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San Diego Community News Network

San Diego Uptown News



(clockwise, from top left) Augie Meyers, Sam Outlaw, and The Cactus Blossoms are the headliners at the 2016 Adams Avenue Unplugged festival. (Photos courtesy of the performers)

Unplugged on Tap joins popular music festival

Ken Williams | Editor

Two weekend days featuring 150 free musical performances highlight the fifth annual Adams Avenue Unplugged, bringing thousands of visitors to restaurants, bars, coffee houses, galleries and businesses along a two-mile stretch of Adams Avenue from University Heights to Normal Heights and Kensington.

The popular festival — running noon to 10 p.m. Saturday, April 30 and noon to 7 p.m. Sunday, May 1 — stages all the concerts indoors and off the street. In addition, a new event called Unplugged on Tap will coincide with the music festival, paying tribute to San Diego's reputation as America's craft beer capital.

see Unplugged, pg 12

Suds & politics

Grab a beer at District 3 debate

Ken Williams | Editor

Anthony Bernal and Chris Ward, the two top contenders in the race to fill the District 3 City Council seat being vacated by termed-out Councilmember Todd Gloria, will face off in an unusual debate where the audience will be able to order a craft beer while learning more about the candidates. The debate will be held April 28 at the Moniker Warehouse in the historic Snowflake Bakery Building, located at 705 16th St. in the East Village. Doors will open at 5:45 p.m., and the debate is scheduled to start at 6 p.m. in the multipurpose arts and creative center.

Craft beer and wine will be sold, with all proceeds made during the event going to the Business Improvement District Foundation to help fund several small-business districts.

NBC 7 news anchor Gene Cubison will moderate the debate between the two Democrats. A third candidate, Scott Sanborn, who is running a nonpartisan campaign, was not invited to participate, according to organizers.

For Bernal and Ward, debates are a vital way to reach voters ahead of the June 7 primary. Interest is already heightened this year because of the presidential campaign, and California's primary vote could push one or more candidates over the top in the

see Debate, pg 9

Uptown artists eager for ArtWalk

By Kit-Bacon Gressitt

Jewelry artist Adrian Arango has lived in Hillcrest on and off for most of his life. Back in the 1990s, he used to walk the streets between Hillcrest and Balboa Park in search of inspiration.

"I was doing a line called '90s Trash,'" Arango told San Diego Uptown News. "I would pick up trash that was interesting to me — as an artist you have to see everything and dissect it. I was basically picking up trash in the streets — and making lots of jewelry."

Painter Stephanie Clair has lived with her family in South Park for eight years, but it wasn't always a sure thing. "We took a break for two years. We went to New Zealand. It took us moving all the way across the world to realize



Stephanie Clair (Courtesy of the artist)



Adrian Arango (Courtesy of the artist)

see ArtWalk, pg 21

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**BIG BLOCK
REALTY**

Hillcrest Town Council seats new board

By Benny Cartwright

The new board of the Hillcrest Town Council (HTC), led by chair Kath Rogers, presided over its first meeting on Tuesday, April 12. While Rogers and the board members are slowly making some tweaks to the meeting format and structure, this meeting was fairly similar to those of past months and, as usual, was packed with great information and discussion.

All attendees were asked to introduce themselves at the beginning of the meeting, and were invited to share any public comment items they had at that time. The crowd was diverse, with a mix of residents, business owners and others who love the neighborhood but don't live or work here. We saw several new faces, and want to continue to encourage anyone who cares about Hillcrest to visit us each month on the second Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. Representatives from the offices of elected officials gave informative updates as usual, and many were sad to hear from state Sen. Marty Block's representative Katelyn Hailey that this would be her last meeting with us as she is moving on to a nonprofit advocacy job. We will continue to see representation from Block's office though, through another staffer who will be assigned to Hillcrest.

As we work towards having more cohesive themes at our monthly meetings, this one centered on bicycle issues, with a presentation by SANDAG on their Uptown Bikeways Project.

SANDAG's stated goal of the project is to "create connections



(l to r) The newly seated Hillcrest Town Council board members are Benny Cartwright, vice chair; Kath Rogers, chair; Rich Grousset, member-at-large; Mary McKenzie, secretary; David Coben, treasurer. (Photo by Luke Terpstra)

within neighborhoods, improve streets, and create links to the larger bikeway network being built throughout the region. The project will provide on-street connections from Old Town and Mission Valley through Uptown to Downtown, North Park, and Balboa Park. The Uptown Bikeways is one of the first high priority projects identified in the San Diego Regional Bike Plan to be funded for implementation."

Some may recall there was much controversy about this proposal last year, especially related to the potential loss of on-street parking spaces in Hillcrest. Some business owners worry about the impact this may have on their businesses, and have put forth alternative proposals. SANDAG provided an update on where the project stands today — which is scaled down from the original proposal — but will include protected bike lanes, "bulb outs" at intersections, and other pedestrian and bicycle safety measures. Concerns raised by community members included the potential loss of parking spaces (the current proposal calls



for about 23 parking spaces to be lost in Hillcrest); whether the "bulb outs" will have landscaping or just be cement as they were shown in the presentation; and the possible addition of mid-block crosswalks to promote a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

SANDAG hopes to begin construction in 2017 and will be back to present to community groups later in the year. More information about the project can be found at bit.ly/1CZmHnJ. On the topic of bikes, HTC has been invited to volunteer at the Hillcrest Business Association's "Re-Imagine Normal Street" events, scheduled for May 12-15. The various events — which will shut down a portion of Normal Street — will include a number of outdoor activities including games, lectures, concerts and a movie screening, capped by Sunday's

see HTC, pg 7

How to Sell High: Avoid these Three Mistakes When Selling Your San Diego Home

San Diego - When you decide to sell your home, setting your asking price is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Depending on how a buyer is made aware of your home, price is often the first thing he or she sees, and many homes are discarded by prospective buyers as not being in the appropriate price range before they're even given a chance of showing.

Your asking price is often your home's "first impression", and if you want to realize the most money you can for your home, it's imperative that you make a good first impression.

This is not as easy as it sounds, and pricing strategy should not be taken lightly. Pricing too high can be as costly to a home seller as pricing too low. Taking a look at what homes in your neighborhood have sold for is only a small part of the process, and on its own is not nearly enough to help you make the best decision. A recently study, which compiles 10 years of industry research, has resulted in a new special report entitled "Home sellers: How to Get the Price You Want (and Need)". This report will help you understand pricing strategy from three different angles. When taken together, this information will help you price your home to not only sell, but sell for the price you want.

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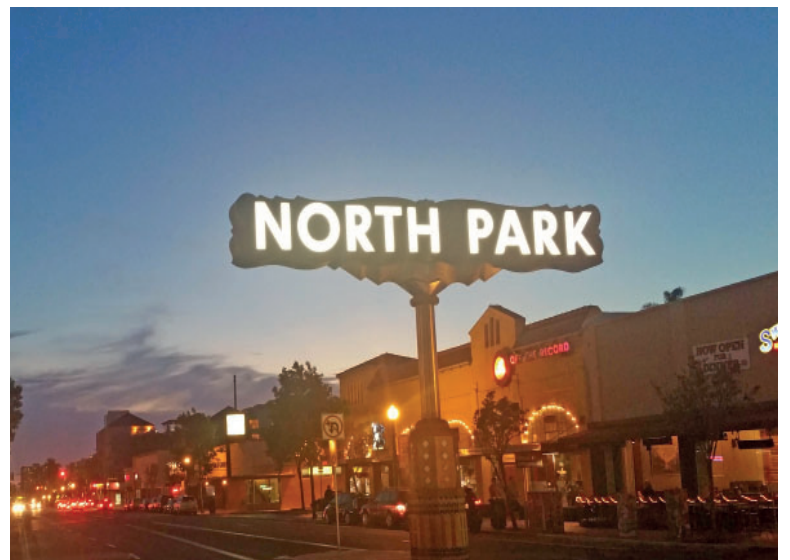
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North Park Planning Committee finalizes parts of the North Park Community Plan update. (Photo by Ken Williams)

North Park Planning Committee elects officers, appoints chairs

Ken Williams | Editor

The North Park Planning Committee on Tuesday night, April 19, reelected its four officers and the chair reappointed all the subcommittee chairs, then the board members continued work on updating the North Park Community Plan.

This followed meetings on March 21 and 22 in which the committee conducted a public recount of the March 15 annual election after the results were challenged by five voters. The dispute centered around which candidate won the No. 7 slot. Rachel Levin had been announced as the winner at the March 15 meeting, but the next day committee chair Vicki Granowitz emailed San Diego Uptown News and said a review of the ballots found that Daniel Gebreselassie had one more vote than Levin, and was thus elected.

The new results triggered protests about irregularities from five voters, including Levin. The Elections Subcommittee and the officers met on March 21 to discuss the challenges and recommended at the March 22 meeting of the full board to recount the ballots — with public observation — instead of conducting another election.

The official results and vote totals are listed below, as the top seven vote-getters won election.

ELECTED

1. Robert Barry (incumbent), 77
2. Sarah McAlear (incumbent), 74
3. Roger Morrison (incumbent), 72
4. Melissa Stayner, 71
5. Brandon Hilpert (incumbent), 69
6. Robert Gettinger, 53
7. Daniel Gebreselassie (incumbent), 34

NOT ELECTED

8. Rachel Levin (incumbent), 33
9. Lucky Morrison (incumbent), 30
10. Don Leichtling, 18
11. John Paul Iacoangelo, 16
12. Danielle Knauff, 8

At the April 19 meeting, chair Granowitz, vice-chair René Vidales, secretary McAlear and treasurer Hilpert were unanimously reelected to their posts.

Granowitz reappointed all the chairs of the subcommittees, including herself as chair of the El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Area (BIA). The other chairs are: Rob Steppke, Balboa Park Committee; Peter Hill, Maintenance Assessment District; Steve Codraro, North Park Main Street; Daniel Gebre-

selassie, North Park Mid-City Regional Bike Corridors; Dionne Carlson, Adams Avenue BIA.

The board members had a full docket, including action items involving the ongoing update to the North Park Community Plan. They voted to:

- Prioritize four historical districts — Valle Vista Terrace (Panorama Drive), Spaulding Place, Shirley Ann Place Expansion 4 and Park Boulevard Apartment (East) — in the update document. Voted 12-0.

- Approve the draft of the update plan's Implementation Element that allows a transit-oriented development enhancement program (TOD) along El Cajon Boulevard, particularly near transit stops at 30th, Utah, Oregon, Texas and Florida streets. The vote also requires developers of such projects to undergo a Process 3 review, so the planning committee reviews the projects. Voted 12-0.

- Approve pedestrian-oriented infill development enhancement program, designed to target the so-called Huffman multifamily units. The goal is to encourage owners/developers to rebuild by allowing increased density on those lots, require parking to be moved from the front of the buildings to the alleys, and reorient the buildings so they don't face neighbor's single-family homes. Board member Gebreselassie warned this would eliminate much of the affordable housing in North Park, but fellow member Howard Blackson said state policy is now encouraging cities to build more affordable housing. Voted 9-3, with Gebreselassie, Codraro and Staynor against the action.

- Approve center and corridor development transition areas, to make sure larger developments fit into residential neighborhoods. Voted 12-0.

The next meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. May 17 at 2901 North Park Way, on the second floor. SANDAG will make a presentation on the Pershing Bike Corridor Plan, which affects the lower portion of Utah Street and Pershing Avenue from North Park to Downtown.

—Ken Williams is editor of Uptown News and Mission Valley News and can be reached at ken@sdcnn.com or at 619-961-1952. Follow him on Twitter at @KenSanDiego, Instagram at @KenSD or Facebook at KenWilliamsSanDiego. ❖

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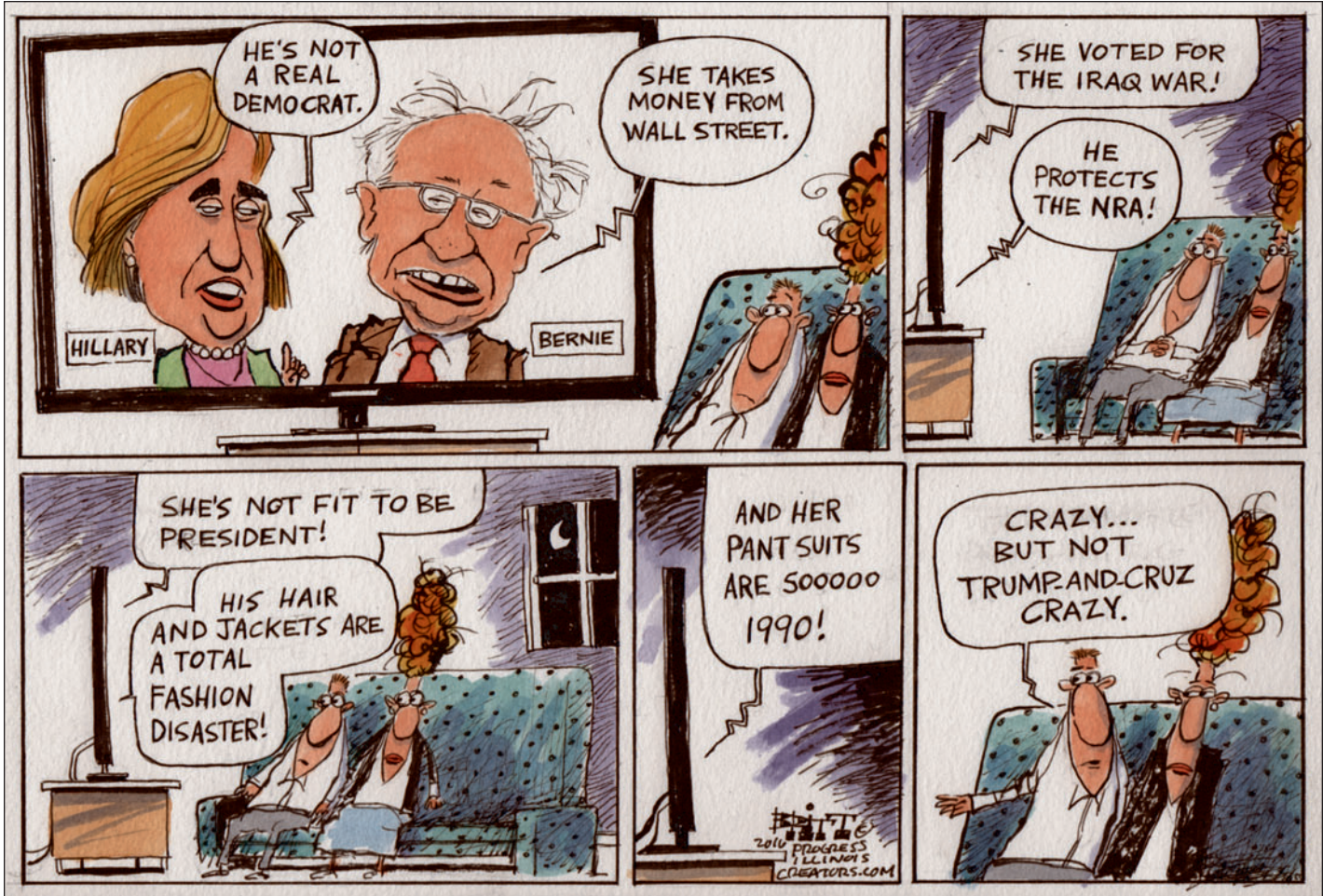
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GUEST EDITORIAL

Earth's health impacts our health

By Rep. Susan A. Davis

Nothing brought home the future effects that climate change will have on us more acutely than the massive methane gas leak that struck Porter Ranch in Southern California.

The health impacts were startling. Residents reported instances of dizziness, nausea, vomiting, headaches or nosebleeds. Children, who can be particularly vulnerable, were among those who fell ill.

It was a rare opportunity to look into the future of what climate change, if ignored, has in store for humanity.

Rising temperatures, sea levels and super storms are just one aspect of what our future could look like. The health impacts of climate change are what our children and their children could be living with if the warming of the planet continues at its current pace.

However, it's a future we can alter if we decide to act on the climate change. Earth Day gives us that opportunity to reflect on this critical issue.

While there are still deniers who refuse to accept a mountain of scientific evidence, the vast majority of people accept climate change as a real threat that needs to be addressed.

Many people around the world are treating climate change with the urgency it deserves and are moving forward on policies to combat it.

Let's start with the investment tax credit (ITC) designed to encourage the expansion of solar energy — just one of the many incentives to encourage renewable energy.

The federal spending compromise reached at the end of last year included a critical a five-year renewal of the ITC for solar energy, which was expected to expire in 2017.

This is not only good in the fight against climate change and good for the country, but it's good for our region as we are a leader in the development of solar energy.

Nationwide, we rank behind only Los Angeles with the most solar photovoltaic capacity installed for 2015. A recent report determined that San Diego County is home to more than 8,000 solar jobs.

The renewal of the ITC will allow San Diego to continue at its record pace and being No. 2 in the country will also motivate us to take that top spot! The ITC extension also helps the goal of the President's Clean Power Plan (CPP) to reduce carbon pollution and address climate change. Extending the ITC for five years gives us a head start in shifting from fossil fuel to renewable energy when the CPP will fully kick

in in 2022. The CPP sets goals of reducing carbon emission by more than 30 percent by 2030. Much of those reductions in carbon emissions will come from the expansion of renewable energy, such as solar. This makes the extension of the ITC even more significant.

While most of us are working to stop climate change and the health threats it will bring, opponents are just has motivated to stop our efforts.

The CPP is facing a barrage of lawsuits. The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision to stop President Barack Obama from implementing the CPP while these legal challenges are considered was disheartening.

It also illustrates the importance of having a full complement of justices on the court.

This month I joined with a bipartisan group of current and former Senators and House members in filing an amicus brief in support of the President's Clean Power Plan.

Submitted to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, the brief was signed by 164 current and past Representatives and 44 past and present Senators.

This bipartisan group from 38 states made the case to the Appeals Court that the CPP is consistent with the intent of the EPA's authority to protect public health and the environment. In keeping with the intention of the Clean Air Act of 1970, the EPA does have the right to regulate new pollutants.

All told, the CPP with save consumers \$155 billion by 2030, create jobs, and more importantly protect our health and the health of our children.

The reduction in pollution from the CPP will prevent 90,000 childhood asthma attacks through 2030. If protecting a child's health doesn't motivate people to act, it's hard to imagine what will.

Congress needs to join with the President in building on his Clean Power Plan. Earth Day is a reminder of the precious gift we have and that we need to protect it. Without a healthy planet, it will be ever more difficult to maintain the health of its inhabitants.

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



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

About the Uptown Planners

Re: “Another election raises eyebrows” [Volume 8, Issue 8 or at bit.ly/1YjErXs]

This is in regard to Leo Wilson’s recent appointment as chair of Uptown Planners. You say that happened without public input. Maybe you’re not aware of this fact, but the public doesn’t vote for the chair and never has. The Uptown Planners themselves vote for their own chair.

And of course, the members of Uptown Planners are elected by that part of the public that lives, works or owns property in Uptown, and bothers to participate in board elections.

So in the final analysis, the public does have input, it just doesn’t directly elect the chair.

Given that this is so, it appears that you just don’t like Leo Wilson for whatever reason. Why not say so instead of falsely implying that the process of his reappointment to the board and election as chair was undemocratic and corrupt? There was nothing undemocratic or corrupt about it that I can see.

As for Tom Mullaney saying that Wilson was the best man for the job, there is nothing “bizarre” about that. Wilson has by far the most experience, having been chair in the past not only of Uptown Planners but of the Community Planning Committee representing all 50 San Diego planning groups.

And, while I can’t speak for Mr. Mullaney, I would note that there is a distinct advantage to NOT being the chair, in that the chair must abstain from all votes unless there is a tie vote that needs to be broken. Other board members, on the other hand, can vote on every decision the board makes.

I have never known for sure whether or not I agree with Wilson on many issues, because as chair he has voted so rarely in the past, and he has made very few comments on those issues. His job is rather to make sure that the decisions of Uptown Planners are strongly advocated before the Planning Commission and City Council.

As a former member of Uptown Planners, I believe that Leo Wilson is a great asset to the community and that we are lucky to have him.

—Andrew Towne via our website, sduptownnews.com

[Editor’s note: Since I became editor a year ago, San Diego Uptown News has had a good working relationship with Leo Wilson. The reporter wrote about what happened at the April 6 meeting and reviewed previous coverage and minutes of previous elections of officers at Uptown Planners. You are correct that the board members elect officers, not the public. However, the acting chair refused to allow the public to speak about any of the candidates for chair even though audience members requested the opportunity to give their opinions. Some audience members told the board members that they did not like the fact that Wilson was not elected by the public to serve on the board, but instead was appointed to fill a seat that was vacated prior to the annual election. To have the same unelected board member named chair twice has caused some community members to question the fairness of the election process. They also wondered why the acting chair went out of his way to try to persuade the audience that the board members did not violate California’s Brown Act, which guarantees the public’s right to attend and participate in meetings of local legislative bodies such as the Uptown Planners. Uptown News is not implying that any laws were necessarily violated, but simply relaying to readers what the public perception is.]

Leo Wilson is some sort of immortal bridge troll ... He votes against pedestrian and people on bikes’ safety.

—Roger Leszczynski via Facebook

I support Leo — he cares about Uptown! ... I have had a different experience of Leo, with Leo’s help in trying to oppose developers who are destroying our hood by demolishing single family residences and being able to ignore zoning. I find he is courageous and helpful!

—Cathy Bolger via Facebook

About MTS service

Re: “Residents generally happy with bus, trolley service” [Volume 8, Issue 8 or at bit.ly/1SVL9Pi]

Quoting the story: “The local residents largely echo a random sampling by the MTS that showed San Diegans are generally pleased with the agency’s work.” I’d be interested on statistics backing this up. In reality, our transit system is poor.

—Ron via our website

I agree. Other than Bus No. 7, I rarely use transit services after some very poor experiences with the trolley and with the transit officers. I sent feedback to MTS and unsurprisingly never heard back.

I ended up getting assistance from a drunk bike rider on the trolley — way more knowledgeable and helpful than any of the officers. I could’ve dealt with the trolley problems but the total disinterest and misdirection by the officers lead me to advise folks not to depend on the trolley or on the personnel for any positive assistance.

—bzribee via our website

Too many stops, making the overall system slow. For instance, trolley loop Downtown stops every two blocks ... you can out walk the trolley!

—Roger Leszczynski via Facebook

Where’s the parking?

Re: “Looking up: North Park’s future coming into sharp focus” [Volume 8, Issue 3 or at bit.ly/1LBAVqp]

What is the plan to accommodate the growth in population and density from the perspective of street parking, parking garages, etc.?

—Mike via our website

Praise for Indian Grill

Re: “A tandoori oven in an unlikely place” [Volume 7, Issue 5 or bit.ly/20Umgti]

Stumbled upon this place [Indian Grill in Old Town] and SO glad we did. Excellent food, lovely patio environment and wonderful recommendations from Mayur, the owner. We had a marvelous experience here and hope others take advantage of this unique dining opportunity. Very reasonably priced, to boot!

—Jacqui Stansfield via our Facebook page

FROM PAGE 3

HTC

weekly farmers market. HTC volunteers will work the bike corral, so that those who choose to bike to the event will have a safe place to park. We will be staffing the corral during the Friday, May 13 evening screening of “E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial” — and volunteers will be situated in a space where they can see the film. If you’d like to volunteer, send us a message at bit.ly/1SQMhnq.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10 and we hope to see you there! We’re still working out the agenda, but hope to hear from the San Diego mayoral candidates at an upcoming meeting. Check out our website at hillcresttowncouncil.com, like Hillcrest Town Council on Facebook, and follow @hillcresttc on Twitter to be kept up to date.

—Benny Cartwright is vice chair of the Hillcrest Town Council.❖

ARTS DISTRICT LIBERTY STATION LIBERTYSTATION.COM/ SUMMERCAMPS

At Arts District Liberty Station — the former Naval Training Center, where sailors once trained for military service — is now a place where a new generation of “recruits” can train in the areas of art, music, dance and more.

Classes and workshops for all ages are presented throughout the year by dozens of cultural groups, but this summer, Summer Camps at Arts District will be where KIDS Get Creative.

Presented by the nonprofit NTC Foundation in partnership with 11 professional arts organizations, Summer Camps at Arts District are ideal for families looking for creative experiences for their children, ages 4-17.

Camps feature music, dance, theater, creative writing, hands-on art making, photography and more ... all in Liberty Station’s park setting.

“This summer, kids can explore and discover new skills in San Diego’s burgeoning Arts District,” said Alan Zieter, NTC Foundation executive director. “We encourage parents to let their kids get creative with local artists this summer.” Visit LibertyStation.com/SummerCamps for a complete list of camps and links for enrollment.

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Help your mother prepare for retirement

Mother’s Day is almost here. But this year, why not go beyond the flowers and candy? Specifically, if your mother is still working but is close to retirement, consider providing her with a gift that can help make her days as a retiree more pleasant.

For example, as someone who is still working, your mother can contribute to an IRA and she may already have one. If so, help her fund it for 2016. You can’t contribute directly to her IRA, but you can certainly write her a check for that purpose. Also, you may want to encourage your mother to consult with a financial professional to help her create an appropriate retirement income strategy – one that incorporates withdrawals from her IRA and 401(k), plus Social Security payments and other income she may have available. These suggestions are relevant to your mother whether she is married, divorced or widowed. And by helping Mom out in these ways, you can brighten her Mother’s Day – and all the months and years to come.

This is Casey Caliva, your Edward Jones financial advisor at Historical 30th and Fern. Member SIPC

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

College Avenue Bridge Club | CollegeAvenueBC.com

Make new friends and have fun playing Bridge!

The College Avenue Bridge Club, located at 4855 College Ave., near I-8 and San Diego State University, recently opened to serve all players from novices to experts. The club has been recently redecorated and is very conducive to making new friends while playing the exciting and challenging game of bridge. This is a wonderful game for people with some spare time and an interest in cards.

Experts agree that playing bridge helps to improve memory and to prevent dementia. Playing bridge helps to preserve brain functionality and cognition by exercising and engaging deep thought processes. For more information, see the article on our website.

The College Avenue Bridge Club offers a full suite of bridge classes starting with “Learn Bridge in a Day,” for new players who have never played before, and follow-on lessons to advance everyone from beginners to experts.

Competitive duplicate and informal social bridge games are offered daily, Monday through Friday, starting at 10 a.m. Come join us and experience the great social and friendly game of Bridge.

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"How to inspect and maintain the exterior of your home." When it comes to inspecting the exterior of your home, it may seem like trouble areas would be obvious and easy to spot. Often time's wood damage is over looked because we do not realize it is present. In this article we will help you identify signs of wood damage in the form of wood rot and fungus damage, and also give you tips on how to prevent them from occurring.

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Who we want to be when we grow up

By Margie M. Palmer

Many seniors recognize the value of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle, but it's safe to say that 77-year-old Andy Keech has set his bar a bit higher than most people in his age group.

Not only did the Uptown resident spend the past 12 months training to participate in the 35th annual World Indoor Rowing Championships, the novice indoor rower placed fourth in his age group. Training to compete in the 2,000-meter CRASH-B sprints is no small feat, but Keech has never been one to back away from a challenge.

The native Australian has maintained a longstanding love affair with sports; when he was 19 he developed an interest in parachuting and went on to become one of the nation's pioneer skydivers. Throughout his 20-year career as a sport parachuter, he competed at a world competition in Germany where he was ranked the top scorer on his team. Later, Keech went onto become one of the world's top freefall photographers, racking up assignments with publications such as Sports Illustrated, Time magazine and The London Times.

After he retired from skydiving, he spent five years working alongside an airframe and power-plant mechanic to build a light, high-performance, safe aircraft, which he nicknamed Woodstock. In October 2003, Keech flew Woodstock across the U.S. and back, resetting three trans-continental speed records.



Andy Keech with his coach Patti Pinkerton (Photo by Peter Billings)

Keech describes himself as being a lifetime amateur.

"Throughout my life I've competed internationally in four completely different activities — parachuting, rifle shooting, as a world record setter pilot, and finally as an indoor rower; three of those were at world competition level," he said.

Use it or lose it

At age 73, Keech traveled to Australia for his 68th kindergarten reunion; half of the anticipated attendees declined due to health reasons.

"Of the 15 who did attend, two of us were fit relative to all the others who were typically retired and sedentary 'old people.' The other fellow was a daily surf swimmer and I was a daily bike rider," he said. "The phrase 'use it or lose it' certainly appeared to apply by the time we are in our early 70s." That trip inspired him to join CrossFit

Hillcrest to see if he could stand the pace.

After six months, he became aware of a physical evaluator in Carlsbad who used a combined average score of a range of five characteristics that can determine one's physical age. At the time of his first evaluation, despite being months away from his 74th birthday, his physical age was calculated at 41.

"I wondered if I had plateaued out or if further effort would change that number," he said.

Six months later, he returned for a second evaluation. The result of the second test determined Keech had a physical age of 25.1 years.

Keech decided he was ready to take on a new challenge. When a fellow gym member suggested he train to represent CFHC at the 2016 indoor rowing competition in

see Rower, pg 18

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COFFEE, BEER AND CRIMES AGAINST HISTORY

HouseCalls

Michael Good

Steve at the Qwik Stop — always ready with a savvy recommendation for a new microbrew — is a changed man. He told me the other day as I was — uncharacteristically — buying water and trash-can liners that he'd quit drinking. He seemed as baffled as I was. "You know," he said, "I never even drank that much! Just a couple beers a night!"

I didn't know what to say. I felt overcome with a feeling of déjà vu. Earlier that same morning, across the street at Cardamom Café & Bakery in North Park, one of the waitresses confided in me that she had quit drinking coffee. She told me this as I was standing at the register with my croissant and coffee.

"That smells so good," she said, adding conspiratorially. "Last week I went on a juice cleanse. I feel amazing." Has the world gone completely mad?

The next morning I went into Influx for a cup of coffee. Influx is one of those bright, airy places filled with people dressed in gray and black. The room was silent as a library, everyone's gaze fixed on a computer screen. I was the one spot of color in an otherwise gray world. Why were they even here? The Wi-Fi? The coffee? Were they just looking for a clean, well-lit place?

I was still pondering these big questions a few days later,

when I went with a friend to a party in Wonder Valley. On paper, Wonder Valley looks like a 1940s housing development, with well-ordered streets crisscrossing the valley floor. In person, it looks like — a desert. A desert with a smattering of abandoned houses, a lot of sagebrush, and one rather spectacular, snow-capped mountain in the distance. Our host, a former musician in a Seattle grunge band, gave me the history of the place as he brought out a large platter of hamburger patties.

In the 1940s, the government opened the area to homesteaders. If you built a small structure on a 5-acre plot and inhabited it for five years, the land was yours. Hundreds of Angelinos took the government up on its offer, built little cinderblock houses and a few rambling ranch homes, then lost interest and disappeared in the wind like so many tumbleweeds.

Now a younger and hipper generation of people are buying the former homesteads, fixing them up and staying there on weekends. This was the highly educated, creative class you've heard about. The IT people, the photographers, filmmakers, programmers and producers. They had discovered a new five-year plan: Rent the place out during the week on Airbnb, cover your mortgage payment and own your 5 acres outright in five years. Thus a new generation of desert dreamers have been born.



There goes the neighborhood: not a good example of an environmentally sensitive remodel. (Photo by Michael Good)

As my host lit the Weber barbecue, threw a few patties on the grill and wandered off in search of another drink, these millennial homesteaders began to arrive, all dressed in varying shades of black. The code of the desert is that there is no code, other than Don't Chop Down the Joshua Trees. Which is how I ended up cooking 20 burgers the size of Frisbees for a bunch of people I didn't know. At some point,

a middle-aged woman stepped in to help. "It looks like you know your way around a smoking piece of meat," I said. I find it's usually helpful when you don't know anyone to throw compliments around.

"Actually I do," she said. "I used to be the personal chef for ..." (She named a famous actor, who I won't mention by name, because then his wife, who apparently is quite a piece of work, would probably sue me.)

By now, the surface of the grill had reached about one degree below spontaneous combustion. The plastic spatula had turned floppy. Flipping burgers was like trying to turn over a tortoise with a wet noodle. The hamburgers, the quinoa burgers, the corn — everything was melding together.

"I guess we need to tell the owners of the veggie burgers that

see House Calls, pg 11

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FROM PAGE 10

HOUSE CALLS

they're no longer veggie," I told my fellow chef.

"Actually those are mine," she said. "Not that I'm a vegetarian. We're just trying not to eat meat."

"Oh." I again didn't know what to say.

"We just got back from an African safari," her husband chimed in, by way of an explanation. In Hollywood, this makes perfect sense. They were eating quinoa to save the Oryx.

Later, around the campfire, I heard about the latest obsessions of a certain class of Angelino. There is a new type of massage that I can't describe in a family newspaper. There is some sort of rejuvenation procedure that involves steam and a body part I also can't mention. Gwyneth Paltrow is a fan, apparently. I also learned a few things about Jennifer Garner, who had recently delivered an inspirational talk that one of the women attended. I couldn't think of a thing to say.

But it really was a lovely night. The stars were out. There was hardly a breath of wind. My hosts had done a remarkable job of resurrecting their once-forlorn 1950s ranch house in the middle of the desert. I actually wouldn't have minded going to bed, but there were still people everywhere, talking. A couple of children were running around barefoot, oblivious to the cactus.

Earlier I had been thinking we were a nation in denial. Denying who we are, what we do, what we want. A cup of coffee. A beer. A slab of hamburger. A spot of color.

Is that really so bad? We seemed filled with doubts, even about our most private parts — parts that rarely see the light of day, even for Gwyneth. But now, looking up at the stars, hearing the children squeal, I thought, *nah*.

All this self-doubt often gets blamed on Hollywood. But Hollywood is an equal opportunity offender; it encourages us to save the whales in one movie and kill our human enemies with extreme prejudice in another. Hollywood doesn't really care, as long as we keep buying movie tickets, and watching television, and allowing the marketing people who run the internet to pitch us on whatever it is they are trying to sell us — more gray T-shirts, for example.

I wouldn't be too bothered by all this if it weren't for the fact that the whims of popular culture are beginning to mess with my neighborhood. In the desert, I didn't cut down any Joshua trees; I didn't turn over any tortoises. But the marketing machines that masquerade as informative television shows are beginning to chop down the icons of my part of the world — the neighborhood bungalows. Instead of being respected, these venerable houses are being gutted and relegated to the dust heap to make way for "green" buildings with open floor plans, energy-efficient windows and new floors, ceilings, walls and insulation that have to be manufactured, shipped and installed. The greenest building is the one that's already standing. Rehabbing an abandoned 1940s ranch house in Wonder Valley? Probably good for the environment. Tearing down a North Park bungalow to build an

"energy-efficient" modern home with an open floor plan? Probably not. Why do house flippers insist on snapping up and gutting the few houses left with their original floor plans and built-ins? Why buy something unique and then destroy what's unique about it? Why cut down a Joshua tree and put it in your living room for Christmas?

It's like working in a liquor store, and not drinking beer. It's like working in a coffee shop and not drinking coffee. It's like going to a barbecue and not eating meat. It's like living in a world full of color and only wearing gray. It's like running around in the sand with your shoes on. Actually, it's not like any of those things. They're minor infractions in a world of sensation. This is a crime against history, an offense to your community.

I'd like to imagine the open floor plan has had its day, based on how many people tell me they want it. "Opening things up" may have reached the tipping point, like shag carpet, popcorn ceilings and aluminum jalousie windows. That's the way of the trend. Tearing down the walls may go the way of the vertical blind, the color mauve, and that white loopy carpet with the little grey flecks in it. Or it could go on forever, until the only kitchen left with a swinging café door and four walls will be mine — and maybe yours, too. Either way, I'll still have a refrigerator full of beer. And from time to time I'll still go out for coffee. They can't take that away from me.

—Contact Michael Good at housecallssdun@gmail.com. ❖

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FROM PAGE 1

UNPLUGGED

"We added a beer stroll this year called 'Unplugged On Tap' where participants can sample 12 different beers at 12 different retail and service locations spread along Adams Avenue," said Scott Kessler, executive director of Adams Avenue Business Association, which produces both events as a fundraiser for the organization.

"Musicians are playing inside the taste locations as well. And, we have a trolley running on Saturday only, to make the beer stroll and the festival's longer Saturday hours, more accessible," he added.

The idea this year, Kessler said, is to pair Adams Avenue's unique dining and drinking establishments with free musical performances that match with their ambience. It's a dream of connecting musical aficionados and foodies to a neighborhood rich in culture, he said. No streets will be closed and no outdoor stages will be constructed again this year — although food booths will be set up outside Smitty's Service, an auto repair shop located at 3441 Adams Ave. "Performances are happening at business locations only and at the United Methodist Church, which will showcase two of the festival's headliners [The Cactus Blossoms and Sam Outlaw]. The other headliner, Augie Meyers, will be at Kensington Club and is the only performance with a cover charge of \$15-\$20," Kessler said.

The Cactus Blossoms will perform at 3 and 6 p.m. on April

see Festival, pg 13

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- Official Unplugged Stages
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Map not to scale

FROM PAGE 12 FESTIVAL

30 at Normal Heights United Methodist Church, 4650 Mansfield St. The band — formed by brothers Page Burkum and Jack Torrey of Minneapolis, Minnesota — released its first single, “You’re Dreaming,” in 2015. An album with the same title was released in 2016 and the band has been touring across North America. Last December, The Cactus Blossoms were part of the Nick Lowe & Los Straitjackets’ “The Quality Holiday Review” that made a stop at the Belly Up Tavern

Adams Avenue Unplugged

Noon to 10 p.m. April 30

Noon to 7 p.m. May 1

Admission free except for Augie Meyers show at 9 p.m. April 30 at Kensington Club (\$15-\$20)

Unplugged on Tap

Noon to 4 p.m. April 30

12 beer samples for \$19

Info: bit.ly/1QEicZW

Beer stroll tickets: bit.ly/23ySpZ5

After purchasing Unplugged on Tap tickets online, print out the receipt or save it on your phone. On April 30, beginning at 11:30 a.m., a will call ticket booth will be open at Smitty’s Auto (3441 Adams Ave). Bring your receipt and/or a photo ID to claim your ticket. Your ticket will not be emailed to you. Ages 21 and older.

in Solana Beach. Sam Outlaw will give concerts at 3 and 6 p.m. on May 1 at the church. The singer-songwriter may have been born in Aberdeen, South Dakota, but he grew up in Southern California and he calls his music “SoCal country.” He said he was inspired and influenced by the music of Asleep at the Wheel, The Beatles, Emmylou Harris and George Jones. His first album, “Angeleno,” was released in 2015 by Six Shooter Records.

Augie Meyers will headline at 9 p.m. April 30 at Kensington Club, 4079 Adams Ave. He will be backed by Action Andy & The Hi-Tones, with The Sleepwalkers tagged for the opening set. The legendary Texan is known for fusing Tex-Mex with Conjunto and soulful rock, backed by his trademark Vox organ. His musical partnership with Doug Sahm created the Sir Douglas Quintet in the 1960s. Later he would launch The Texas Tornadoes, famed for its Grammy Award-winning South Texas sound.

To read the biographies of all of the performers, visit bit.ly/1S7WVbO.

Hosting concerts will be the Ken Café, Ponce’s Mexican Restaurant, The Haven, Dos Palmas Cafe, Java Joe’s, DiMille’s Italian Restaurant, Rosie O’Grady’s, Proprietor’s Reserve Wine Bar, The Rabbit Hole, The Ould Sod, Adams Avenue Integrative Health, Triple Crown Pub, El Zarape Restaurant, Air Conditioned Lounge, Polite Provisions, Cantina Mayahuel, and Twiggs Bakery & Coffeehouse.

Participating in the craft beer crawl will be Mona Lizzy’s, Maven, Dink’s Barber Shop, Heights Optometry, Back From Tomboctou, Ken Video & Vida Juice, Zac’s Attic, Liquid Eden, Adams Avenue Integrative Health, Brooklyn Bicycles, Home Start Thrift Boutique and Zen Sanctuary.

Parking, which is always a challenge along Adams Avenue, is limited to residential neighborhood streets. A good alternative to the congestion would be to take MTS bus routes 2 and 11, which service the neighborhoods. Wear comfortable walking shoes to explore the two-mile stretch of Adams Avenue that is participating in the festival.

—Ken Williams is editor of Uptown News and can be reached at ken@sdenn.com or at 619-961-1952. Follow him on Twitter at @KenSanDiego, Instagram at @KenSD or Facebook at KenWilliamsSanDiego. ❖

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PLASTIC SURGERY

Johan Engman of **Breakfast Republic** and **Fig Tree Cafes** is on a roll with plans to open two new restaurants in North Park. In mid-January, he will introduce **North Park Breakfast Company** at 3131 University Ave., where **Moncai Vegan** previously operated.

"I have a wait line everyday at Breakfast Republic, so I wanted to expand and do something different in the area," he says.

The menu will feature an entirely new slate of dishes backed up by breakfast-friendly craft cocktails, many of which will involve coffee.

Later next year, he will open a dinner-only restaurant next door to Breakfast Republic, at 2726 University Ave. The space formerly housed a pet shop and will be completely remodeled with a full kitchen and wine and beer bar. Engman says he will finalize the concept after renovations begin.



The End zone in North Park will reopen this spring under new ownership.
(Photo by Ken Williams)

Look for a mid-spring reopening of **End Zone Pub & Grill** in North Park, which closed last year and recently came under new ownership by Louie Namou of neighboring **Glenn's Market**. He's keeping the name, and says the bar will remain a gathering spot for watching sporting games, with little changes to the food and drink menus. The interior, however, is undergoing a full cleanup and fresh paint job. 2859 University Ave.



Dozens of restaurants throughout San Diego County are participating in this year's **Dining Out for Life**, which supports HIV/AIDS programs at the San Diego LGBT Community Center. The restaurants taking part will donate a portion of their sales proceeds on April 28 to the cause, with some giving 50 percent **Crest Café**, **Napizza**, **Waypoint Public**, **The Mission**, **Martinis Above Fourth**, and many more). For a complete list of participants, visit thecentersd.org/events.

New to Bankers Hill is **Royal Stone**, a seasonally based, European-inspired bistro launched by John and Jackie Stone. The couple took over the space previously occupied by **Royal Café** under different ownership.

"After working in a corporate career, I wanted to follow my heart by opening a place with a warm and welcoming atmosphere," Jackie said. "Business has been terrific."

The restaurant serves breakfast daily, and dinner on Wednesday through Sunday. It also offers brunch on Saturdays and Sundays. 3401 First Ave., 619-738-8550, royalstonebistro.com.



Mini pies will be coming to an eatery in University Heights. *(Courtesy of Pot Pie Co.)*

An interior remodel is underway at a former hair salon in University Heights to make way for **Pot Pie Co.**, an eatery that will sell mini pies filled with everything from braised pork and curried vegetables to spiced apples and pastry cream incorporating Earl Grey tea. Due to open in early summer, the venture was conceived by local business banker Steven Torres, and baker Gan Suebsarakham, who fell in love with a specialty pie shop in his native Thailand before moving here.

The savory pies will measure five inches in diameter, with the sweet ones ringing in at three inches. Sidekicks will include mashed potatoes and gravy, citrus-pesto cauliflower, kale slaw, and more.

Since starting the business last year, Torres says they've been making the pies mainly for weddings and special events. 4404 Park Blvd., poppieco.com



Made-to-order sangria *(Courtesy of Vinavanti Urban Winery)*

Vinavanti Urban Winery in Hillcrest recently began selling made-to-order white and red sangria in pitchers. Customers seated at the bar get to see the various "all-natural" ingredients that go into them. The price per pitcher is \$30, although during happy hour (4 – 7 p.m., Monday through Friday) they're \$10 off. In addition, the menu was revamped to include more items such as hearty salads, sandwiches and flat breads. 1477 University Ave., 877-484-6282, vinavanti-urbanwinery.com.

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

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Old-time diner on a hill

Restaurant Review

Frank Sabatini Jr.



Block glass, fishbowl windows and Chevy-style booths define Golden Hill Café, which occupies a circa-1940 structure so splendidly sealed in time that you won't mind killing an hour over a meal you could easily cook at home.

Located at the top of C Street, the café is owned by a woman named Carmen, whose late husband, Ronald Paul Avery, started the business in 1977. Avery, a former police officer, is remembered as his picture and gold-plated obituary hang on a wall near the semi-open kitchen.

In previous decades, the address was supposedly home to other eateries, at least according to Trudi, the café's spry waitress of 27 years who served us eggs, pancakes and red chilaquiles on my first visit here.

A lunch counter with low, swivel stools absorbs the center of the dining area. It's encircled partly by several cozy booths. And perched above the milkshake machine is the original notice from Aug. 6, 1988, alerting customers the café would be closed that day "due to the filming of the motion picture 'K-9.'"

The action-comedy was released the following year and starred James Belushi, who played Officer Dooley in the movie and entered the café to buy a cupcake.

Also displayed is an autographed headshot of John Stamos. Trudi says he was here possibly for a commercial shoot. She later added that it might have been for the filming of a scene from a failed TV pilot, but couldn't recall for sure.

I was less swept up by the celebrity factor of this Golden Hill landmark than I was with the authentic feel of the place. As one of the few surviving all-American diners in San Diego, it offers a sense of discovery outside places such as Rudford's and Hob Nob Hill. The only thing missing is a pie case, which means settling for a milkshake, fruit cup or dish of ice cream if your sweet tooth needs pampering.

Breakfast dishes dominate about 75 percent of the menu. They're served daily from 6:30 a.m. to when the café closes at 2:30 p.m. Although if you're hankering for a tuna melt or cheeseburger when the morning birds are still chirping, the kitchen obliges.

My favorite dish over two visits was the chilaquiles.

Upon ordering these fried and sauced corn tortilla strips, Trudi asked me in a forewarning tone, "Do you like spicy?"

"Yes. Bring 'em on," I insisted.

Simmered gently in red hot sauce, they maintained the right amount of crispiness and offered a high but manageable mouth burn. Compared to versions covered in green tomatillo sauce, which tend to taste one-dimensional, this was worlds better.

The plate included refried beans, the kind I'm guessing contain lard based on their creamy texture and old-school flavor. For \$2 extra, I upgraded the meal with two over-easy eggs, knowing full



Art Deco architecture is preserved at Golden Hill Café. (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

Golden Hill Cafe

2505 C St.
(Golden Hill)
619-239-7464

Prices: Breakfast dishes:
\$3.95 to \$16.95; soups,
sandwiches and burgers,
\$3.25 to \$9.50

well the love affair that ensues when chilaquiles meet runny yolks.

My companion ordered the "farmer's mix" breakfast consisting of two (possibly three) eggs scrambled with bacon, sausage, onions and bell peppers. He gave it an instant thumbs-up. It also included a moist house-made biscuit draped in white gravy that further gratified his rural-Midwestern roots.

We shared a short stack of fluffy pancakes elevated by a spatula's worth of butter the cook applied as he set the plate onto a waiting ledge. When they arrived to our table moments later, the butter had melted into a foamy, yellowish puddle that we weren't about to shove away. No doubt, you'll need to foxtrot down and up the hill several times to burn off these jumbo fat-soaked disks.

A week later I returned to a hit-and-miss lunch. A cup of admirable tortilla soup was the highpoint. The savory, judiciously salted broth was brimming with tortilla strips, cubed queso fresco and chunks of fresh avocado. So hearty, I almost ordered a second round.

The turkey-bacon club sandwich that followed, however, was disappointing only because of the low-grade turkey in it — the mealy, processed kind with water added. The sandwich would have otherwise sent me into diner bliss, given that it was a classic triple-decker on toasted white bread, cut into four triangles, and neatly tucking in crisp iceberg lettuce, juicy tomatoes, crisp bacon, and oozing measures of mayo. Nobody seems to make them like this anymore. A heap of medium-cut french fries in the middle of the plate compensated in sustenance for half the club I abandoned. They were crisp and golden on the outside, steamy and soft inside.

There are no salads listed on the menu except for a mention of one that comes with "fish



Turkey-bacon club



Red chilaquiles with eggs and beans



A biscuit with gravy is included on the "farmer's mix" plate.



Hearty tortilla soup

and fries." Though according to my lunchtime waitress, a basic garden salad (\$3.75) is available for customers in the know. But in the face of pancakes and patty melts, I have to wonder how many of them actually drop in for the greens. Part of the thrill of eating at Golden Hill Café is that you won't find rosemary trees sticking out of omelets and brown sugar bumping up the bacon. Nor will you encounter healthy smoothies or gluten-free anything. We know where to go for those, which is precisely why flashing back to the basics on occasion tastes so special.

—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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House pleasures

Come On Get Happy! Dr. Ink

Take away the bar and the TurboChef ovens behind it and it's easy to imagine when Red House Pizza was a residential bungalow. The property was converted for retail use more than a decade ago, although the framed archways separating the rooms and the French doors leading to a side patio remain gracefully intact. The eatery has become known for pizzas that fall somewhere between Neapolitan and New York-style. Available in a variety of crusts (whole wheat, thin

herb or gluten-free), they cook in less than five minutes in high-tech ovens that combine convection, steam and infrared technologies.

All of them, except for the gluten-free pies, drop 20 percent in price during happy hour Tuesday through Sunday. On Mondays, all day, they're 30 percent off. The same price breaks apply to sandwiches, craft beers on tap, and wines by the glass. With a drinking companion in tow, we took a table at the front window, in what was probably the home's living room. We then received the ultimate compliment from a 20-something waiter when he came to take our drink orders. Can I see your IDs?" he asked with a warm smile.



Mother Earth Mosaic IPA and Benchmark Oatmeal Stout (Photo by Dr. Ink)



Toasted meatball sandwich (Photo by Dr. Ink)

We thought he was joking at first since neither of us has been proofed for alcohol since the days when Fuzzy Navels and Alabama Slammers were in vogue. So we pulled out our driver's licenses and predetermined he'd receive a nice tip. New to the beer list, which features about a half-dozen choices, is Mother Earth Boo Koo Mosaic IPA, a refreshing straw-colored brew with toned-down hops and a light grapefruit finish. It's exactly how I prefer IPAs lately after practically soaking in them over the past couple of years. My companion eschews the bitterness in them all. So he ordered a dark oatmeal stout by Benchmark Brewing Company sporting the expected smooth black-coffee flavor of stout, but with an ethereal lemon aftertaste. Priced also at \$4.80 with the discount, I would have switched to it, but I didn't want to guzzle heavy-bodied beer with the amount of food we ordered.

In no time, our 14-inch "Seattle" pizza arrived. During happy hour it costs \$13.20, which is a steal for the medley of ingredients it includes — white sauce, mozzarella, sausage, roasted tomatoes, arugula and fresh basil. I've paid upwards of \$25 in other joints for pies of this nature, and came away far less satisfied.

We also sprung for a sandwich of house-made gluten-free meatballs that were shrouded in mozzarella and white onions, and tucked between two slices of thick bread. We loved the toasted pockmarks on the sandwich, which stood vertically on its back crusts and stayed manageably intact while eating it.

With three beers and a whole lot of food consumed, our final cost was \$36. We were happy campers.❖

Red House Pizza

4615 Park Blvd. (University Heights)

619-546-7430

redhousepizzasd.com

Happy hour: All day Monday, and 4 — 6 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday

RATINGS

Drinks: ★★★

Styles vary slightly from a short list of seven craft beers on tap. They include stout, blond and white ales, and a few IPAs. The wine menu offers more choices, with varietals originating from California, Europe and New Zealand.

Food: ★★★★★

Pizzas and sandwiches toast up fast in the restaurant's super-powered TurboChef ovens. The signature pizzas are creatively conceived; and the hefty meatball sandwich on nicely toasted bread is a standout.

Value: ★★★★★

Regular prices on food and drinks start out lower than average. Yet when you factor in the discounts of 30 percent on Mondays and 20 percent all other days, your wallet rejoices.

Service: ★★★★★

The servers are cheerful and welcoming, as though you've arrived at their homes thirsty and hungry.

Atmosphere: ★★★★★

The eatery has retained the charm of the cute, small house it was many years ago, with cozy indoor seating and a narrow side patio running alongside the main dining room.

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The 14-inch Seattle pizza (Photo by Dr. Ink)

A fun outing for a serious cause

Mama's Day food-and-wine gala is on May 6

By Dave Fidlin

Mama's Kitchen celebrated its golden birthday last year, and on the heels of that milestone is the 25th anniversary of Mama's Day — the annual fundraiser founded with a Mother's Day theme.

Mama's Day returns May 6, from 6:30 – 9:30 p.m., to its annual home at the Hyatt Regency La Jolla at Aventine, located at 3777 La Jolla Village Drive.

The food-and-wine gala provides the bulk of the funding necessary to bring quality meals — free of charge — into the hands of people who vitally need such services.

To the San Diego men, women and children affected by AIDS and cancer, the nutrient-filled meals are of the utmost importance, particularly since their immune systems are usually compromised.

With a milestone on the horizon, Cortés cannot help but wax nostalgic as he reflects on how Mama's Kitchen has stayed true to its roots, yet dually grown and evolved in the past quarter century.

"We've added components [to the mission statement] here and there, but it really hasn't changed that much," Cortés said. "It's stood durable over time."

What has changed since Mama's Kitchen was established in the early 1990s are some of the stigmas and misinformation concerning AIDS, HIV and other conditions that have impacted the LGBT and other communities. "That was right in the throws of

the AIDS epidemic," Cortés said of Mama's Kitchen's earliest days as an organization. "The number of diagnoses were still very high, and it was considered a deadly condition. There was an atmosphere and stigma of fear and a real lack of information. It was a real hostile time."

But as Cortés sees it, the organization's importance in the community has been unwavering — even as society has evolved its attitudes. Humanizing the impact AIDS still has today is one of the fundamental goals behind the organization's outreach efforts.

While Cortés' leadership with the organization only goes back 14 years, he said he has been an ardent supporter of Mama's Day from the get-go.

"At the time, it was unique because fundraisers were usually known to be more formal with speeches," Cortés said. "I think we raised the bar and created a tradition other organizations have tried mimicking."

Since quality food is at the heart of Mama's Kitchen's mission, it is only fitting the same holds true for the annual Mama's Day fundraisers. A hallmark of each year's event are the range of chefs — many from some of San Diego's finest and most notable restaurants — who prepare samples of some of their top dishes for attendees to enjoy.

While final pieces of the puzzle are still being assembled in the weeks leading up to the 25th annual fundraiser, Cortés said at



(back, l to r) Chef Julie Darling of Just Calls Us Volunteers and Chef Chris Decker with (front) two student chef volunteers at Mama's Day 2015. (Courtesy of Decker Brothers Gourmet Soup)

least 55 local chefs have donated their time and talent for this year's event. The figure is notable, Cortés pointed out, since the event takes place on a Friday — a time of the week when restaurants are usually bursting at the seams with customers.

One of this year's participating chefs is Chris Decker, who co-owns Decker Brothers Gourmet Soup. As the company's name suggests, Decker's business partner is his brother, Karl. Together, the Deckers have been making a variety of health-conscious soup recipes inspired by their mom's concoctions over the years, sold wholesale or distributed throughout various restaurants in San Diego.

This is the sixth consecutive year Decker Brothers are participating in Mama's Day.

"It's one of the most fun and impressive fundraisers out there," Chris Decker said. "Everyone gets into it and has a blast."

Decker and brother Karl hail from the East Coast and came to San Diego to tap into their love of surfing. They also are long-time supporters of LGBT causes.

Mama's Day fundraiser
May 6 from 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Hyatt Regency La Jolla at Aventine
3777 La Jolla Village Drive
mamaskitchen.org

- Tickets are \$150 per person in advance, \$175 at the door
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Andy Keech with fellow competitor Dave Watts (Photo by Peter Billings)

FROM PAGE 8
ROWER

Boston, he bit. Halfway into his training, he sought out seasoned rowing coach Pattie Pinkerton. Working with Pinkerton produced a performance spurt that was most heartening, he said. "Those who persevere with the training, injuries and pain are the ones who finally step into the ring with the best in the world and those giants are always there to measure one's self against. In my case there were eight who competed in the 75-79 age group and three were world champions," he said. "Anyone can come last, but any position above that will be someone who is fitter than 99 percent of men or women in his or her age group."

The 13 competitors who signed up in the 80-years-plus age category also served as a source of inspiration. "[Those athletes] are beyond the average lifespan of the average American. The average person is dead by then, yet these are

training and competing in a very painful and demanding activity at levels the average person doesn't reach at any time in his life. They are not from the majority who retire 'into slipped ease,'" he said. "It doesn't come easy."

CrossFit Hillcrest coach Crystal Canez notes that while Keech is certainly not your average senior, there are lots of things that older men and woman can do to maintain and improve their fitness. "The best advice I can give is to keep moving," she said. "Go on a walk with friends. Go outside and get some fresh air and sunshine. I'd also suggest checking out the bulletin boards in Whole Foods and Starbucks since they almost always have contact information for fantastic senior fitness resources."

—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. ❖

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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

Sudoku

Puzzle from page 19

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

Talky

Crossword from page 19

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

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Puzzle answers on page 18

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'Constellations' in a teacup

Theater Review

Charlene Baldridge



Nick Payne's "Constellations," which opened April 14 at The Old Globe's Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, is at first glance a surface-simple, clever play about a young couple who meet at a wedding, or is it a barbecue?

Neither has had much luck at love. She's a physicist who teaches at Cambridge University, and he, a beekeeper keeps a hive on the rooftop of his London apartment. In other words, they're both nerds, but she adores honey.

They leave the social affair together, and then at length try to decide whether he should stay or go. There is some doubt, eventually, as to whose apartment they are in, or perhaps the decision whether to get physical spans more than one evening. The audience is never sure of time and its passage — a slick demonstration of theories she tries to explain to the simple, good man that fate has placed in her life.

Roland tries to understand Marianne's discourse about quantum theory and quantum cosmology, and she tries to relate to beekeeping in context of who he is. During their protracted courtship — numerous partings

and reunions — he reads one of her papers, trying to understand what so obsesses her. Then he writes a paper of his own; to wit, there are three kinds of bees: the workers (non-reproductive females), the Queen (who lays eggs) and the drones (one of whom mates with the Queen and then dies).

The playwright pens numerous scenes, which blackout, then repeat, using the same words in different tones of voice, each progressing, then regressing, having started up again. Once in a while, earthy language about bees and ballroom dancing falls from the couple's lips, even as they marry (or not) and experience life together (or not, we're never sure). Then, suddenly, just as we become fond of the unlikely pair that have such difficulty communicating, and used to the intricacies of their dialogue, a surprising and poignant element appears (did I really hear that; yes, you did), develops to the max, and then, just as suddenly, returns us to earlier discourse as if to keep us from bleeding out right then and there.

Through the playwright's intentionally scattered manipulation the challenged playgoer may enjoy or merely endure the puzzle of relationship. Some may feel used; others will be comforted. Richard Seer, who is the Globe's



Christian Coulson stars as Roland and Victoria Frings as Marianne in Nick Payne's "Constellations," directed by Richard Seer, through May 8 at The Old Globe. (Photos by Jim Cox)

director of professional training and who has a long string of successful directing assignments to his credit, has the requisite sensitivity and depth to tackle this fragile play, which might be ruined in less adept hands. His actors, Christian Coulson and Victoria Frings have the disparate chemistry and unforced characterization to capture the nuance of such an improbable yet affecting relationship.

All other elements complement the work: David Israel Reynoso's scenic design; Elisa Benzoni's costume design; Brad-

"Constellations"
Written by Nick Payne
Directed by Richard Seer
The Old Globe
1363 Old Globe Way (Balboa Park)
theoldglobe.org
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Tuesdays-Sundays, through May 8
Tickets start at \$29

ley King's lighting design; and Fitz Patton's sound design. The circa 70-minute play is performed without interval.



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

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FROM PAGE 1

ARTWALK

what a wonderful little community we had back here. ... We turned our two-car garage into my studio. We have shows here. It brings out the community, gets people together."

Photographer and painter Leslie Pierce received a windfall a couple years ago, gave up on trying to make it in Austin, and moved to Golden Hill.

"I sold six paintings," Pierce said, "loaded up a U-Haul, and drove here from Texas. It was the most desolate loneliness — I wouldn't recommend it. I wanted to do it for 14 years, so, what the heck."

While all three artists live in Uptown neighborhoods, their work is as diverse as their paths to the area. But they do have one other thing in common: They were selected by jury to display their work in the 2016 Mission Federal ArtWalk San Diego, an annual fine art and performing arts festival. This year's event is April 30 and May 1 in Little Italy.

Mission Federal Credit Union, which has a branch in Mission Hills, is sponsoring ArtWalk for the eighth year. Part of the credit union's mission is caring for the local community it serves. The festival's director, Sandi Cottrell, said Mission Fed's financial contribution helps keep the festival free for the community and provides a venue for artists.

"It's a labor of love to be a professional artist," Cottrell said, "to attempt to make a living in that way. It's just such an honor to give them a showcase for their work."

Arango's work began at San Diego State University, where he studied graphic arts when design was transitioning to computers — but not Arango.

"I was going towards hand-made things," he recalled. "One of my projects meant for us to pick up three different materials that would form the art piece. One was leather, which is my main medium right now, so that's the inception, but obviously it has grown. I did try setting up a website, but I'd rather be making my jewelry."

Instead, Arango shows his one-of-a-kind pieces, incorporating leather, beading and antique buttons, in the Solana Beach de-



Code Defied No. 1 "The Art Party" by Leslie Pierce (Courtesy of the artist)

2016 Mission
Federal ArtWalk

April 30 and May 1
11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

San Diego's Little Italy, along
India Street

KidsWalk at the corner of Beech
Street

ArtWalkSanDiego.org



Code Defied No. 16 "Twiggy" by Leslie Pierce (Courtesy of the artist)

sign district. Clair abandoned a corporate job to become an artist.

"I decided to take the leap and make it my full-time passion," she said. "My early work was very Cubist. It looked like stained glass. But I didn't want it to be too angular, like Picasso. My more recent work, they're a lot more free, a lot more open, not as Cubist. I really want to evoke mystery and emotion, and also challenge the viewer's eye and mine, so you get lost in the three-dimensional world — people, passion and beauty. I try to tell a story, and the eyes in the painting allow you to reach in and connect to the piece, be enlightened, inspired."

Pierce, who works in oils, was selected as one of eight featured artists at this year's ArtWalk, from among the 350 participating artists.

"I start with a photograph," Pierce said of her process. "I was well-known for a photo series before, and I shoot my own photo references now. I love my newest series, 'Code Defied.' I admire photorealism, but I wanted to play with abstraction and reality

in a new way. I was printing some photo references and the printer went on the blink — printing lines, striations of color. That was the start of the 'Code Defied' series. Now, in some of the paintings' lines I'm using Morse code to spell out 'Code Defied.' It brings up so many things about systems."

As the artists gear up for ArtWalk, they imagine seeing old friends and collectors, maybe attracting some new ones.

"Years ago," Pierce said, "when I was doing the photo series, someone walked by, saw my work and offered to represent me. I'm kind of hoping for lightning to strike twice."

—Kit-Bacon Gressitt writes commentary and essays on her blog, "Excuse Me, I'm Writing," and has been published by Ms. Magazine blog and Trivia: Voice of Feminism, among others. She formerly wrote for the North County Times. She also hosts Fallbrook's monthly Writers Read authors series and open mic, and can be reached at kbgressitt@gmail.com.❖

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CONSTELLATIONS

By Nick Payne
Directed by Richard Seer

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Physicist Marianne meets beekeeper Roland at a party. They hit it off ... or perhaps they don't. One of them is married ... or maybe they're both single. Nick Payne's *Constellations* takes this chance encounter between two lost souls and opens the door to the infinite possibilities of their relationship. Breathlessly navigating through the spellbinding and romantic journey of being in love, *Constellations* looks at how the tiniest change in the details of our lives can lead us on completely different paths.

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	Vegetarian/Vegan	Women's Apparel	
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UPTOWN CALENDAR

HIGHLIGHTS

'Who made my clothes?'

Friday, April 22

Local designers, clothing makers and shops will showcase their latest creations at this pop-up event in South Park (3009 Grape St.) from 6 – 9 p.m. This is part of Fashion Revolution Week, which seeks to bring awareness to the "true cost of fashion" and inspire the creation of a more sustainable future. Clothing items will be available for purchase and proceeds will benefit Fashion Revolution. Visit bit.ly/1Sqtkh5 for more information.



Ed Harris and Lori Saldana (Courtesy of candidates)



Uptown Democratic Club pre-primary meeting

Tuesday, April 26

This meeting will give voters the chance to meet two candidates for mayor of San Diego: Ed Harris and Lori Saldana. Harris is a Democrat who represented District 2 for most of 2014 as interim councilmember. Saldana is a former Democrat and Assemblymember who is running as an Independent. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at Joyce Beers Uptown Community Center (1220 Cleveland Ave., Hillcrest). Free and open to the public. Visit uptowndemocrats.wordpress.com for more information.

'Brush and Ink: Chinese Paintings'

Friday, April 29

The San Diego Museum of Art (1450 El Prado, Balboa Park) is opening this new exhibition today, which will continue through Sunday, Sept. 4. The selections curated by Chinese artist Pan Gongkai will include over 40 works from the museum's collection of more than 200 Chinese paintings. The exhibit will showcase the evolution of brush and ink painting from the 15th century to present days. Visit sdmart.org for tickets and more information.



Digital Gym Gems

Friday, April 22 – Thursday, April 28: Suspense film "The Invitation" stars Logan Marshall Green as a man invited to a dinner party thrown by his ex-wife (Tammy Blanchard) and her new husband (Michiel Huisman). At the party, he starts to become suspicious that the couple has sinister plans for himself and the other guests. Rated R. 110 minutes.

Friday, April 22 – Thursday, April 28: "The Messenger" is a documentary by filmmaker Su Rynard examining the hazards to songbirds around the world. Biologists and industry experts discuss the global ecosystem and the role songbirds play in it. Unrated. 89 minutes.

Friday, April 29 – Thursday May 5: The drama "Sky" follows a couple played by Diane Kruger and Gilles Lellouche as they go on vacation in the U.S. Kruger decides to break free of their worn-out marriage, leaving behind what is stable and secure. Rated R. 110 minutes. Visit DigitalGym.org for show times and tickets and information on additional films.

FEATURED EVENTS

'Adventures in Croquet-land'

Saturday, April 23

A croquet tournament by Impact Young Adults will be held in Balboa Park on the War Memorial Building lawn (3325 Zoo Drive) from 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. with an "Alice in Wonderland" theme. All skill levels are welcome and can come solo or in teams of six. Players should wear traditional "all whites" or come in colorful clothing inspired by the theme. Entry is \$25 per person/\$150 for team of six. Each team plays three rounds working to get through the course with the fastest time. There will be a trophy for the winners, plus prizes for best team outfits and best hat. Food vendors will be on site selling lunch items. There will also be a raffle for an indoor skydiving session for two at iFly San Diego. All proceeds benefit Impact Young Adults. Visit bit.ly/1qCflbh to register and get details.

'Speechless'

Saturday, April 23

This unique show at Finest City Improv (4250 Louisiana St., North Park) lets attendees live out their worst nightmare: giving a PowerPoint presentation with no preparation. The type of presentation to be given ranges from a TED talk to a wedding toast with lots in between. Additional performances of "Speechless" will be held on Saturday, May 28 and Saturday, July 30. Visit finestcityimprov.com for tickets.

RuPaul's Drag Race: Battle of the Seasons Extravaganza

Sunday, April 24

This world tour will make a stop in San Diego at The Observatory North Park (2891 University Ave.) starting at 8:30 p.m. There will be performances by "Drag Race" winners and fan favorites. Series judge Michelle Visage will host the event. VIP tickets will include a pre-show meet and greet starting at 6 p.m. featuring the stars of the show. Tickets start at \$37.50. Visit rupaulbots.com for tickets and details.

'What Wearable Cameras and GPS Can Teach Us About Human Behavior' with Jacqueline Kerr, UC San Diego, School of Medicine

Wednesday, May 4

The Research in Environments, Active aging and Community Health group is using wearable cameras and other devices to observe people's real-life behavior. This research, supported by the National Institutes of Health is designed to learn how daily behavior patterns relate to health. The Institutional Review Boards that review Dr. Jacqueline Kerr's research want to protect participants but how to do this remains unclear. Kerr will discuss the ethical framework her team developed to protect participants and the challenges of sharing their collected data with other scientists. This talk will be given at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center (1875 El Prado, Balboa Park) from 5 – 7 p.m. There will be light refreshments at 5 p.m., followed by the presentation at 5:30 p.m. This forum is free but tax-deductible donations are welcome online. Visit bit.ly/1qCnwEB for details and to register for this event.

Fiesta Old Town

Thursday, May 5 – Sunday, May 8

For the 33rd year, Old Town will celebrate Cinco de Mayo with several days of family-friendly festivities. Restaurants and bars in the area will offer food and drink specials along with live entertainment over all four days. On Friday, May 6, the festival will take to the streets transforming San Diego Avenue into a mercado with food and other vendors. Harney Street will become "Lowrider Lane" showcasing beautiful lowrider cars. During this festival from 4 – 10 p.m. there will also be live music performed on three stages. On Saturday, May 7, there will be a petting zoo and pony rides for kids from 11 a.m. – 10 p.m. There will also be a "Cantina Garden" with adult beverages for purchase. To finish up the weekend, on Sunday, May 8, the Fiesta will continue from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. with entertainment, petting zoo and more. Visit cincodemayooldtown.com for more information.

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

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Dine out for breakfast, lunch and dinner on **Thursday, April 28, 2016**, and support The Center's HIV AIDS services and prevention programs, and the San Diego HIV Funding Collaborative.

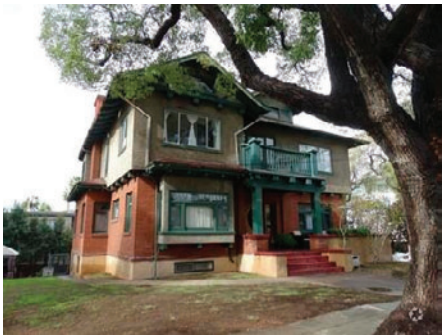
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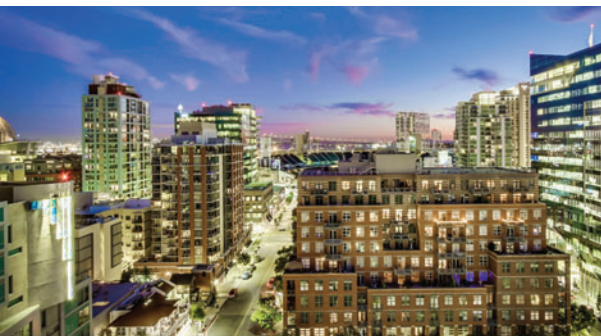
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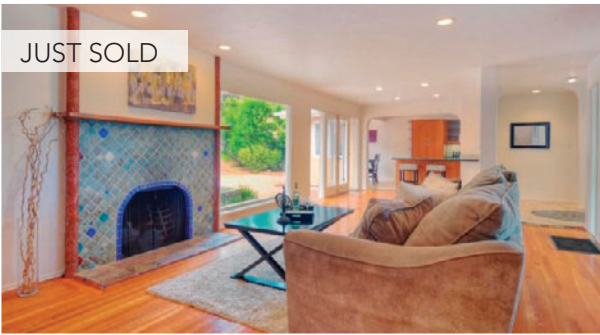
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This spacious 2BD/3BA home on a 10,500 SF lot features huge bonus room & tons of storage! \$957,000
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Newer Townhome! 3 bed, 3 ba, 2 car gar, modern kitchen/baths, balcony, storage, patio, storage, VA! \$329,900
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DOWNTOWN - 527 10th Avenue #608
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