increases because it forecasts a 55 percent increase in population for all of Uptown — but it is only interested in making room in Hillcrest. Zoning in Bankers Hill and Middletown is being kept basically the same, and both Mission Hills and University Heights are actually being downzoned. [Editor's note: The section of University Heights west of Park Boulevard is in the Uptown Community Plan, while the east side is in the North Park Community Plan.]

Yet there is no independent source to back up the city's projection of 20,000 more people in 20 years; and the city isn't planning for more police or schools or any services other than what Hillcrest has right now. And since during the past 30 years Uptown added less than 2,000 people, it is hard to avoid the suspicion that something else is happening to influence the city's politically appointed top planners.

What is happening is a global boom in real estate as the investment of choice for the wealthy, feeding the city's greed for potential property taxes above all else.

Which brings us back to the Hillcrest

Gateway Council. Instead of participating in the public debate on the Community Plan update, the Pernicano family and some nearby property owners hired a lobbyist to make up a name, and on the last day of six months of public comment, turned in an 18-page packet attacking the city's already massive increases for density and height as "not economically feasible."

Instead of the city's proposed 100-foot building height limits, the Gateway group wants 200 feet and higher. And instead of density of 45 to 73, they're insisting on 218 to 241 dwelling units per acre, or one person per 10-foot-by-20-foot condo — and smaller. Remembering that density is a strict range, this zoning would make it impossible to build anything less than 218 residences per acre.

There is simply no reason for this, except to bulldoze existing buildings and turn the streets of Hillcrest into canyons of condo high-rises for outside investors.

In cities around the world, desirable neighborhoods are being replaced with glass towers, pushing long-time residents miles from the communities where they live and work. Ironically, it is these neighborhoods' livability that makes them targets for the excessive development that is destroying them. And doubly ironic, it is pushing the sprawl that thwarts advocates of smart growth and those who want to address climate change.

People of good will can disagree and still seek mutual accommodation. Unfortunately, it is precisely this sense of fairness that the Gateway group seeks to exploit. By going behind the community's back and making ridiculous demands, they're trying to hijack the debate then guilt opponents into "meeting them half way."

The time to get involved is now. The city will soon be releasing a draft Environmental Impact Report and final Community Plan, giving everyone one last chance to make a difference — for an entire generation.

Which is why I'm announcing the formation of Rescue Hillcrest, a group of residents, business owners, and stakeholders dedicated to protecting the quality of life in Hillcrest. Anyone wanting to know more can go to rescuehillcrest.com [bit.ly/1KA7Hs].

But even if you aren't interested in this group, join in the discussion: Go to the meeting of Uptown Planners at 6 p.m. Feb. 2 at the Joyce Beers Community Center in the HUB shopping center; write to City Councilmember Todd Gloria at toddgloria@sandiego.gov and the Planning Department at MPangilinan@sandiego.gov; keep reading this paper and other land-use news, and talk with your neighbors. Say no to upzoning Hillcrest.

This next year will decide the next 20.

—Mat Wahlstrom is a representative for Hillcrest on the board of Uptown Planners. ❖

San Diego Uptown News

Poll of the Month



Last Month's Question:

Is the city doing enough to encourage affordable housing?

31% Yes

62% No

7% Don't know

This Month's Question:

Do you support the President's executive action on guns?

☐ Yes, should have happened sooner

☐ No, don't touch the 2nd Amendment

☐ The President should work with Congress on gun control

To cast your vote, visit sduptownnews.com.



Going Dutch: A Colonial in Kensington with side Gambrel roof and classical columns (Photo by Michael Good)

A dream of a house

Colonial Revival represents the American values of persistence and respectability

HouseCalls
Michael Good

As 20th-century house styles go, Colonial Revival is as American as apple pie. Colonial is America's first house style — the chosen abode of George Washington and the founding fathers. It's the go-to style whenever the country is in doubt, under threat, or just feeling patriotic.

America's original house styles — like Craftsman or Prairie — were mere fads compared to Colonial. They were popular with builders and architects for a few years — a decade or two at most. But Colonial has proven resistant to social and economic changes; it has been adapted to bungalows and ranch houses; has survived wars and economic downturns. It's the four-century-old style that keeps on keeping on. Like another American original, the Constitution, it can be adapted to the times and the mood of the nation. The Colonial is always open to a new interpretation.

The Colonial may be America's favorite house style, yet your average North Park millennial likely wouldn't recognize one if he was drinking a pint under its pedimented entablature. Part of the problem is our point of reference. George Washington didn't sleep here. There are no old-school Colonials here. In San Diego, a "colonial" is an adobe hacienda from the 1830s. Our Colonial Revival is a Cliff May hacienda from the 1930s.

San Diego didn't really embrace the East Coast version of the Colonial Revival until after World War I. By

then, Easterners had already lost and rekindled their affection for Colonials many times over, having been seduced by sexy Italianates and having lost it to lusty Victorians. By the 1920s, when San Diegans were finally embracing the Colonial, Easterners had already experienced "revivals of revivals of revivals," as historic house expert Kiley Wallace puts it. Wallace has seen his share of Southern California Colonials doing Mills Act investigations for Legacy 106, the local historic house research firm. He'll share his knowledge of the builders of the style Jan. 30, as part of the latest installment of the Mission Hills Heritage annual lecture series, "Colonial Revival Hits Mission Hills."

Colonial Revival may be America's favorite house style, but its origins are distinctly un-American. They're British, as were most of the Colonists. The first Colonial style was Georgian, as in King George I through IV. (And Georgian grew out of the Italian Renaissance style.) Virginia Savage McAlester, author of "A Field Guide to American Houses," explains that Italian Renaissance style "emphasized classical details and reached England only in the mid-16th century." By "classical," McAlester means Greek and Roman; between roughly 1650 and 1750 in England, architects such as Inigo Jones, Christopher Wren and James Gibbs produced buildings with Greek and Roman detailing. The carpenters and builders who constructed those buildings brought the style with them to the New World.

Still other American Colonists learned the Georgian style from books. McAlester estimates there were 100 architecture tomes available to the Colonists in 1776. Some were academic, but most were "carpenter manuals showing how to construct fashionable doorways, cornices, windows, and mantels." These American Georgians were the first "Colonials."

Georgian style was followed by the Federal style, which was

distinguished by its use of fanlights over the front door and Palladian windows throughout. During the 19th century, the Georgian and Federal styles were followed by a series of revivals, each introducing new classical elements, such as two-story porticos with double height pillars reminiscent of "Gone With The Wind." For the amateur student of the style, Federal, Georgian, French, Dutch and the various revivals make for a dizzying assault of elements and characteristics — pediments, entablatures, porticos and polygonal projections. Add to that the confusion of columns: Tuscan, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. Then there's the plethora of roof orientations: front gable, side gable, green gable ... can this get any more complicated? With a little prodding, Kiley Wallace agreed to break it all down to three simple characteristics.

"The first is symmetry," Wallace explains. "Colonials are always very symmetrical. They almost always have a central doorway." Add the two identical front windows flanking the doorway, and you have the universal house of childhood crayon drawings. Compare this to a Craftsman- or Prairie-style house — in those types, the doorways are offset and the windows are of different sizes.

"The second thing to look for is an accentuated front doorway," Wallace adds. In other words, there is something about the Colonial that draws your eye to the entrance. "There is an arch, or a pediment. You might find Greek revival columns, a balustrade and, almost always, sidelights."

"The third thing," Wallace continues, "is the windows are almost always in pairs, with multiple glazing." Rather than the Craftsman and Prairie "Chicago-style" window, with a large picture window in the middle, flanked by two operable double-hung, the Colonial has "multi-light windows with six-over-six or eight-over-eight."

For better or worse, houses say something about their occupants, and Colonials are no exception. They've always been rooted in the past, never been modern, never been hip. Colo-

see Colonial, page 16

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COLDWELL BANKER

FROM PAGE 1
CHRISTIE'S

gay and bisexual men, and women felt like they weren't addressed. Christie's Place fills that gap," said Patrick Loose, chief of San Diego County's Health and Human Services Agency's HIV, STD and Hepatitis branch.

"Women have unique needs. They are the ones that take care of the family," Blount said.

Falvey said there is a disproportional impact of the disease on women's health. Females are diagnosed later and when that happens they proceed to AIDS and death faster than men. "In order to really undertake the disparity we have to make sure that we create women's centers that are gender responsive and have an approach to health care for [them]," she said.

About 1,200 women with HIV/AIDS currently use Christie's Place's assistance. And 91 percent of them live below the federal poverty line. The first Tuesday of every month, the organization gives away fresh produce to its clients.

"Basic needs assistance is a really important way to engage women," Falvey said. The nonprofit also provides other benefits, like emergency food or hygiene and baby products.

Women that report sexual assault make up 44 percent of Christie's Place's clients. And 27 percent of them have recently experienced intimate partner violence. Falvey believes that these percentages are larger than it has been reported because it's still hard for women to disclose this information.

"[Domestic violence] is sort of a newer thing that people are paying attention to, but it's nearly universal to have one of these factors as a part of women's experience with HIV," Falvey said.

In a domestic violence context, bringing up wearing a condom can be a problem for women. "Some women cannot negotiate safe sex practices because of intimate partner violence," Blount said.

Christie's Place hosts one of the oldest support groups in San Diego for women who have suffered from trauma in their life. Many show Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Only in the last National HIV/AIDS Strategy survey published in 2015, these variables were addressed in the approach to the epidemic.

Affected women are disproportionately from minorities and very isolated in impoverished communities. For these women, taking care of their families can obstruct the healthy habits that a HIV patient should comply with.

At Christie's Place, they have



(l to r) Jay Blount and Erin Falvey organize the first Tuesday of the month fresh produce giveaway at Christie's Place. (Photo by María José Durán)

created a community of women who look after one another. "We try to diminish isolation. When people are engaged and connected in community, being healthy and feeling hopeful are much more possible," Falvey said. The organization is based out of an old house in Bankers Hill, with spaces for them to hang out, and for the kids to play.

have been talked about in my community, 'don't touch that person, what are you trying to do, give them HIV, too?'

"The way we combat stigma is to empower women to share their status. If a woman can become empowered enough to accept and be OK herself and with her status, that fights stigma right there," said Blount, who has been an advocate since she was diagnosed in 1995.

Peer navigators, such as Blount, work for the nonprofit guiding women who have been diagnosed recently through their first steps into the disease. "My job is to engage and retain women in care by addressing barriers in their life like child care, transportation, food, immigration status. ... We are not telling them what to do, we are walking with them in their journey," she said.

"It aligns the skills and talents of women living with HIV who walk in their shoes to say, 'look at me, I'm living with HIV, I'm healthy, I live a very productive life, you can do that, too,'" Falvey concluded.

Christie's Place is funded by public and private foundations as well as private donors and has no cost for their clients.

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

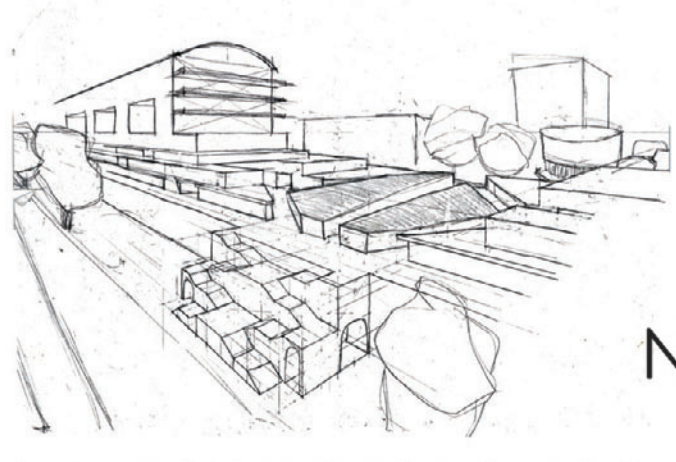
One out of eight people in San Diego who have HIV don't know it.

One out of eight people in San Diego who have HIV don't know it. Making people aware of their HIV status is, according to Loose, one of the challenges for the future. Fear and stigma are among the reasons why people who are at risk of HIV don't get tested.

"Oh, boy. Stigma," Blount said. "It is still a very huge reason why people are not retained in care." She has experienced it first-hand. "I

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Kensington House offers short- and long-term stays at this 1940s era home in a historic neighborhood. (Courtesy of vrbo.com)

FROM PAGE 1

KENSINGTONHOUSE

ceramic chickens; it pays a nice homage to the house.”

In terms of renovations, those were minor, she said, noting that many of the original finishes were preserved. The original appliances were kept in the upstairs, two-bedroom unit and the original cast-iron bathtubs were kept in both apartments.

When the paint was touched and the properties were fully furnished, Kensington House was officially born.

“The technical concept was to turn it into a vacation rental but I actually cater a lot to the local market; I don’t do any online advertising to people who are traveling on vacation. I advertise locally in Kensington and I get a lot of people who are guests of people who live locally,” Regina White said. “Sometimes that’s grandparents who are coming to visit their grandchildren and sometimes it is people who are remodeling their home and don’t want to stay in a hotel.”

Two of her more memorable guests arrived with three housecats in tow, she said. “They lived in the neighborhood and they stayed with us because they were getting their hardwood floors refinished.”

For the Whites, it is all about being an asset to the neighborhood.

“It’s more like staying at a house than a hotel and we’re convenient because guests can be right down the street from anyone they’re visiting,” Regina White said. “I also purchased a couple of vintage Schwinn bicycles that are in the garage for people to use because it’s a nice way to see Kensington.”

Kensington House is her favorite part of her business, she said, because she gets to meet so many different types of people. “I made so many random friends,” White said. “We’re pretty busy and it’s been a lot of fun.”

—Margie M. Palmer is a San Diego-based freelance writer who has been racking up bylines in a myriad of news publications for the past 10 years. You can reach her at margiep@alumni.pitt.edu. ❖



The images above show the exterior and interior of Kensington House, which offers a two-bedroom unit upstairs and a one-bedroom unit downstairs. Amenities include a hot tub and a barbecue grill in the backyard and a couple of vintage Schwinn bicycles in the garage. (Courtesy of vrbo.com)

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Florists: the unsung heroes of Valentine's Day

Tori Hahn and Joseph Ciolino | SDCNN interns

One of the most popular businesses on Valentine's Day is your neighborhood florist, who delivers your expression of love to your significant other. Although Valentine's Day is not until Feb. 14, florists are already stocking up floral supplies, hiring temporary workers and drivers, and preparing for that special day of the year when business booms.

Here is a glimpse at how several Uptown florists are getting ready for Valentine's Day:



Mission Hills Florist

Mission Hills Florist (missionhillsflorist.com) has operated on the corner of Washington and Goldfinch streets for more than 50 years. Beverley and John Ireland — the third family to own and manage the flower shop — have worked since 2005 to provide the community with quality flower arrangements and prompt customer service.

While Beverley manages Mission Hills Florist and two other San Diego flower businesses, El Camino Flower Shop and Jasmine Creek Florist, John helps with marketing for the stores, services weddings and parties, and, during busy holidays, drives the delivery vehicle.

Q: What is the appeal of red roses and how many do you go through on Valentine's Day?

A: The appeal of red roses is red signifies love, although people don't always order red. I don't know how many we go through; completely guessing, I would say maybe 80 dozen or more.

We don't make [the arrangements] ahead of time. That is not our business model. We make up everything custom made — that's our niche in the flower world.

Q: What is the biggest seller outside of roses?

A: For the millennials, gerbera daisies are extremely popular. [It's] a bold, colorful flower that is about 4 inches to 5 inches across and they come in very bold colors: a bright orange, a bright hot pink, gold, yellows, burgundy reds. Young people love them. They're useful, they're colorful and they're long-lasting.

Others that are really popular are Oriental lilies and those have a fabulous fragrance.

Q: What is the weirdest request that you've had for Valentine's Day?

A: We get marriage proposals — people who are actually asking someone to marry

them. We've sent diamond rings along with those roses in the past before.

Q: How much additional hiring do you do for Valentine's Day week? How much extra help is needed?

A: Between the three flower shops, there are about six [delivery vans] going out every day. We already hired [extra help] a couple weeks ago, including extra drivers, designer help, people who will clean flowers. ... It depends on which day of the week it lands on.

Because [Valentine's Day] is a Sunday this year, I don't think we'll be as busy as we have been in the past because people usually like to send flowers to people when they're at work.

Q: What is the percentage increase in sales compared to a normal week?

A: We won't know for this year yet. Year to year it varies and it will be different than it was last year, because last year it was on a Saturday and this year it's on a Sunday.

—Tori Hahn, SDCNN intern



Dave's Flower Box

Dave's Flower Box (davesflowerbox.com) — at the corner of El Cajon Boulevard and Texas Street — has been around for 60 years. Dave Cordova started the shop in 1953, and Jim Martin took over in 2008.

Q: What is the appeal of red roses and how many do you go through on Valentine's Day?

A: We go through a lot of red roses. All the men do it because it is known

as a love flower. We sell well into the thousands of red roses leading up to and on the day of Valentine's. Anything red is popular in Valentine's Day and the color is a tradition. I'm not sure where it started but red is the traditional color.

Q: What is the biggest seller outside of roses?

A: Roses is the biggest seller, red roses is No. 1, then mixed colored roses. We try to keep inexpensive flowers for the customers. Red carnations are popular because they are cheaper. Red, pink and white are usually the popular Valentine's Day colors. Yellows, oranges and colors like that are never popular on Valentine's.

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Make sure they have enough flowers, regardless of if they want one rose or a dozen. Hard-times people will still buy flowers; many may buy only one and then in the good times they have enough to do a dozen. All different kinds of clients being in the Hillcrest area. We make no judgment against anyone. Best time to have them deliver is to deliver to the person at work, to make all the co-workers jealous.

Q: What is the weirdest request that you've had for Valentine's Day?

A: I've had people call up to buy 100 roses and some have called for 12 different rose arrangements to be delivered at all different times of the day. It would be as often as 12 different times during the day, delivering flowers pretty close to every hour to the same person. Twelve or ten dozen, have them arranged and have them all delivered throughout the day. I've dealt with people that want deliveries at exact times and that is too difficult because we just have too many orders and deliveries during this time.

We enjoy making people happy.

We enjoy watching people come in the shop and buy something that will make their loved ones happy. It's a lot of hard work. We have people working here until midnight just before the holiday. Drivers come in at 7 a.m. and they will work through the day. We are busy because we cover areas including Chula Vista all the way north to Del Mar and east to El Cajon and in between.

During this season we have customers that will come in as early as 7 in the morning and for the next 12 hours the shop will not be empty. There is always a customer.

Q: How much additional hiring do you do for Valentine's Day week?

A: We'll have more than 10 drivers on the road for the holiday. We have part-time drivers and people we have on call since it is the weekend. People will come in and work up to a few hours. We have to accommodate the customer. We hire very few for the shop itself. People that work here are extremely efficient. As many as two or three extra people waiting on customers, not large numbers of workers needed in the shop. Not going to hire 10 people.

Q: What is the percentage increase in sales compared to a normal week?

A: Two to three times the amount of business on that day. We preorder things early and we already have orders for Valentine's Day now. People come in and order on the spot and preorder, there is constant preordering between now and Valentine's Day. We have into hundreds of orders for delivery. People want their wives and girlfriends to get them on the day that she is at work.

—Joseph Ciolino, SDCNN intern



Green Fresh Florals

Green Fresh Florals (green-freshflorals.com) is owned by Carlos Franco, who has been in the floral industry for more than 25 years. The shop has been at 3785 Fourth Ave. for six years but Franco has been in business for nine.

Travis Rogers is the manager and main designer at Green Fresh Florals, and talked about Valentine's Day.

Q: What is the appeal of red roses and how many do you go through on Valentine's Day?

A: We go through about 500 or more stems of roses on the week of Valentine's Day.

Q: What is the biggest seller outside of roses?

A: Peonies and tulips because most flower shops don't carry them. Peonies are not an inexpensive flower and tend to be more popular. Most shops don't carry that kind of flower; the standard supermarket stuff other shops carry. We carry more interesting and unique blooms.

Most popular flower that our customers want would be the peony. Our shop specializes with more spring flowers and our customers come to us for more variety. The peonies are more expensive and we



try to buy as many as possible but they're out of season. We also go through about 700 stems of tulips and about 300 to 400 stems of hydrangeas.

Q: What is the weirdest request that you've had for Valentine's Day?

A: I have had to spray paint roses black before. It looks amazing and actually it looks like leather. I have had a customer bring in a whip to deliver it with the flowers. There have obviously been weird requests for flowers; there's the quintessential "dozen red roses with one single white rose in it."

Sort of happens sometimes. I have delivered an engagement ring before. I wasn't too comfortable with it at first, but this was a very good customer of ours. I have had really weird card messages. One person wrote a very awkward poem and sent \$800 worth of red roses, which is eight dozen red roses.

Q: How much additional hiring do you do for Valentine's Day week?

A: People freelance for us. We also have people who live in the community that are friends and customers that come and help with things. They will just come and hang out to help out. Obviously we have others that we pay that help out with designs and other stuff. Friends who are customers just like to come into the shop to have fun, be with us and experience the whole thing because they enjoy it.

We're a family, we love each other and care about each other and just like to have fun together.

Q: What is the percentage increase in sales compared to a normal week?

A: It fluctuates. Based on last year's sales, we went up about 30 percent to 40 percent during Valentine's Day week. Generally speaking over the past six years that we have been here, we have seen a general increase about 30 percent. Every year we go up in sales around this time.

—Joseph Ciolino, Tori Hahn, SDCNN interns

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Daisy Varley, Operations



Bully's East in Mission Valley will celebrate its 45th anniversary on Feb. 5 with a party at the restaurant and sports bar. The first 250 people showing up after 4 p.m. will get a free 45th anniversary shot glass. Other bling will include 45th anniversary T-shirts and hats. A "U-Call It" cash bar will include draft beer specials, red and white wines, and an array of tequila, whiskey and bourbon. Tray-passed appetizers will be served from 5 to 8 p.m. with samples of their new appetizers and entrees. Bully's East was named Best Steak House, Best Business Brunch and Best Happy Hour in the 2015 Best of Mission Valley awards. 2401 Camino Del Rio South, 619-291-2665, bullyseast.com.



Ingrid Croce and husband Jimmy Rock have closed Croce's Park West. (Facebook)

Croce's Park West (2760 Fifth Ave.) has closed. Croce's restaurant and music venue moved to its Bankers Hill location in early 2014 after losing its lease after a 30-year residency at Fifth Avenue and F Street in the Gaslamp. On Croce's Facebook page, owner Ingrid Croce and her husband Jimmy Rock wrote on Jan. 25: "We have found that live music isn't the draw that we hoped and needed it to be. The piracy and devaluation of music has been such a major blow to us that we can no longer afford to support live music on our own. And it wouldn't be Croce's without live music. "In the end, Croce's Park West was fabulous ... the food, the ambience, the hospitality, the live music and our wonderful guests, who have become like friends and family. It was everything we wanted it to be! We feel it was a success." The new owner of the space is Harry's Bar & American Grill, formerly located in the UTC area.



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Mediterranean-inspired wraps coming to Hillcrest (Facebook)

Coming into the space that formerly operated as Sally & Henry's Doghouse Bar and Grill in Hillcrest is Spitz, a hip eatery spotlighting Mediterranean street food that's due to open by early February. The concept is the brainchild of college buddies Bryce Rademan and Robert Wicklund, who launched their first location several years ago in Los Angeles after Rademan spent a semester in Spain. They've since opened other outlets in the region. The menu features everything from crispy garbanzo beans and "street cart" French fries to a colorful variety of doner-inspired wraps and sandwiches made with beef, lamb, chicken or falafel. A full bar and patio will be incorporated into the operation, which will serve lunch, dinner and weekend brunch. 3515 Fifth Ave., eatatpitz.com.



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Restaurateur Tracy Borkum will open Sorella in the heart of Kensington this spring, in the space where she previously operated Kensington Grill for 20 years, and more recently Fish Public. The new venture will feature a "pasta-forward" menu incorporating the Southern California twists seen at her other restaurants, Cucina Urbana in Bankers Hill, and Cucina Enoteca in Del Mar, Newport Beach and Irvine. Aside from hand-crafted pasta dishes, there will be polenta boards, antipasti, and sweet and savory share plates. Borkum's executive chef, Joe Magnanelli, will oversee the menu. The restaurant will also feature a designated area for cooking classes. 4055 Adams Ave., urbankitchengroup.com.



A new restaurant specializing in house-made pasta is planned for Kensington. (Courtesy of Urban Kitchen Group)

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New brewery opens on Morena Boulevard. (Photo by Scott Linnett)

San Diego's burgeoning brew scene has come to include Bitter Brothers Brewing, a 3,200-square-foot facility that opened recently in Bay Park by siblings and craft beer enthusiasts Bill and Kurt Warnke from Detroit, and Monica Andresen, formerly of Waters Fine Catering. The project launched with eight types of beer in the offing. They include session IPA, porter on nitro, hefeweizen, dunkelweizen and a pomegranate Berliner Weisse. Food trucks roll in on Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons. 4170 Morena Blvd., 619-961-6690.

Rubio's has announced that it will begin using only "all-natural" chicken raised without antibiotics as well as nitrate-free bacon across its entire menu at all locations beginning this spring. As part of its "Made with a Mission" effort, the 33-year-old chain is also intent on removing artificial flavors and colorings contained in some of the foods (flour tortillas, fire-roasted corn and a few desserts) while exploring sources for sustainable fish and hormone-free beef. Those changes are slated for late 2017. rubios.com.

An offshoot of Evolution Fast Food in Bankers Hill had its soft opening Jan. 25 in Ocean Beach under the name PlantPower Fast Food. Launched in part by Evolution's founder, Mitch Wallis, the eatery will serve vegan and mostly organic versions of fast food favorites such as burgers, crispy chicken sandwiches and tacos using tempeh and other plant-based ingredients. The newly built structure, which will open in a few weeks, features indoor/outdoor seating plus drive-up ports resembling those at Sonic. 2204 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., plantpowerfastfood.com.

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

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(clockwise from above) Ponce Meza Jr. oversees daily operations at Ponce's Mexican Restaurant in Kensington; shrimp tacos with cabbage and chipotle sauce; enchiladas suizas adorned with Mexican crema (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

Restaurant Review

Frank Sabatini Jr.

Business owners had warned Ponce Meza in the late 1960s not to open a restaurant in the heart of Kensington, believing that it would fail in a neighborhood that didn't support much culinary activity at the time. But Meza proceeded anyway, taking with him the experience he gained from working as cook at Nati's Mexican Restaurant in Ocean Beach.

The venture panned out. And 47 years later, Ponce's Mexican Restaurant operates consistently to a full house, pretty much from the moment it opens its doors in the morning until closing them at 10 p.m. on most nights.

Even on a cold and rainy Monday evening last month, the wait time for a table was 40 minutes. Or on a recent Friday lunch, both dining rooms and most of the bar had filled to capacity before the clock struck noon.

Meza's son, Ponce Jr., said the draw is "comfort food with good portions," a simple formula that he's upheld since his father retired 15 years ago.

"My dad still pops in sometimes to chit chat with the longtime customers, many of whom love his original chile rellenos and chicken enchiladas," he said.

For this customer, the ground beef tacos and burritos hold sacrilegious appeal in the face of shredded beef versions served in all other Mexican establishments — except for Nati's, from which Meza adopted the recipe. He's since tweaked the seasoning with added measures of cumin and oregano.

The crispy quesadilla, too, is a Nati's carryover involving a bubbly layer of cheddar or Jack cheese (or both) on a thin, fried tortilla sporting the fragility and lightness of filo pastry. Pair it to a sturdy margarita harboring a loose pour of Cuervo Gold tequila, and you begin to understand why Ponce's has become wildly contagious in a town brimming with stiff competition.

Décor plays into the restaurant's allure as well. Since its remodel in 2003, the main dining room came to include a "wall of women," which captures numerous paintings of señoritas, some of them humble, others seductive. The framed works were acquired mostly

at flea markets. Those that appeared non-Mexican were touched up to look Latina, Ponce Jr. said.

Several items have been added to the menu over the past several years such as the simple, brothy chicken tortilla soup, standard fajitas, and chicken enchiladas suizas, which are the best I've had anywhere. Plump and crepe-like, they're stuffed with tender breast meat and manchego cheese, and topped with Mexican crema and tomatillo salsa.

Equally noteworthy is the carnitas cooked in lard, oranges and Mexican Coca-Cola. What I

especially like about the preparation is that the pork isn't flash-fried before it's served. The result is slow-roasted soft meat with its juices fully retained, and sans the greasy finish.

On my last visit, I tried the shrimp tacos containing crispy cabbage and robust chipotle cream sauce, which surprisingly didn't upstage the sweet, delicate flavor of the shrimp. It's the closest thing you'll find here to a luxury taco, with the exception of the adobada tacos stuffed with guajillo chile-seasoned pork, cilantro and pineapple-avocado salsa.



The menu otherwise spotlights traditional dishes: chorizo sopes with nopales salsa, chimichangas, tilapia tacos, dressed-up quesadillas, tamales, and the like. A couple of burgers are also in the offing — the "guero" and "Mexi." Both are topped with a chile relleno, although the latter contains a slightly bigger patty served on an oblong roll with lettuce, tomato,

mayo and guacamole. Chilaquiles verdes are relative newcomers to the breakfast menu. But I've defaulted regularly to the classic huevos rancheros with standard ranchero sauce, if only because of the creamy refried beans served alongside. The frijoles appear on most plates, although only in my morning visits have they sported a crispy top layer. Whether intentional or not, I found it appealing.

As a dining anchor to the neighborhood, Ponce's has become a charitable force in the city by donating annually to elementary schools and the Mid-City Little League. It also takes part regularly in Dining Out for Life, which raises money for the San Diego LGBT Community Center's HIV/AIDS services and prevention programs.

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

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(above) "great balls of fire" over fries; (below) the house "Rita" at Joe's Crab Shack in Mission Valley (Photos by Dr. Ink)

The first time's a charm

Come On Get Happy! Dr. Ink

It isn't what connoisseurs consider the Cadillac of seafood restaurants. And for that very reason, I've never B-lined into Joe's Crab Shack for their famous shellfish steampots and Southern-style catfish. At least not yet.

After encountering the Shack in multiple cities while traveling, I finally paid a visit to the Houston-based chain right here in Mission Valley. But for happy hour only, when the drafts, hurricanes and house margaritas are only \$3 and various appetizers, including a few incorporating crab meat, are \$5.

The restaurant is the size of a grand ballroom and located on the second level of the Hazard Center. The vibe is playful, if not boisterous on Friday and Saturday evenings, as I've witnessed when ducking into Yogurtland directly below.

I went on a Monday and learned when I arrived that it's the day kids eat for free. To my relief, there were only two tykes in the whole place and the atmosphere was rather relaxing.

Dividing the bar lounge from the main dining room is a merchandise station resembling a souvenir shop at an airport. It's filled with T-shirts emblazoned with peace symbols, the same as what the servers wear.

I took a table in the bar area and was greeted immediately by

a young waiter who slipped me a ticket-size menu listing the happy hour specials. A hurricane seemed too festive a cocktail for drinking solo, and the draft beer selection, mainly common crafts and the usual domestics, didn't grab me. So I chose the house "Rita" served in a wide, tall glass.

A lively cocktail it was, given that the mediocre-grade Sauza Tequila is complemented by Triple Sec and sweet-and-sour syrup, which my waiter couldn't confirm as house-made. Neither could the bartender when asked. Either way, the drink maintained a bright citrus flavor and reasonable kick right to the end, even after most of the chipped ice melted into it.

Salivating over various seafood buckets passing my table, most of

them seemingly loaded with crab legs and lobster tails, I caved into my seafood craving with a \$5 order of "great balls of fire."

Served in a metal bin over decent French fries were eight panko-breaded balls filled with warm cream cheese, diced jalapeños and minced crab. Crispy on the outside and decadently flavorful on the inside, I'd order them again in a heartbeat, perhaps when trying out the place for dinner sometime.

In addition to happy hour — offered twice each day Monday through Friday — the Shack features other midweek specials such as \$2 "bites and drinks" on Tuesdays; all-you-can-eat snow crab for \$29 on Wednesdays; and \$15 whole main lobsters along with \$2 Sauza Blue margaritas on Thursdays. ❖

RATINGS

DRINKS: 🍷🍷🍷🍷

The beer selection is somewhat pedestrian, but if you're hankering for a bright-tasting margarita, they're a couple notches above what you'll find in other chain establishments.

FOOD: 🍴🍴🍴🍴

Based only on an appetizer called "great balls of fire," they're similar to jalapeño poppers, but better because they contain crab meat.

VALUE: 🍴🍴🍴🍴🍴

The prices on beer, cocktails and noshes come down by nearly 50 percent during happy hour.

SERVICE: 🍷🍷🍷

The staff was young, friendly and fast, but not entirely knowledgeable about the ingredients used in the drinks.

ATMOSPHERE: 🍷🍷🍷

Both the bar lounge and main dining room have a mess-hall feel conducive to large parties. Bright lighting throughout the rooms and a merchandise area near the entrance confirm you've entered into a corporate-run chain.

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Puzzle answers on page 16

Puzzle answers on page 16

UPTOWN CALENDAR



FEATURED EVENTS

New science exhibitions: “Taping Shape” and “Zoo in You: The Human Microbiome”

Saturday, Jan. 30

Two new exhibitions will open at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center (1875 El Prado, Balboa Park). “Taping Shape” presents an indoor landscape with a maze of rooms and tunnels made of hundreds of rolls of packing tape. Visitors can climb, slide and explore the exhibit and concepts of architecture, engineering, sound and more. This exhibition was developed at the science center with local artist and engineer David Ghilarducci. It will feature accompanying hands-on exhibits and interactive. “Taping Shape” will be open through June 12. Also opening today will be “Zoo in You: The Human Microbiome” where visitors can explore the complex world of our microbiome — “a dynamic, adaptable and delicately balanced ecosystem like any other found in nature.” The exhibition will explore how trillions of microbes inside our body affect us. “Zoo in You” was created in partnership by the J. Craig Venter Institute, a local biotech research company, and the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. This exhibition will run through May 8. Visit RHFleet.org for more information and tickets to the science center.



Easy Super Bowl Appetizer class

Sunday, Jan. 31

This free class at Vom Fass in Hillcrest (1050 University Ave, E-103) will be held from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Attendees will be shown some unique ideas for Super Bowl appetizers. And along with ideas about simple and tasty snacks for game day party guests, there will be items to sample. Visit Hillcrest.VomFassUSA.com for details and additional class and tasting listings.

Live music: Bayou Brothers

Wednesday, Feb. 3

Local group Bayou Brothers will perform at the Mission Hills Library (925 West Washington St.) in honor of Mardi Gras at 6:30 p.m. The group combines Cajun and zydeco music infused with a lot of fun. Visit Facebook.com/MHLibrary for more information.

Bully’s East 45th anniversary party

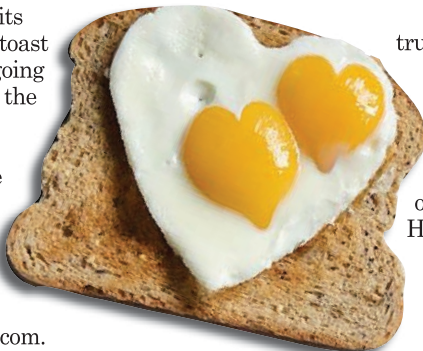
Friday, Feb. 5

Bully’s East Restaurant (2401 Camino Del Rio South, Mission Valley) will celebrate 45 years with beer, wine and cocktail specials. There will be tray-passed appetizers from 5 – 8 p.m. New appetizers and entrees will be unveiled. Their “u-call it” cash bar will include a draft beer special, red and white wines and an assortment of liquors. The first 250 people to arrive after 4 p.m. will receive complimentary 45th anniversary shot glasses. Men and women’s anniversary t-shirts and hats will be available also. Visit bullyseastsd.com for more information.

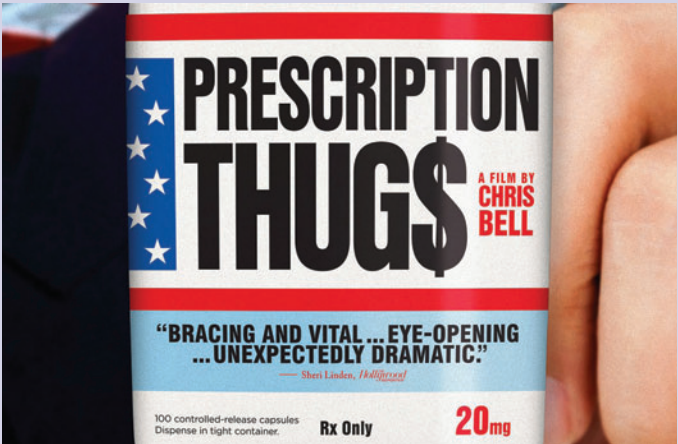
Adams Avenue Business Association’s annual breakfast meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 9

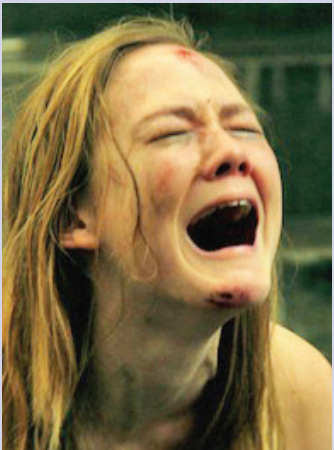
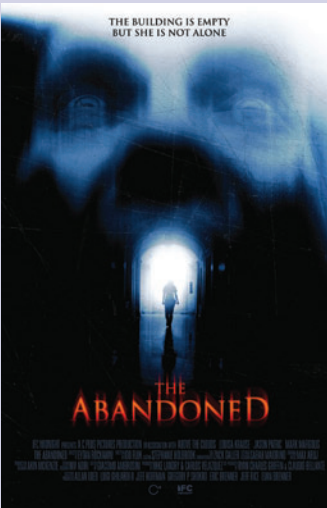
This annual meeting will be held from 8 – 10 a.m. at The Rabbit Hole (3377 Adams Ave., Normal Heights). Attendees can socialize with business neighbors and sample breakfast cuisine prepared by The Rabbit Hole chefs. Join the Adams Avenue Business Association (AABA) in its new year’s tradition to toast to Adams Avenue’s ongoing revitalization and elect the 2016 slate of nominees to serve on the AABA’s Board of Directors. The cost of the breakfast is \$10 (payable by cash or check) at the door. RSVP no later than Friday, Feb. 5 to kat@adamsavenuebusiness.com.



Digital Gym gems:



Feb. 5 – 11: Director Chris Bell follows up his film “Bigger Faster Stronger” with “Prescription Thugs.” Bell sets out to expose pharmaceutical companies and doctors as drug-pushers while learning about the nature of addiction from experts. As he learns more, Bell falls down his own hole of addiction providing a very personal aspect to the story. Unrated. 86 minutes.



Scene from “The Abandoned”
(Photos courtesy of Digital Gym)

Feb. 5 – 11: A darkly comic thriller “A Perfect Day” stars Benicio del Toro and Tim Robbins as rescue workers in a war zone. Along with a crew of humanitarians, they find unexpected consequences as they try to remove a dead body from a drinking well in the Balkans. Unrated. 106 minutes.

Feb. 5 – 9 and 11: “The Abandoned” stars Louisa Krause as a new security guard on the graveyard shift watching over an abandoned apartment complex. On her first night she discovers a horrifying presence within the decaying building. This horror-thriller co-stars Jason Patric. Unrated. 88 minutes.

Visit DigitalGym.org for show times and tickets and information on additional films.

RECURRING EVENTS

Select dates:

Canyoners guided nature walks: These free walks are part of a countywide program by the San Diego Natural History Museum through June 26, 2016. A map and schedule of walks can be found online at sdnhm.org.

Mondays:

Singing Storytime: 1:30 p.m., learn what’s going on inside your baby’s mind, strengthen your bond and sing songs together at Mission Hills Library, 925 Washington St., Mission Hills, free. Library92103.org.

North Park Toastmasters meeting: 6:30 – 8 p.m., weekly meeting at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 3725 30th St., North Park. 8469. toastmastersclubs.org.

Open Mic Night: 7:30 p.m., the mic is open to you at Lestat’s Coffee House, 3343 Adams Ave., Normal Heights, free. Lestats.com.

Unsung Genius: 6:30 p.m., trivia hosted by Rafael Gaitan starting at 7 p.m.; \$2 to play; cash, bar tab and other prizes. Karaoke to follow at 9 p.m. on the big stage at The Merrow, 1271 University Ave., Hillcrest. Themorrow.com.

Tuesdays:

Curbside Bites: 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., gathering of gourmet food trucks at 3030 Grape St., South Park. Curbsidebites.com.

Tasty Truck Tuesdays: 6 – 9 p.m., Smitty’s Service Station hosts several food trucks under their well-lit shade structure, 3442 Adams Ave., Normal Heights. Sdfoodtrucks.com.

Uptown Democratic Club: 6:30 p.m., Joyce Beers Community Center hosts these meetings on the fourth Tuesday of every month. New members wanted. 1220 Vermont Ave., Hillcrest. Uptowndemocrats.org.

Open Mic Charlie’s: 7 – 9:30 p.m. (except the third Tuesday), open mic night at Rebecca’s Coffee House, 3015 Juniper St., South Park, free. Rebeccascoffeehouse.com.

North Park Brewer’s Club: 8:30 p.m., monthly meeting

of the club every second Tuesday of the month on the back patio at Thorn Street Brewery, 3176 Thorn St., North Park. Thornstreetbrew.com.

Wednesdays:

Wednesday Night Experience: 7 – 8 p.m., uplifting and spiritually inspiring experiences for all, weekly at Universal Spirit Center, 3858 Front St., Hillcrest, love offering requested. Universalspiritcenter.org.

Storytelling: 7 – 8:45 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month featuring members of Storytellers of San Diego at Rebecca’s Coffee House, 3015 Juniper St., South Park, Suggested \$5 donation. Ages 12 and up. Storytellersofsandiego.org.

Thursdays:

Uptown Sunrise Rotary Club meetings: 7 a.m., weekly meeting at Panera Bread, 1270 Cleveland Ave., Hillcrest. Sdrotary.org.

Gentle yoga for seniors: 2:30 – 4 p.m., presented by The Center and Silver Age Yoga Community Outreach (SAYCO) at The San Diego LGBT Center, 3909 Centre St., Hillcrest, free. Thecentersd.org.

North Park Farmers Market: 3 – 7 p.m., in the parking lot behind CVS at 32nd Street and University Avenue, North Park, free. Northparkfarmersmarket.com.

Kornflower’s Open Mic: Signups at 7 p.m., open mic (no poetry or comedy) 7 – 10 p.m. Family-friendly event at Rebecca’s Coffee House, 3015 Juniper St., South Park, free. Rebeccascoffeehouse.com.

Liberty Toastmasters Club: 7 p.m., at Saint Paul’s Community Care Center, 328 Maple St., Bankers Hill. Libertytoastmasters.org.

2016 San Diego Film Series: 7:30 p.m., every third Thursday view a film representative of Italian cinema at the Museum of Photographic Arts, 1649 El Prado, Balboa Park. Sandiegoitalianfilmfestival.com.

Kirtan Musical Meditation: 8:15 p.m., chant and sing contemporary mantras celebrating love and life at Pilgrimage of the Heart Yoga, 3287 Adams Ave., Normal Heights, donation requested. Pilgrimageyoga.com.

Cinema Under the Stars: 8:30 p.m., classic movie screenings at 4040 Goldfinch St., Mission Hills. Additional showings Friday – Sunday. Tickets start at \$15. Topsresents.com.

Fridays:

Memory Café: 10 – 11 a.m., second and fourth Fridays. Gathering place for those with memory loss, caretakers and those worried about memory problems in the Common Room at First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego, 4190 Front St., Hillcrest. At-will donation. Memoryguides.org and Firstuusandiego.org.

Preschool Storytime: 10:30 a.m., at Mission Hills Library, 925 Washington St., Mission Hills, free. Library92103.org.

Square Dancing Classes: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., every Friday. No previous dance experience needed. Recital Hall, 2130 Pan American Plaza. \$50 for 13 classes. 858-277-7499 or circulators.sdsda.org.

Saturdays

Old Town Saturday Market: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., on Harney Street and San Diego Avenue, Old Town, free. Also held on Sundays. Oldtownsaturdaymarket.com.

Golden Hill Farmers Market: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., on B Street between 27th and 28th streets, Golden Hill, free. Sdmarketmanager.com.

Tai Chi Qigong: 10 a.m., all skill levels welcome in Balboa Park, Upas Street and Sixth Avenue, free. Call Chris at 619-504-1557.

Children’s Craft Time: 10:30 a.m., at Mission Hills Library, 925 Washington St., Mission Hills, free. Library92103.org.

Comedy Heights: 8 – 10 p.m., local comedians take the stage next to Twiggs Coffeehouse at 4590 Park Blvd., University Heights, free. Comedyheights.com.

Sundays

Free Pancake Breakfast: 8:30 – 9:45 a.m., every second Sunday this neighborhood breakfast precedes worship service and Sunday school at Normal Heights United Methodist Church, 4650 Mansfield St., Normal Heights. Email nancy@nhunited.org.

ASD Mornings: 9 a.m. – noon, every second Sunday members of the autism spectrum community are given chance to explore the museum in a quiet, less-crowded environment at the San Diego Natural History Museum, 1788 El Prado, Balboa Park. bit.ly/1TjvYkQ

Hillcrest Farmers Market: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., under the Hillcrest Pride Flag, Harvey Milk and Normal streets, free. Hillcrestfarmersmarket.com.

Karaoke: 8 p.m., your chance to shine on the big stage at The Merrow, 1271 University Ave., Hillcrest. Themorrow.com.

To view local community organization meeting information online, visit: sduptownnews.com/community-organization-meetings.

—Email calendar items to ken@sdcdn.com. ❖



'Ragtime'

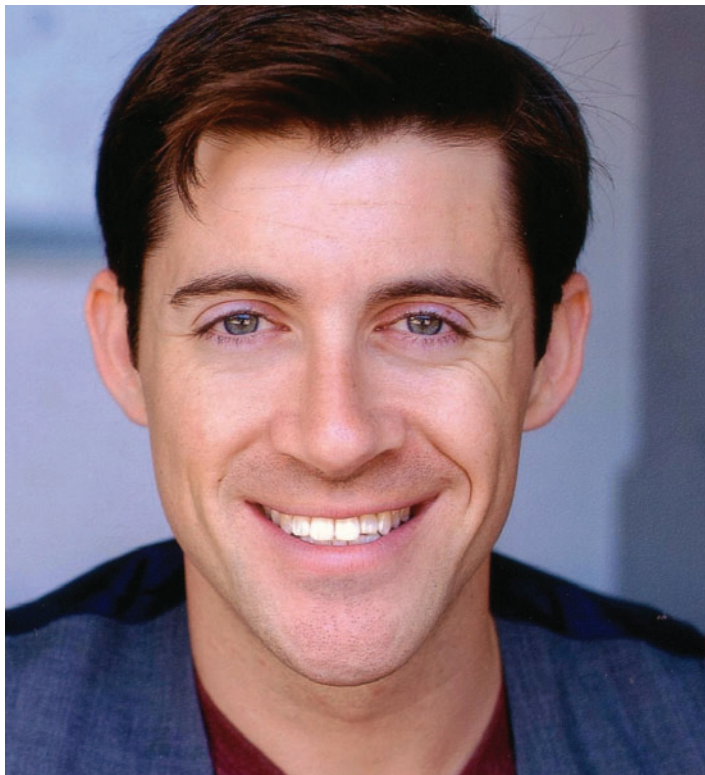
Finding historical relevance in the early 20th century

By David Dixon

The turn of the 20th century in New York will be coming to Spreckels Theatre in a fresh San Diego Musical Theatre production of "Ragtime." Adapted from E.L. Doctorow's acclaimed novel, the plot is a massive epic dealing with three interconnecting stories involving an upper-class suburban family, Eastern European immigrants, and African-Americans.

During a grand prologue, the main characters are introduced to the audience. A New Rochelle Protestant family, which includes a traditional housewife, Mother (Carolyn Agan) and the financially successful patriarch, Father (Cris O'Bryon). As Father goes with Robert Peary on an expedition to the North Pole, a Jewish immigrant, Tateh (Louis Pardo), tries to become successful so he can provide a good life for his daughter.

Also introduced early on is Coalhouse Walker (Jay Donnell), a pianist who plays ragtime music in Harlem. He hopes to win back a woman he adores, Sarah (Nicole Pryor). Just like the book, all the fictional tales eventually link together while real-life legends, including Booker T. Washington (Bryan Allen Taylor), Emma Gold-



(clockwise from above) Bryan Banville of University Heights, Kevane L. Coleman of Hillcrest and Rhianna Pfannenstiel of South Park have been cast in "Ragtime." (Courtesy of San Diego Musical Theatre)

man (Abby Gershuny) and even Harry Houdini (Michael Mittman), appear throughout the production.

Director/choreographer Paul David Bryant has cast more than 40 performers who are featured throughout the nearly three-hour-long musical.

Hillcrest resident Kevane L. Coleman, who is an ensemble member in the Harlem sequences, said the players will contribute to visually spectacular moments. "What is truly amazing about the theatrical event is seeing so many people onstage working together, which can be magical and powerful," he said. "That is something I am truly

looking forward to experiencing."

The historical drama is not without scenes of extravaganza including a real Ford Model T.

Rhianna Pfannenstiel, a New Rochelle Ensemble member from South Park, cannot believe a historical automobile gets to be at the Spreckels stage. "I love cars, so I'm really looking forward to working with a Model T," she said. "I have never really had to deal with an actual vehicle as an actor. That will be a first for me."

Adding energy, besides the pageantry, are several lighter musical numbers with cheeky music and lyrics from Tony winners Stephen



with her rejecting his advances. "While Younger Brother is having trouble finding out who he is and what to believe in, his rejection sparks the anger that grows throughout the night," Banville said. "Viewers will find some sympathy in how his anger changes him."

One aspect that the artists believe will be evident in the new staging is relevance for the 21st century. "I think this is the perfect show to put on right now with everything going on with politics, police brutality, racism, gender equality and immigration," Pfannenstiel said. "It's really crazy how the events of the narrative take place over 100 years ago, but the problems are still ones that our country is facing."

Just like Pfannenstiel, Banville is intrigued by the parallels between the time periods. "Seeing so many similarities should make theatergoers question whether we have really grown," he said. "There has been a lot of progress, but the same core issues remain to be problems for many U.S. citizens."

Coleman believes everyone who visits the Spreckels will be impacted by the experience. "It's a story that is so pivotal and powerful, especially in 2016. There are so many themes that we still have in today's society. I think it's a story that is going to resonate with people when they come to see this in the theater."

"Ragtime" will be performed at the Spreckels Theatre Feb. 5-21. For tickets or more information, visit sdmt.org or call 858-560-5740.

—A fan of film and theater from a very young age, David Dixon has written reviews and features for various print and online publications. You can reach him at daviddixon0202@gmail.com. ❖

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Rosina Reynolds and Tom Stephenson in a scene from "When the Rain Stops Falling" at Cygnet Theatre in Old Town (Photos by Ken Jacques)

When the rain fell

Theater Review

Charlene Baldridge



The curtain-time cloudburst on Saturday, Jan. 23, was exceptionally fitting. Just as patrons alighted from their automobiles at Cygnet Theatre in Old Town, considerable rain poured from the heavens.

It was so fitting an introduction to the evening, in fact, that one who had foreknowledge expected the odd, extinct fish to fall from the sky. That is exactly what happens on page one of Andrew Bovell's "When the Rain Stops Falling."

The miraculous fish falls at the feet of Gabriel York (Adrian Alita), a reclusive, middle-aged resident of Alice Springs in Australia. He's received a phone call from Andrew, the 28-year-old son he abandoned in London when the child was 7. Andrew, a grown man, who appears in the play's last scene, has come to find answers to family mysteries, through which we have been guided since the fish fell from the sky. In the process, Andrew delivers relics to Gabriel, hoping, as all sons do, to find out who he is from his father.

Primary in the unfolding of the awesome tale is the consummated love affair between Gabriel Law (Josh Odess-Rubin) and Gabrielle York (Rachael VanWormer), who met at a roadhouse in Australia's Coorong, and fell in love while tracing the footsteps of Gabriel's father, Henry (also Adrian Alita), who had abandoned his son in childhood and fled to Australia. We meet Tom (Tom Stephenson), the man who saved and devoted his life to Gabrielle and raised her son. Two men do the abandoning. Their sons seek them and the reasons why; but the women who love them are not inconsiderable in their devotion and determination not to divulge secrets.

The playwright's original, 2008 Australian production, which Director/Associate Artistic Director Rob Lutfy follows, has a seven-person company. Two of the women play younger and older versions of themselves: Gabrielle York is played by Rachael VanWormer and Rosina Reynolds; and Elizabeth Law, wife of Henry, the original abandoner and Gabriel Law's mother, is portrayed by Beth Gallagher and Cristina Soria. To add to the play's fascination and complexity, Alita and Odess-Rubin both play grandsons and their own grandfathers.

After being hit by at least three surprises that no self-respecting critic or theater lover would divulge, the joy is in pondering of minutiae — something I expect to go on doing for weeks and months.

Cygnet must be applauded for having the guts and resources to



(left photo, l to r) Josh Odess-Rubin, Rosina Reynolds (standing) and Rachael VanWormer; (right photo) Beth Gallagher and Adrian Alita



tackle this powerful and complex work that requires absolutely top work of everyone. Lutfy elicits the very best whether the actor is new to Cygnet or a debutant.

Our theaters of late are rife with plays that travel through time. "When the Rain Stops Falling" tops them all for beauty of language, clarity of purpose, complexity, casting and direction. The simple and unified design work is a great asset as well. Junghan Han is scenic designer; Chris Rynne, lighting designer; Jeanne Reith, costume designer, Kevin Anthenill, sound designer/com-

poser; Syd Stevens, props designer; and Peter Herman, wig/makeup designer. Other contributors are dialect coach Vanessa Dinning and movement director Michael Mizerany.

In addition to the selection of the play, the addition of Lutfy to Cygnet's staff last year is a real and present blessing and portends well for the company's increasingly splendid programming.

—Charlene Baldridge has been writing about the arts since 1979. Follow her blog at charlenebaldridge.com or reach her at charb81@gmail.com.

"When the Rain Stops Falling"

by Andrew Bovell

Directed by Rob Lutfy

Wednesdays-Sundays

through Feb. 14

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Anthony Roach and Amella Pedlow. Photo by Scott Suchman, courtesy of Shakespeare Theatre Company.

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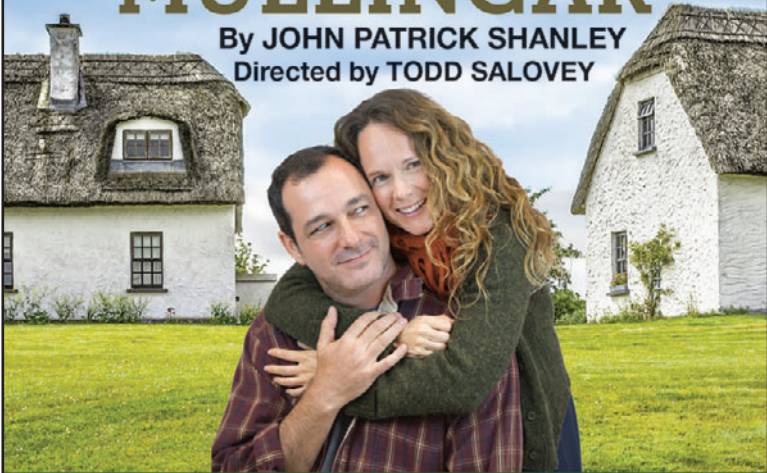
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FROM PAGE 1
NORTHPARK

strictest level of scrutiny by planning officials and can be appealed all the way to the City Council.

Kathleen Ferrier, a North Park resident who is director of advocacy at Circulate San Diego, said she was concerned about the growing lack of affordable housing in North Park. She said her brother, a PhD student, would love to live in North Park but cannot afford to move here. She said the update plan would boost affordable housing and help support transit options along El Cajon Boulevard. By 2035, for example, “The Boulevard” is expected to have a trolley line connecting Downtown to San Diego State University, via Park Boulevard.

Paul Jamason, who often posts on the sdurban.com website about transportation and development issues, said he was pleased with the update because “tens of thousands of people need affordable housing, especially along El Cajon Boulevard.”

A woman named Randi said she lived in a house off Howard Avenue that was built in 1910 on the northwest end of North Park, just south of El Cajon Boulevard. Her voice cracked as she expressed her fear that the higher density proposal might spell doom for single-family homes like hers.

“I am a scientist,” she said, “so I’m not usually this emotional.”

Tom Mullaney, who represents a small group called Friends of San Diego, bashed North Park’s update plan because of the density bonus program. Mullaney, who is also a member of the Uptown Planners, told North Park planners that his committee got rid of the density bonus because of that community’s objections. Mullaney also took issue with the Pedestrian-Oriented Development (POD) density bonus overlaid on the area south of El Cajon Boulevard and north of University Avenue, from Florida to Boundary streets.

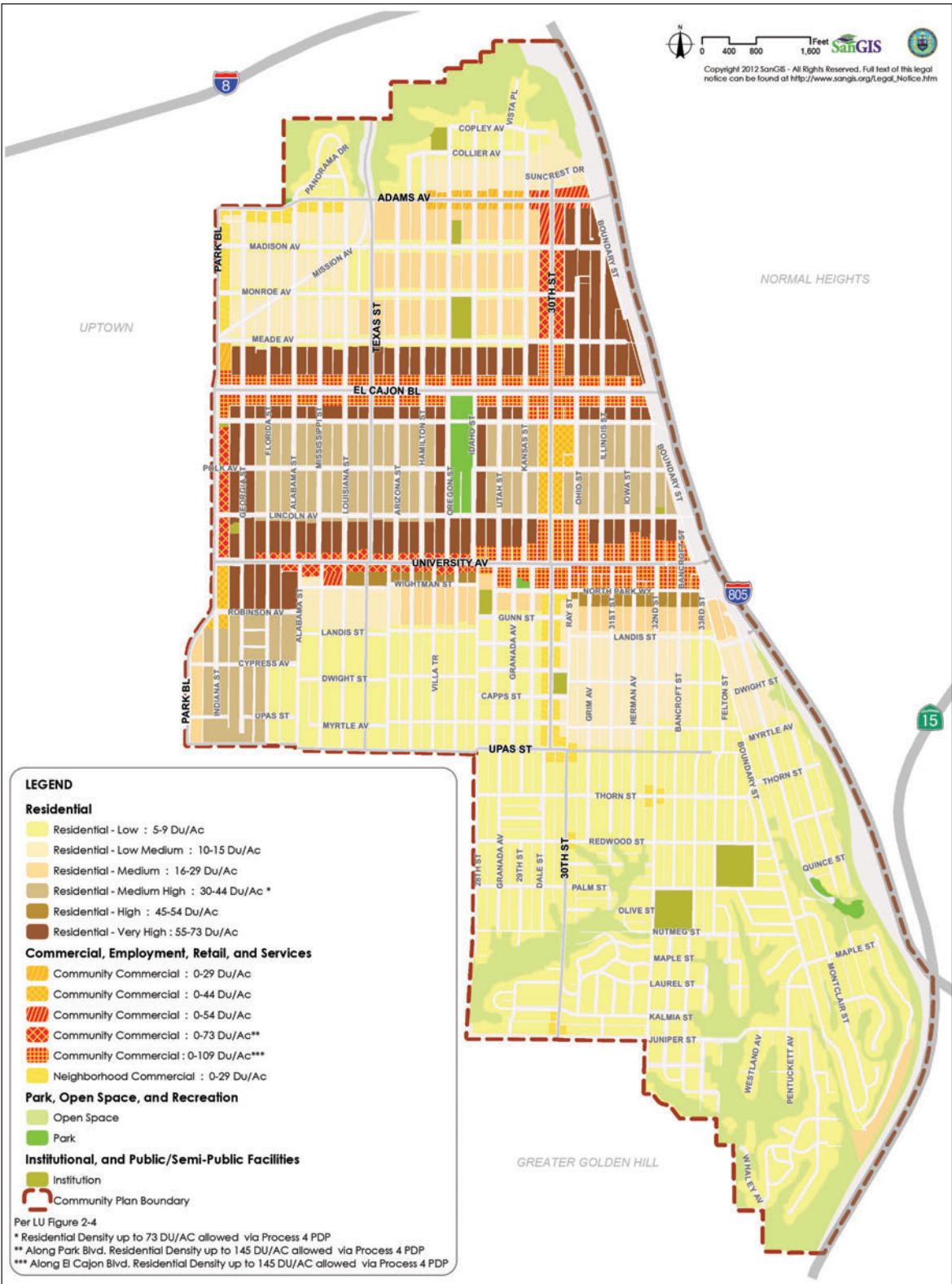
The North Park Planning Committee asked city planning officials to fine-tune the language in the update to reflect that the POD density bonus is specifically designed to get rid of the so-called “Huffman six-packs,” those small apartment buildings that sprung up in North Park and Hillcrest in the 1970s and 1980s as the city’s answer to the never-ending affordable housing crisis. The Huffmans are typically plain-looking with a row of parking spots in front of the apartment buildings and little to no green space.

Because many North Park residents have grown weary of the Huffmans, city planners decided to provide incentives through the POD. Still, a few North Park committee members expressed concern that the POD infill zone — which would allow up to 44 dwellings per acre — would trigger a major increase in density between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue.

Lara Gates, a city planning official now in charge of the North Park update, reminded the committee that a POD developer would also have to request a rigorous Process 4 Planned Development Permit.

WHAT THE PLAN UPDATE DOES

The update of the North Park Community Plan will replace the 1986 Greater North Park Community Plan, which was preceded by the 1970 Park North-East Community Plan and the 1969 North Park Commercial Area Plan. The document, a component of San Diego’s General Plan, will be a



The proposed land-use designations in the update of the North Park Community Plan (Courtesy of SanGIS and the city Planning Department)

guide for how the North Park community will grow and develop over the next 15 to 20 years. If the time line goes as planned by the city, the update would go into effect by January 2017.

The plan includes specific goals and recommendations regarding the use and development of land and addresses mobility, economic prosperity, public facilities, conservation, open space and recreation, according to the document. The plan also envisions a sustainable community that preserves historic resources and North Park’s unique and aesthetic character.

The update begins with this description of the neighborhood: “North Park is a dynamic urban community located in the central core of the City of San Diego. Originally settled at the turn of the 20th century, North Park has evolved into a thriving area community of thriving neighborhoods with a diversity of housing, strong commercial districts, and a growing arts community. The North Park Community Plan strives to reflect and protect North Park’s uniqueness while planning for future growth in the community.”

The current population of North Park is estimated at 45,728 and the document notes that “Residents represent all economic backgrounds and are diverse in composition. Based on the build out of the community plan, the ultimate population of North Park community is estimated to be approximately 70,000.”

Core values for North Park, the document states, are:

- A diversity of housing types with varying levels of affordability.
- Businesses that contribute to the vitality and growth of the community in harmony with residential neighborhoods.
- A circulation system that offers safe, multimodal access between jobs, shopping, recreation, businesses, schools, and residential neighborhoods.
- A community that is a center for creativity and enriched by public art.
- Employment and mixed-use centers that allow North Park residents to work where they live through the attraction of new businesses and higher paying jobs.
- A high level of public facilities that not only meet the needs of the community, but serve to enhance community identity.
- A community that fosters the expansion of recreational opportunities through traditional and innovative ways.
- Open space resources that are managed and maintained.
- Sustainable residential neighborhoods and business districts.
- Cultural and historic resources that are respected and preserved through historic designations and adaptive reuse.

Authors of the update noted that the document now fully complies with the city’s newly adopted Climate Action Plan and embraces the development concept known

as City of Villages. The document lists the goals of the Land-Use Element thusly:

1. A diversity of housing options through new construction and the preservation of existing quality housing stock.
2. High-quality development with medium to high residential densities, centrally located with the community to form an attractive and vital central area focused in between El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue.
3. Appropriately located, attractive commercial and office facilities offering a wide variety of goods, services, and employment to benefit the entire community.
4. Continued revitalization of North Park’s business districts while respecting potential impacts to adjacent neighborhoods.
5. Diverse employment opportunities in North Park.
6. Villages with a lively, walkable, and unique atmosphere that build upon existing neighborhoods and include places to live and work.
7. Commercial/residential transition areas that promote compatible development and reinvestment along the community’s commercial districts.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Park Boulevard and El Cajon Boulevard, eastward to Interstate 805, will be designated as Community Commercial residential, allowing up to 145 dwellings per

Meet with the planner

Lara Gates, the city planning official who is in charge of the North Park Community Plan update, will meet with stakeholders in various locations of the community. She will be available to review plan update documents and maps, and answer questions or concerns relating to what is being proposed.

Office hours are meant to allow for one-on-one or small group discussions. Staff usually allocates 10 to 15 minutes per stakeholder. Onsite, there will be a sheet for stakeholders to sign up for time to speak with Gates. Locations, times and dates are:

- **Twiggs Coffee Shop,** 4590 Park Blvd. (University Heights) Friday, Jan. 29 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
- **North Park Main Street,** 3076 University Ave. (North Park) Wednesday, Feb. 3 1 – 3 p.m.
- **Lafayette Hotel,** 2223 El Cajon Blvd. (North Park) Friday, Feb. 5 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
- **Waypoint Public “Bear Den,”** 3794 30th St. (North Park) Monday, Feb. 8 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

acre via the Process 4 PDP. This encourages commercial space on the ground floor with residential on the floors above.

More than half of North Park would be largely unaffected by the update plan. Almost all of the area south of Landis Street would remain largely untouched by the update, preserving historical neighborhoods such as Burlingame and Dryden. Most of the areas north of Adams Avenue are also largely unaffected, as well as those west of Texas Street and north of Meade Avenue.

But 30th Street, from North Park Way to Upas Street, could be redeveloped as Neighborhood Commercial, allowing mixed-use developments with up to 29 dwellings per acre. Planners said 30th Street, south of North Park Way and north of Upas, currently is a “dead zone” for pedestrians and bicyclists because of the lack of things to do. More multi-use buildings — restaurants and retail or office space on the ground floors and residential above — would be encouraged to create little villages where people could live, work, shop and play.

Danny Fitzgerald, an Uptown resident and developer who owns properties in North Park, reminded the audience that “this is a big vision.” The renaissance of Little Italy didn’t happen overnight and was the result of long-term planning, he said. Ditto regarding Downtown.

“It took 25 years for Downtown to happen,” Fitzgerald said. “It took 10 years for Little Italy to develop and another 10 years to see what’s happening there now.”

Fitzgerald, however, is betting on North Park.

The North Park Community Plan update can be read online at bit.ly/23raIjF.

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