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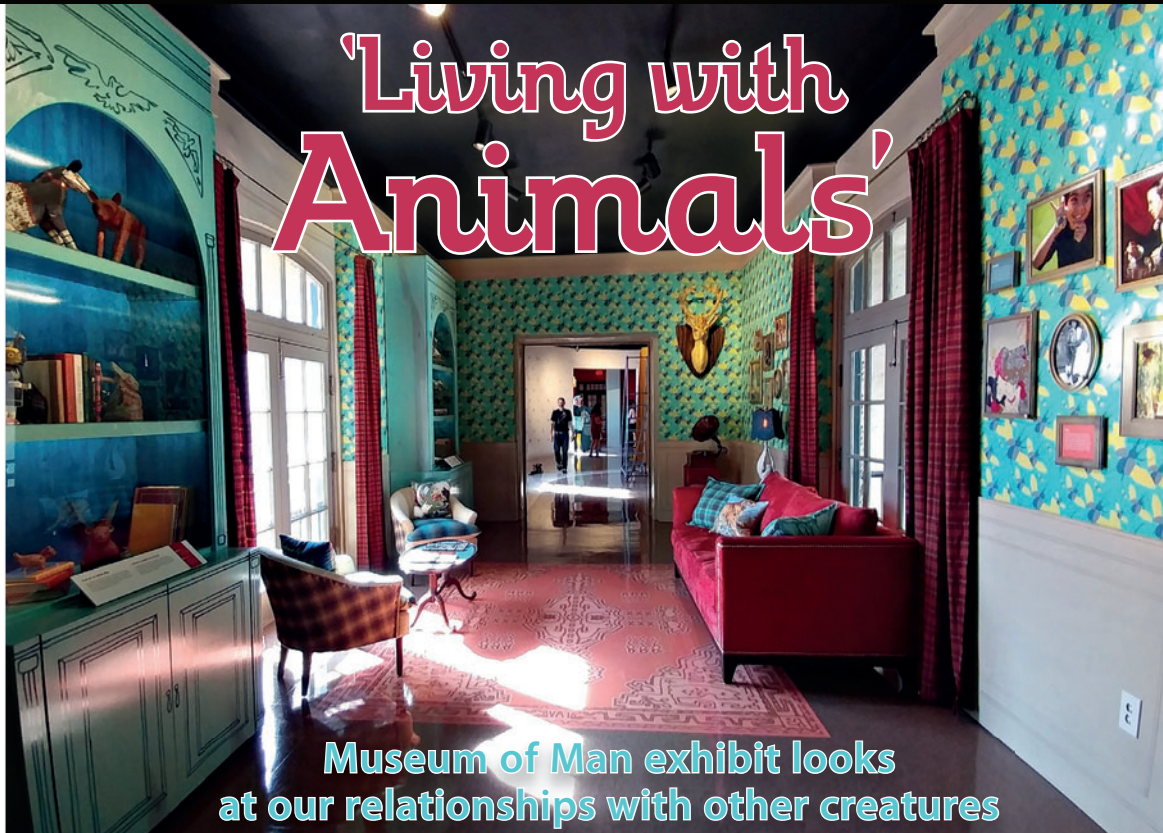
Contact us

Editorial/Letters
619-961-1952
ken@sdcnn.com

Advertising
619-961-1958
mike@sdcnn.com

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San Diego Community News Network

San Diego Uptown News



Museum of Man exhibit looks at our relationships with other creatures

In the "Living With Animals" exhibit, "The Living Room" reflects contemporary life and people's various relationships to animals, such as an animal trophy on the back wall, animal figurines in the bookcase, "animal" pillows on the furniture, and photos of people and their pets. (Photo by Ken Williams)

Ken Williams | Editor

Humans and animals have co-existed since the dawn of mankind, a relationship as

benign as cuddling on the couch with Fido, as creepy as sharing an old house with rodents and roaches, or as sacrificial as eating them as food on a plate.

"Living With Animals," a fascinating new exhibit that opened March 11 at the San

see Exhibit, pg 13

Helping children overcome grief

Ken Williams | Editor

Longtime North Park resident Cara Allen has been named clinical director of Experience Camps, a national nonprofit devoted to helping children who have experienced the death of a loved one.

Allen has more than 14 years of experience in bereavement, currently running a private psychotherapy practice in San Diego.

About 1.5 million children are living in a single-family household due to the death of one parent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Grieving children are at higher risk than their non-grieving peers for depression, anxiety, poor school attendance and higher dropout rates, isolation, behavioral problems, lowered academic achievement, drug and/or alcohol abuse, incarceration or suicide, according to Experience Camps officials.

Allen is a licensed clinical social worker and has worked extensively in bereavement for the past 14 years at Sharp Healthcare,



Cara Allen and her partner, Dan, and their two dogs at their home in North Park (Courtesy of Cara Allen)

where she was awarded both Social Worker of the Year and the prestigious Sally Bruener Haugh Spirit of Caring awards. She has been involved with Experience Camps since 2014.

Here are five questions with Cara Allen:

What are Experience Camps?

"Experience Camps are one-week camps for boys and girls

who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling or primary caregiver. It's a place where kids can laugh, cry, play, create, remember the person who died, or forget the grief that weighs them down. It's a place where they can feel 'normal,' because everyone there has been through something similar and understands what it's like to lose

see Profile, pg 3

Talking bicycling, Gateway, history

Ken Williams | Editor

The Uptown Bikeways plan, the Uptown Gateway project and the potential historic designation of the old Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic drew the attention of Bankers Hill business leaders at the monthly meeting of the Metro San Diego Community Development Corp. (Metro CDC).

The meeting, held March 13 in St. Paul's Manor Café Room, attracted about 40 members who heard updates on three big projects that will directly or indirectly affect Bankers Hill.

Uptown Bikeways

Mariah VanZeer, an associate active transportation planner for the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), in her role as project manager discussed the Uptown Bikeways time line.

VanZeer focused on the "Fourth and Fifth Avenue Bikeways" portion of the project, which is the first phase of the Uptown Bikeways project that will eventually connect Uptown to Downtown, Old Town, Mission Valley, North Park and Balboa Park.

The first phase creates protected bike lanes from B Street Downtown, north to Washington Street in Hillcrest, via Fourth and Fifth avenues.

According to SANDAG: "Separated bike lanes are protected from vehicle lanes by a vertical element such as raised medians, on-street parking, or bollards, and provide a degree of safety desired by people who are interested in biking for transportation, but are concerned about the safety of riding with vehicle traffic. Buffered bike lanes are conventional bike lanes combined with a painted buffer that increases the distance between people on bikes and the adjacent motor vehicle travel lane and/or parking lane."

see Bankers Hill, pg 19



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BIG BLOCK REALTY

FROM PAGE 1

PROFILE

someone important to them. It's a home away from home. And just about everyone will tell you: 'It's the best week of the year.' In 2017, Experience Camps will have over 450 campers at camps in Maine, California, New York and Georgia."

What is the California Experience?

"The California Experience is a one-week camp for boys and girls, entering grades four through 12 in summer of 2017, who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling or primary caregiver. It is held at Camp Hess Kramer in Malibu, California."

What is your role with the nonprofit organization and what are your goals for the program?

"As clinical director, my goal is to ensure that our campers feel safe, understood and supported. I create programming that allows campers to express their grief in age-appropriate ways and to develop coping mechanisms that assist them when they get home from camp."

"I support our clinical teams so they can best meet the children's needs during camp and I facilitate connections with like-minded organizations and people who can offer additional services to our youth when they're not at camp. I inject a clinically informed perspective into program and strategic discussions that are shaping the future of the organization."

"My goal for our program is to provide the best experience for grieving youth possible. I am excited to help spread the word to the many kids out there who could benefit from spending a week with us, becoming a part of our community. Working together with local professionals, we are continuing to grow the



Dan, Cara and their dogs in front of the mural on the side wall outside Belching Beaver Brewery's North Park tasting room (Courtesy of Cara Allen)

organization to help as many bereaved children as possible, while expanding our services to include more year-round programming for campers and their caregivers."

What is your professional background?

"I came to San Diego in 1998 after college for a temporary job with the American Red Cross. It was when they were still located on Fifth Avenue in Hillcrest and I worked in their disaster services department in a program sponsored by AmeriCorps. It was intended to be a one-year stay in San Diego that has turned into nearly 20."

"I attended San Diego State University for graduate school, earning my master of social work degree in 2001. During

that time I volunteered in the rape crisis program at the Center for Community Solutions, and interned at Casa de las Campanas and the San Diego LGBT Community Center in Hillcrest. From there I worked in a small nonprofit providing wrap-around services to youth before becoming a part of the Sharp HealthCare team in 2003. I worked at Sharp Memorial Hospital, Mary Birch Hospital for Women and Newborns, and in the Laurel Amtower Cancer Institute at Sharp."

"My professional life has always included work with grief and loss in many different forms. After earning my professional license, I started my private practice, guiding people through life transitions of all kinds. It is work I continue to love doing. In 2014 a chance email from an oncologist led me to Experience Camps. Joining their team initially as a director of camper services for the California camp, and now transitioning into the full-time national role."

What do you like about living in North Park?

"I have lived in and around North Park since I came to San Diego. It has changed so much, but has always felt like home. My partner, Dan, and I live with our two dogs in a Spanish home in Morley Field that is over 100 years old."

"We enjoy the diversity of the community here, the warmth of our neighbors, and the commitment of the community to retain its history. Of course, the ease of walking to restaurants, shops and breweries is fantastic!"

"We lovingly refer to Balboa Park as our front yard, and are always happy strolling around in the evenings there. Last year, my parents moved from Pennsylvania to North Park, so that is another thing that I love. Being three blocks away from them instead of 3,000 miles is amazing! Since my work with

Experience Camps is done remotely from my home, I get even more time to enjoy all that North Park has to offer. There is something so wonderful about working while watching the hummingbirds outside my window. Once in a while I even catch a glimpse of the parrots!"

For more information about the Experience Camps, visit experience.camp.

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



Cara Allen has been named clinical director of Experience Camps.

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Hillcrest Town Council holds annual election

By Mary M. McKenzie

The annual meeting of the Hillcrest Town Council (HTC) was held on Tuesday, March 14, at the Joyce Beers Community Center in the HUB shopping center.

As usual for the March meeting, the primary order of business was the election for the board of directors.

It was the first contested election in recent memory, and a number of community members recognized the board for becoming more inclusive and pertinent

their desire to serve the community. Daniel Merk-Benitez did not stand for re-election and was recognized for his service to HTC by state Sen. Toni G. Atkins' office.

As always, the attendees heard from several community members and representatives, including Sen. Atkins' office, Assemblymember Todd Gloria's office, the Stonewall Patrol, the San Diego LGBT Community Center, the Hillcrest Business Association and the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon weekend, which will occur on June 3-4.



HTC election moderators William Pontius and Toni Duran

to community members.

Six candidates were on the ballot for three open seats. Forty-six ballots were cast, and the most votes went to incumbents Benny Cartwright, Kath Rogers and steering committee member David Vance.

HTC secretary Mary McKenzie, acting as elections chair, thanked the other candidates (Andrew Dugger, David Lundin and Derrick Roach) for

Of special note is Sen. Atkins' authorship of the Building Homes and Jobs Act that will create a permanent source of funding for affordable housing.

The last order of business was a discussion of bylaws. The board worked for several months on a revision to the bylaws, and after a spirited discussion, the new bylaws were overwhelmingly



Voters check in with Hillcrest Town Council election moderators Toni Duran and William Pontius. (Photos by Benny Cartwright)

accepted by the majority of HTC members at the meeting. The changes expand HTC membership to include the unhoused who live in Hillcrest; restructured the Steering Committee (now the Advisory Committee); and extended to ability to propose changes to the bylaws to the entire HTC membership. The new bylaws can be found on the HTC website.



HTC meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month at the Joyce Beers Community Center, 3900 Vermont St. Next month, on April 11, HTC will focus on hate crimes with guests from

the mayor's office and the Stonewall Patrol.

The HTC always welcomes new volunteers. If you have any questions, contact Kath Rogers at dognamedannie@gmail.com. More information about HTC is online at hillcresttowncouncil.org.

—Mary M. McKenzie is secretary of the Hillcrest Town Council.❖



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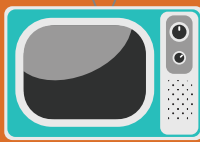
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San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 519-7775
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EDITOR

Ken Williams
(619) 961-1952
ken@sdcnn.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Jeff Clemetson, x119
Morgan M. Hurley, x110

ASSISTANT EDITOR

John Gregory

WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA

Sara Butler, x118
web@sdcnn.com

COPY EDITOR

Dustin Lothspeich

CONTRIBUTORS

Charlene Baldrige
Jennifer Coburn
Susan A. Davis
Michael Good
John Gregory
Dr. Ink
Mary M. McKenzie
Frank Sabatini Jr.
Ron Stern

SALES & MARKETING

DIRECTOR

Mike Rosensteel
(619) 961-1958
mike@sdcnn.com

ADVERTISING

CONSULTANTS

Andrew Bagley, x106
Annie Burchard, x105
Heather Fine, x107
Sloan Gomez, x104
John Watson, x113

ACCOUNTING

Priscilla Umel-Martinez
(619) 961-1962
accounting@sdcnn.com

WEB DESIGNER

Kim Espinoza
kim@kespinoza.com

SENIOR INTERN

David Sengmany

INTERNS

Alex Ehrie
Jennifer Gottschalk
Christian Gurrola
Yesenia Luna

PUBLISHER

David Mannis
(619) 961-1951
david@sdcnn.com

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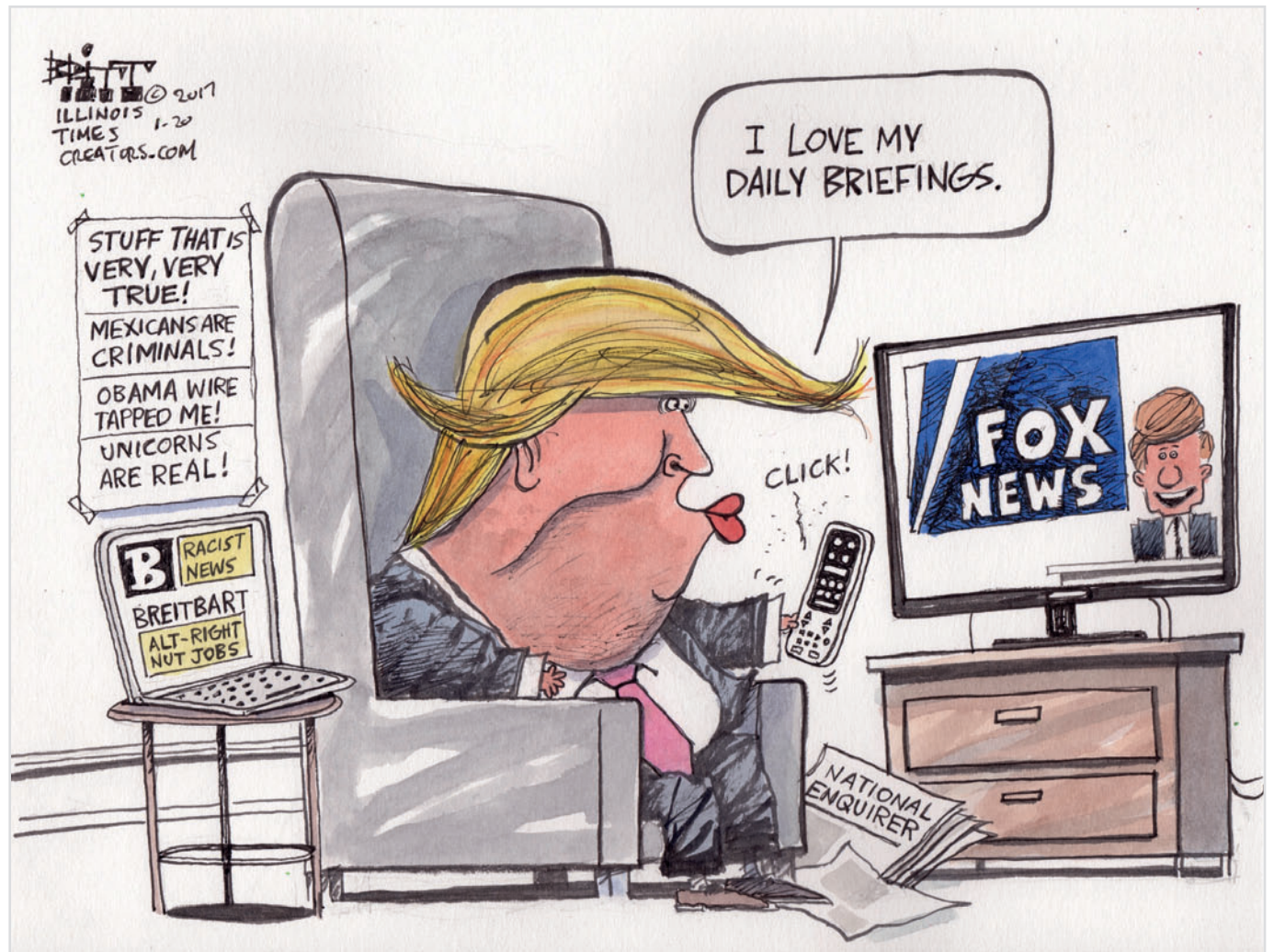
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GUEST EDITORIAL

Time for independent inquiry of President Trump

By Rep. Susan A. Davis

The scandal of a potential Russian grip on the Trump White House is growing. There has already been a resignation of a high-level White House official. Many questions remained unanswered. To get those answers we need a full, independent bipartisan investigation.

It's clear the Russian government, under orders from President Vladimir Putin, engaged in a cyber hacking of the Democratic Party to help Trump win the White House. We also know that people — at least six — associated with the Trump campaign were in contact with senior Russian officials despite repeated denials by the president and his aides.

One person in contact with the Russians was former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, who lied to Vice President Mike Pence about the contacts and was forced to resign.

The resignation of Flynn underscored the increasing and disturbing potential of Russia's grip on the White House. It's another instance of someone in the administration, the other being the president himself, who could potentially be subject to blackmail by the Russian government.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. A computer server within the Trump Organization had a number of communications with Alfa Bank — a Russian bank with ties to Putin. These communications remained unexplained.

Then there is the famous — or infamous — dossier alleging that Russia has in its possession compromising videos of Trump. The notion that the president of the United States could be blackmailed is a chilling thought and an even more compelling reason for a full investigation.

The dossier further alleged that there was collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia.



Rep. Susan A. Davis

My Democratic colleagues and I have been pursuing the facts behind the Russia/Trump connection.

The Protecting Our Democracy Act, of which I am an original co-sponsor, would create a National Commission on Foreign Interference in the 2016 Election. This would be an independent and bipartisan commission, similar to the 9/11 Commission that looked into the terrorist attacks on New York and the Pentagon.

The American people have the right to know the facts surrounding these cyber-attacks. The integrity of our election process is paramount.

The scope of the commission's investigation needs to be expanded to look at the connections between the president and Russia beyond the election.

A key to such an investigation is access to the president's taxes and financial documents.

Donald Trump Jr. was quoted in 2008 declaring that money is "pouring in from Russia." This raises more eyebrows about the financial dealings between the president and Russia.

For decades, presidents have released their tax returns to the American people. The fact that

President Trump has refused has raised serious questions. If there is nothing there, as he claims, then why not release the tax returns?

On the House floor, Democrats attempted to force the issue on Trump's taxes. We brought a resolution to the floor that would compel the president to let the American people see his taxes. The resolution was defeated by a party-line vote.

We weren't done. Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York offered a resolution of inquiry. House Resolution 111 would direct the Attorney General to send to the House of Representatives any documents relating to Trump's financial practices, or any criminal or counterintelligence investigations of the president.

Republicans on the Judiciary Committee were successful in killing the resolution. This will not be the end of it. House Democrats will continue to use all legislative tools at our disposal to press this issue to uncover the truth.

The potential of Russia's grip on the White House and this president is a serious national security concern that needs to be investigated. We have a responsibility to follow all the threads to reveal what this means to our national security and our democracy.

A bipartisan and independent investigation into Russian influence in the White House and the election is the way to get those answers. The American people have a right to know what those in the White House knew, when did they know it, and how deep does it go.

—Rep. Susan A. 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.❖

Get ready for Taste of Morena

By SDCNN Staff

The date is set and tickets are on sale for one of the Morena District's premier events.

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

For \$25, attendees will enjoy a culinary adventure from more than 20 restaurants, breweries and bars including Bay Park Coffee, Pita Pit, Andres Restaurant, Baci Ristorante, Bay Park Fish Company, Siesel's Old Fashioned Meats, Bull's Smokin' BBQ, Dan Diegos, JV's Mexican Food, La Gran Terraza, Luce Bar & Kitchen, Offshore Tavern & Grill, Sardina's Italian Restaurant & Bar, zPizza, Fiji Yogurt, Home Brew Mart by Ballast Point, The Clutch Bar, Side Car Bar, Poseidon Project, and new this year, the cafe and bar at San Diego Tennis & Racquet Club, Pho Kitchen, and tastes from a local establishment at Morena Storage.

The Taste of Morena will take place along Morena Boulevard, West Morena Boulevard, Linda Vista Road and the surrounding side streets.



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

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

Tickets went on sale March 20 at the following locations:

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'Shadowlands' is a 'must-see'

Theater Review

Charlene Baldrige



The time is right for Lamb's Players Theatre to produce the San Diego professional premiere of William Nicholson's "Shadowlands."

The production — directed by longtime Lamb's associate

artist Kerry Meads — is a must-see for lovers of C.S. Lewis with fine acting and meaningful, affecting work. It continues through April 9 at the Coronado theater.

In the opening monologue Robert Smyth, as C.S. ("Jack") Lewis, addresses love, pain and suffering as if the "Oxford Don" is delivering a lecture to one of his classes. He then asks, "If God loves us, why does

He allow us to suffer so much?" Nicholson's play attempts to be both the question and the answer.

In the lead roles are producing artistic director Robert Smyth as C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) and his wife, associate artistic director Deborah Gilmour Smyth, as Lewis' late-in-life wife, American poet Helen Joy Davidman (1915-1960).

The Smyths, certainly among San Diego's finest actors, recently received Craig Noel Awards from San Diego Critics Circle for their performances last year in Intrepid Theatre's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" As Robert said in post-performance discussion March 12, they portrayed two entirely different married couples, one fictional, the other real, but there is undeniable love underlying both relationships.

Lamb's Players' relationship with Lewis includes the 1999 production of "Til We Have Faces," Robert's adaptation of Lewis'



(l to r) Robert Smyth, Deborah Gilmour Smyth, Brian Salmon and Catie Grady



(l to r) Robert Smyth, Paul Maley, Jonathan Sachs, Jordan Miller, Brian Salmon and John Rosen

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Albert Jones. Photo by Jim Cox.



(l to r) Robert Smyth and Gavin Reid August



Robert Smyth and Deborah Gilmour Smyth as C.S. Lewis and Helen Joy Davidman (Photos by Ken Jacques)

book, which was performed in Cambridge as part of the centennial celebration of Lewis' 100th birthday. Lamb's also produced an unforgettable adaptation of Lewis' "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" in 1997.

With "Shadowlands" Lamb's demonstrates its usual, scrupulous production values, with Mike Buckley's scenic design fluidly presenting the play's many scenes, set in Oxford and environs. The largely male company is adept at creating character from the thin air of Oxford, England, in the early 1950s. Catie Grady contributes many female roles.

Lewis, one of the great thinkers of the 20th century, is the author of books as diverse as "The Chronicles of Narnia," "Mere Christianity" and "The Screwtape Letters," among 60 others. He taught at both Oxford and Cambridge, and lived with his brother Warnie (Brian Salmon) with whom (on the play) he enjoyed a decidedly intimate and comfortable relationship. They meet socially on a regular basis with a group of other male intellectuals that at times (but not in the play) included J.R.R. Tolkien, author of "The Hobbit."

Lewis was a lifelong bachelor, with whom Davidman began corresponding in 1950. In

the play, she visits him, and it is apparent that though she is still married, albeit unhappily, her purpose is to woo Lewis, with whom she has fallen in love through their correspondence. He is quite resistant, as subtly telegraphed by Robert Smyth, throughout the couple's initial meetings and her eventual move, with her son, Douglas (Gavin Reed August), to be closer to Lewis. It's a costume design (Jeanne Reith) miracle how much is learned from Lewis' tweedy jacket, so misshapen from long usage and constant wear that it hangs crookedly upon his body.

When her visa is imperiled, Lewis agrees to marry Joy in a civil ceremony so that she and Douglas may remain in England. Though they continue to live separately, he falls in love with her gradually, and when she is diagnosed with advanced cancer he moves her into the home he shares with Warnie.

The characters of Lewis' male friends, created by John Rosen, Paul Maley, Jonathan Sachs and Jordan Miller, are by degrees stuffy and disapproving and hysterically funny. Lewis' conversion from dependable bachelor to lover was not universally endorsed. However, Lewis' grief is all too real.

A two-hour-plus play dealing with loss and grief may not sound like a fun time; however, the play is rife with humor, mostly due to Davidman, who has wit to match and captivate Lewis. Their love story is exhilarating and life affirming. The play's other great virtue is love, and it is for this that we honor the Smyths, Lamb's and all involved.

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

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Dr. Ink

Much has changed at what used to be The Wellington Steak & Martini Lounge in Mission Hills.

For starters, you can actually see

the small-plates menu are also discounted.

The drink specials are written on a mirrored wall in removable paint markers, which makes for tricky reading against the reflecting daylight. The food bargains of the day aren't listed anywhere. They

Utah offered a smooth, dry finish without the funky sourness that can sometimes taste like rancid white wine in other brands I've tried. This is brewed with salt and coriander, which added complexity while teasing out the malt.

Watlington is known for sourcing produce from local farmers as well



Garden veggies with chimichurri vinaigrette

"Ready Set Gose" sour beer by Uinta Brewing Company

inside the place from the sidewalk, thanks to the installation of big, front windows. The interior is exceptionally brighter with its freshly painted white walls, light-wood table tops, and live greenery dropping from the center of a tall ceiling.

It's now called Bar by Red Door, which remains under the ownership of Trish Watlington. She also runs the adjoining farm-to-fork restaurant, The Red Door.

Gone are the swanky chandeliers and heavy fabrics that defined the dim, loungey setting for eating steaks wrapped in puff pastry. Though still intact is the six-seat bar, now fronted by river stones, and a crafty cocktail list that doesn't exclude martinis.

Happy hour extends to a few different cocktails that change daily, plus a couple of wines and beers that rotate less frequently. Several items from

were rattled off to me by a chipper, fast-talking bartender, which tested the memory banks of my strained brain after a long workday. I craved a printed menu listing all of the offerings as much as I did a beer and nosh.

Skipping over the various cocktails, such as a strawberry daiquiri and "blushing mule" with gin and pomegranate — at least on this initial visit — I caved into my ongoing quest for a palatable sour beer, and found one here.

Served in a can and priced at \$5 during happy hour, the organic "Ready Set Gose" by Uinta Brewing Company in

as from her home garden, so you can bet that any dish involving vegetables here or at The Red Door will taste fresh and bright.

Such was the case in the garden veggies I ordered for \$7 (normally \$8). The medley featured snap peas, zucchini, radishes, baby carrots and sprouts, all flash-sautéed and dressed in a light chimichurri vinaigrette speckled with red chili flakes.

Had I grown up eating vegetables this way, and with a cold beer to wash them down, my parents would have never found smashed peas and carrots hiding under my plate at the end of dinner.❖



A place for drinks and small plates in Mission Hills (Photos by Dr. Ink)

Bar by Red Door

729 W. Washington St.
(Mission Hills)

619-295-6001
barbyreddoorsd.com

Happy Hour:
4 to 6 p.m. daily

RATINGS

Drinks: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

The drink specials are limited to a few cocktails, which I didn't try, plus a couple of wines by the glass and canned beer. The latter included a drinkable sour beer by Uinta Brewing Company, which the bartender said will stick around for the coming weeks.

Food: ⚡⚡⚡⚡⚡

The discounted options change daily. On this visit they included carrot-pesto flatbread, vegan nachos, free-range chicken wings, and a terrific "farm-to-fork" medley of garden veggies.

Value: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

Though the discounts are nominal, many of the drinks and food items are made with organic ingredients.

Service: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

The bartender on duty was attentive and doubled as the server. He was also tasked with reciting the daily specials. A printout listing them would work better.

Atmosphere: ⚡⚡⚡⚡

The remodeled space is quaint and bright, and looks out to the street. It features a small liquor-stocked bar, several tables and a few booths.

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The Wine Lover in Hillcrest kicks off a series of monthly sit-down wine tastings with various winemakers and the establishment's owner-sommelier, Serge Chabl . The first one will be held from 5–7 p.m. Saturday, March 25. It will feature both popular and obscure varietals hailing from different growing regions around the world. Artisan cheeses will also be in the offing.

The tastings continue on the last Saturday of each month through October. They range in range in price from \$30 to \$45, depending on the wines served. Chabl  said an average of five different wines will be poured at the events. Reservations are required. For schedule updates call The Wine Lover or visit the website. 3968 Fifth Ave., 619-294-9200, thewineloversd.com.



Beer, food and art converge in Bankers Hill on March 31. (Courtesy of San Diego Brewers Guild)

The Bankers Hill Business Group will present its fifth annual **Bankers Hill Art & Craft Beer Festival** from 6–9 p.m., Friday, March 31, in conjunction with the San Diego Brewers Guild.

The event spans throughout two levels of **The Abbey**, a 10,000-square-foot historic space that will allow for nearly 15 local breweries and several neighborhood restaurants to dole out samples as local artists showcase their pop-up exhibits.

Among the vendors taking part are **Hillcrest Brewing Company**, **Thorn Street Brewery**, **Pizza Port**, **Mister A's**, **Cucina Urbana**, **Barrio Star**, **Hornblower** and more.

Admission is \$30 (or \$25 during early bird pricing). Attendees must be 21 years of age or older. Buy tickets at bit.ly/2n74j0a. The Abbey is located at 2825 Fifth Ave.

Raffles for various prizes and discounts on pizza and beer are in the offing as **The Haven** in Kensington celebrates its fourth anniversary from 4–9:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 28. The restaurant, a popular destination for Neapolitan-style pizzas and craft beer, was named by owners Lauren Passero and Kate Grimes after a maze of caves that were dug beneath a nearby home more than 75 years ago. 4051 Adams Ave., 619-281-1904, thehavenpizzeria.com.

Talavera Azul in Chula Vista recently partnered with **El Zarape Restaurant & Tequileria**. Starting March 30, daily breakfast will introduced (except Mondays) and feature several popular items from Talavera's morning menu, such as caf  de la olla (Mexican coffee) and five different types of chilaquiles. Various egg plates and granola-fruit bowls will also be available. El Zarape's lunch and dinner menus will remain the same. 3201 Adams Ave., 619-578-2600, elzarape.biz.



Muffaletta sandwiches for a good cause in North Park (Photo by Katie Barton)

San Diego-based **Pure Project Brewing** debuted its latest beer, **The Mind Expander**, on March 19 at **Carnitas Snack Shack** in North Park. The eatery's chef-owner, Hanis Cavin, dished up "specialty bites" to pair with the suds, which the brew masters describe as "one-of-a-kind English cream ale with honey."

In addition, the Shack's special sandwich of the month is a muf-faletta with ham, salami, mortadella, white cheddar and pickled veggies on ciabatta. Available through the remainder of March, it sells for \$11.75 with a portion of the proceeds earmarked for the North Park Public Library. 2632 University Ave., 619-294-7675, carnitassnackshack.com.



Imaginative ceviche coming to India Street (Photo by Jennifer Petit)

Look for a late-March opening of **Karina's Ceviche & More**, a walk-up window in Mission Hills that will sell various ceviches, shrimp cocktail and more than a dozen different types of tacos and burritos. The fast-casual venture is an offshoot to **Karina's Seafood Mexican Restaurants**, and replaces **Saffron Thai Chicken Shop**. The company will mark its neighborhood debut with free tacos on the Tuesday after it opens. Check the website for updates. 3731-B India St., karinagroup.com.



Buttermilk-style sugar pie at Donna Jean (Photo by Roy Elam)

Missouri native Roy Elam has taken animal proteins out of Southern cooking at a restaurant he opened recently in Hillcrest called **Donna Jean**. It's named after his late mother and features dishes such as black-eyed pea burgers, bourbon chili, tem-peh Salisbury steak with red eye gravy, and cast-iron mac n' cheese using cashew milk. The menu extends to a few desserts as well, including non-dairy buttermilk sug-ar pie.

Elam converted to a plant-based diet more than 10 years ago and was head chef at two different vegan restaurants in Los Angeles before moving here. He launched Donna Jean in partnership with the owners of **Evolution**, a vegan eat-ery next door, and **Plant Power** in Ocean Beach. His drink menu includes wine, craft beers, ciders, kombucha, teas and Dark Horse coffee. 2949 Fifth Ave., 619-299-5500, donnajeansd.com.

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

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Catapulted to France

Restaurant Review

Frank Sabatini Jr.



There we were dining for the first time at Et Voila French Bistro just hours after friends touring Paris had taunted us on social media with magnificent pictures of the Eiffel Tower, as seen from their hotel balcony. And earlier that day, my dining companion saw Disney's adaptation of "Beauty and the Beast," set within a fairytale French village and castle. We were in a Francophile state of mind.

No restaurant in San Diego does a better job at sending you to the hexagon country than Et Voila, which was launched nearly a year ago by southern France natives Ludo Misfud and Vincent Viale. Both worked at La Jolla's former fine-dining Tapenade Restaurant; Ludo was its maitre d' for 11 years and Viale served as executive sous chef before moving over to Bernard'O before that closed.

Et Voila captures all the charm of a seasoned Parisian bistro within a linear design featuring old-style globe lighting, classic floor tiling, and silver Champagne buckets parked along the paneled walls. The owners' attention to detail means that tea candles are lit and share plates are set on the tables long before you're seated. Even better, the wait staff is neither overbearing nor aloof, thus striking a conscientious balance I don't witness too often in breezy Southern California.

Ravioli aux champignons is one of Viale's signature appetizers that you'll remember forever. The crimped pasta purses are filled with a duxelle of wild mushrooms, much like a thick paste. They're served in a lush, foamy sauce of port wine, chopped mushrooms, Parmesan shavings and truffle oil.

We left nary a molecule behind after mopping up the bowl with a crusty baguette that is actually imported from France. The bread arrives in regular shipments to the restaurant frozen and half-baked. But nothing is lost in the transport. It was as airy, elastic and crunchy as any I've consumed when foraging the bakeries of Paris.

Less complex, though equally praiseworthy was a trio of phyllo cups oozing with buttery Reblochon cheese. The delicate pastry shells were in poetic contrast to the rich, melty cheese inside — and ultra-savory until swiping them through the accompanying berry jam, at which point they qualified as a semisweet dessert.

Count me among the diners who can't pass up onion soup au gratin when I see it listed on just about any menu. Viale, however, injects it authentically with herbes de Provence and enough sherry to know that it's in there. Capped with a bubbly layer of Emmental cheese and not as salty as

American versions, I was too enthralled to bother much with my companion's carrot-butternut squash soup, which was flavored boldly with ginger and served with tasty sweet-onion madeleines on the side.

For our main courses, she chose seared Scottish salmon plated artistically with cauliflower gratin. Both were set in a pond of lemon beurre blanc and pureed purple romanesco (Roman cauliflower). In classic French style, the flavors and textures were coherently comforting with nuances of butter and cream stemming from some of the components.

Torn between three different foie gras dishes, steak au poivre with frites, duck confit or coq au vin, I chose the latter without regret.

Served in a steel pot, it featured the classic bone-in chicken leg and thigh in a wine-heavy stew of thick-cut bacon, carrots, potatoes, onions and herbs. Coq au vin is a soulful, rustic dish that offers no gourmet surprises. But when carefully constructed by a true French chef like Viale, the meat emerges exceptionally moist and the vegetables maintain their earthy flavors without any one ingredient overpowering the other. This hit all the high points.

So did the soufflé du jour we had for dessert, which was helium-light and escaped the common pitfall of turning into scrambled eggs. Here, the inside had the texture of mousse, and with just the right measures of sugar and vanilla. On this evening it was infused with passion fruit puree and served with a side of berry sauce. Best to order the soufflé midway through your entrée since it takes about 20 minutes to prepare.

With a full bar in place, craft cocktails, whiskeys, tequilas, global wines and local and European beer comprise the drink list. In addition, brunch is served from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, and happy hour featuring reduced prices on food and drinks is offered 4:30 to 7 p.m. Sunday through Friday, and until 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

—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. Reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.✴

Et Voila French Bistro

3015 Adams Ave.
(North Park)

619-209-7759
etvoilabistro.com

Prices: salads, soups and appetizers, \$7 to \$22; mussels and fries, \$19; foie gras dishes and entrees, \$23 to \$29

Seared salmon (top) and cauliflower gratin (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

Carrot-butternut squash soup

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Read the writing on the wall

HouseCalls Michael Good

The ultimate of the antique world is the signed piece. This is an object whose provenance is beyond questioning, because the craftsman who made it has carved, branded, etched or scrawled his name into the surface. Over the years, “signed” has come to mean “labeled by the factory.” And today hardly any furniture is worth signing, because it isn’t worth keeping more than a few years.

Be that as it may, wouldn’t it be nice if finding out who built your old house were as simple as turning over a chair and reading a signature?

As it turns out, sometimes it is. (If you’re good with a heat gun.) In the West End neighborhood of North Park, some builders did sign their work, writing their names above the hall doorway (before painting it over).

John T. Vawter, a San Diego architect who also lived and worked in Los Angeles, left his signature (a stylized letter “V”) on the shingles of the Frank C. Hill House near downtown L.A.

Vawter and his partner Emmor Brooke Weaver left a number of signs on their quirkiest commission, the Amy Strong Castle, near Mt. Woodson. The walls of this amuse-l’oeil is decorated with symbols and mysterious writing. (There’s probably a signature in there somewhere.)

Sometimes the scribbles in an old house are as a sign of nothing — except my own folly. I once found what I thought was the name of a builder on the back of baseboard for a 1912 house in South Park. I’d heard of Swedish contractors and Norwegian contractors — so somehow I got it in my mind that this guy was French (maybe it was the florid, cursive writing). My helper and I tried to decipher the writing aloud, giving it a French spin, “Clo-zay!” “Clo-zette!” Finally, the light came on — dimly. “Closet.”

Lumberyard employees are as fond of writing on wood as editors are of writing on paper. At the Devin and Delayne Harmon residence on Marlborough Drive, I found the name “Donahue” written on the side of a drawer in a closet dresser. The name popped up on three other pieces of wood as we deconstructed and refinished various parts of the house.

But this sign was a red herring — the lumberyard had misspelled the customer’s name. An internet search for a contractor named Donahue turned up a contractor named Ed Donahoe. Searches for Ed Donahoe led to stories about his partnership with Carl B. Hays and, finally, photographs of the house under construction. (The two things that didn’t turn up were the name of the architect and the name of the lumberyard.)

A few blocks away and a few months later on Hilldale Road, I found another contractor’s name written in a similar

cursive style on the inside of a breakfast nook sideboard. Unlike Donahoe, Paul McCoy is a recognized master builder. Like Donahoe, he often worked with Carl B. Hays. (But then, everyone worked with Hays; he’s credited with building more than 600 houses in North Park alone during the 1920s.)

Not all old house writing is done by professionals. I’ve found a child’s crayon scrawls inside a drawer. (And I’ve met the now-grown child, when she came by a yard sale to say she’d once lived in my house.)

Builders found other ways to sign their work than with a carpenter’s pencil. For Nathan Rigdon, it was the octagonal column. For his sometime partner Morris Irvin, it was the eyebrow porch. Master builders and architects could be restless. Their signatures changed. Rigdon moved away from his cast stone fireplaces and window seats to his octagonal columns — but held on to his tendency to push windows together on adjoining walls. When he moved to Los Angeles, he switched to Spanish.

In the 1920s, Americans became obsessed with the



A spinning sun symbol

then-new archeological discoveries in Mesoamerica and Egypt. Mayan and Egyptian iconography began to show up — illogically — in 1920s Spanish Revival houses. American Indian symbols, ancient European motifs and secret society signs were popular too. Everyone was living a hidden life already, making moonshine in the bathtub, and communicating with secret hand gestures and passwords through their speakeasy front door. Whatever the signs and symbols, for homeowners the message was the same: “Come on in — we’ve got whiskey!”

Many of those front doors with their little speakeasy windows were adorned with burned-in decorative symbols (although most of those symbols have since been sanded away). The snow cloud, the Slavic sun wheel, the Egyptian Eye of Horus (which was also a Freemason symbol) show up willy-nilly in pyrographic door designs.

Southern Californians were introduced to Mayan images and symbols at the Panama



Early Nathan Rigdon fireplace: Cowboys and Indians (Photos by Michael Good)

California Exposition from 1915-17. (The plaster reproductions of the Mayan ruins from Quirigua are still on display at the Museum of Man.) The head of the expedition, Edgar L. Hewitt, misread the signs and symbols. He concluded that the Mayans were peaceful. They were not. (They enjoyed internecine warfare, decapitation of prisoners and ritualistic bloodletting.)

He was wrong about the makers of the stelae, too, claiming that the Mayans didn’t sign their work. We now know otherwise. Like artists today, they just wanted a little recognition. Between the bloodletting and the decapitation.

The best example I’ve seen of Mayan tile work in San Diego is the fireplace at Devin and Delayne’s Spanish Revival house in Kensington. (There are a couple of lesser quality versions for sale currently on eBay.) The fireplace is covered with Mayan symbols, taken from the structures at Palenque, Mexico, but as far as I know, it lacks an actual signature. Not that it matters, since everyone agrees it’s the work of Rufus Keeler, chief designer for the Calco tile company. (He installed another example in his own house.)

Like furniture makers of old, lumber mills signed their work with a stamp. And logging companies branded their logs so they could be rounded up like lost cattle if they got loose. I came across a lumber stamp a few weeks ago while working on a Sim Bruce Richards house in Solana Beach. Richards built the place for Herschell Larrick, Jr., who’s father was a lumberman himself — first at Benson Lumber in San Diego, later at Solana Beach Lumber at the corner of Lomas Santa Fe and the Santa Fe Railroad tracks. The stamp was on the backside of a tongue-and-groove knotty cedar board that I was salvaging from the inside of a storage closet. I was using the well-preserved boards in the back to replaced the weather damaged ones at the front. The stamp was hard to read. I could barely make out “Solana” and “Cedar.”

A couple hours on the internet and I found an image of the stamp, in a 1950s newspaper ad for Incense Cedar boards from Solana Beach Cedar and Milling Co. I also found a 1960 newspaper photograph showing Herschell Larrick Jr., the proprietor of Solana Beach Cedar

and Milling Co. demonstrating his new invention for staining cedar. It involved some plastic piping and a felt-covered roller. The photo seemed particularly apt, since this was what I was doing all these years later to those same boards from his mill (without his clever invention to speed things along).

To me, this seemed a sign that the effort we were going through to salvage this 57-year-old wood was somehow merited. It wasn’t just that we were restoring a cool midcentury modern house with a lot of wood (paneled with cedar both inside and out). It wasn’t just that the architect was one of the great San Diego modernists. It was that the owner supplied the wood from his own lumberyard to build his house — and

probably supplied the cedar for Richards’ many other cedar-paneled houses. It hinted at a relationship that hadn’t previously been revealed.

After refinishing the board with the Solana Cedar stamp on it, I nailed it in a place of prominence to the right of the front door, replacing a board that had a big crack in it and had been poorly repaired with caulk. I left the stamp preserved inside the wall like a message across time for another restorer to discover, perhaps in another 57 years, and if he or she’s really curious he or she can find this article on the internet and get the story.

That is, as long as the internet hasn’t gone the way of the signed antique.

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



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FROM PAGE 1

EXHIBIT

Diego Museum of Man in Balboa Park, explores those themes and more. Created in-house, the exhibit will be on view for the next three years.

Sarah Crawford, the exhibit curator, gave San Diego Uptown News a private tour of the new show. When she moved here from Chicago, one of the first things she observed was San Diegans’ fondness for their animals.

“People in San Diego love their dogs,” she said, noting that many bar and restaurant owners go out of their way to welcome canines. That planted a seed in her mind, and soon the concept for the new exhibit began to blossom.

“There’s opportunity and challenges in tackling a topic like animals, but we’ve created an exhibit that feels fresh both in its whimsical, vibrant design and in its non-traditional approach to storytelling,” Crawford concluded. “Living With Animals’ looks at the animals we encounter every day in our lives and homes — our beloved pets, the pests crawling through our walls, and the side of bacon we put on our plates



A dog figure welcomes visitors.
(Photo by Ken Williams)

— and asks how we decide which of these categories they belong in.”

Visitors enter the exhibit through an area dubbed “Living With Pets.”

First up is “The Living Room,” a warm and inviting space located on the museum’s second floor and situated directly above El Prado.

“This space formerly was used as the Time Tunnel, so we opened up the [shuttered] historic windows for the first time in a long time so everyone can enjoy the views,” Crawford said.

Looking out the windows to the west is a view of the top of the historic Cabrillo Bridge, while the east view provides a glimpse of Plaza de Panama.

“The Living Room” is a reflection of the modern world, showing how animals have become such an important part of everyday life. Notice the animal carvings and figurines, “animal” pillows, photos with people and their pets, even an animal trophy on the wall.

A fun “hands-on” activity in “The Living Room” is a card game where you pick the faces

of people out of a hand of cards and try to match them with their dogs. If you think this person shares a home with a bulldog, you lift the canine’s image to see if you picked the right match.

“They say that people look like their dogs,” Crawford said. “Even studies have shown that.”

All of the people and dogs are from San Diego. The humans and their pets were found at dog parks or dog beaches, and the pet owners agreed to participate in the exercise.

The next alcove provides five examples of dog collars throughout history, from a shocking array of spikes designed to prevent worker dogs from being attacked by other wild animals to a crude metal muzzle crafted to protect humans from getting rabies from dog bites.

“The Animals on Our Plates” examines how humans decide which animals are fit for our plates. This is designed to be provocative, to stimulate memories and discussions, and shows how human taste buds have changed over the years.

In a fake dining area, visitors can sit at a table containing five plates representing different parts of the world. For example, we learn that Americans eat far more meat than the Chinese.

Two dining tables project virtual meals from five countries over the last 100 years, when we ate different kinds of meats. Pigeons, for example, were commonly served just two generations ago in the United States.

Crawford said one of the big differences is that humans used to hunt and kill the animals they ate, but that changed later in the 20th century when it became cheaper to buy from the local supermarket.

Another alcove shows hunting tools we once used, such as the halibut hook, the crossbow, and the blood milk flask from Africa.

Tucked away in an area designed for privacy is “From Farm to Factory,” showing historical images from slaughterhouses. The images were taken by the Swift slaughterhouse, which pioneered the modern meatpacking operation.

These images can be disturbing to folks who are unfamiliar with how animals are killed to eat.

“We want people to have a dialogue about the process of slaughtering our food,” Crawford said.

Around another corner is a video area, showing dairy cows, a chicken-grabbing machine and a pig nursery. Again, these videos are not for the squeamish.

A third phase of the exhibit focuses on “Living With Pests.” A large mural — titled “Cockroaches, rats, and pigeons are just animals, but the way we live makes them ‘pests’” — explains how these three animals ended up being smeared with bad reputations. The pigeon was bred to be fast and smart, and their natural abilities came in handy for surviving in a hostile environment.

San Diego imported thousands of pigeons for the Panama-California Exposition in 1915, Crawford said, “because they thought it would



create a ‘big city-like atmosphere’ and ‘feel authentic.’”

She found historical photos of women wearing big hats and fancy clothes, surrounded by hundreds of pigeons in Balboa Park. Today, she said, pigeons are considered a nuisance in many parts of the world.

For centuries, humans have tried to kill off rats. In one corner of the exhibit is a collection of rat traps from across the course of history.

“I bought most of these on eBay,” she said, laughing. “I must have raised some eyebrows somewhere.”

Crawford pointed to one gruesome example, a two-hole rat trap with twin nooses. The rat would enter the trap and its neck would be caught in the noose, which would snap and tighten until the critter was dead.

More than 4,400 rat-trap patents have been filed in the United States.

“And people say you can’t build a better mousetrap,” she said, smiling.

On the lighter side is a whimsical representation of Ma and Pa Rat as tourists, standing on luggage as they stow away on a ship heading abroad. It points out the age-old problem of how humans have unwittingly helped animals to migrate to places where their species have never lived.

Finally, visitors are invited to enter a tent, where they can

hear 12 San Diegans share their stories of impressionable encounters with animals that have affected their lives. The audio was recorded by the So Say We All storytellers group in San Diego. The 90-second audio clips play consecutively as an abstract video is projected on the walls and ceiling.

The exhibit is aimed at a target audience of 18 to 34, but Crawford believes that people of all ages would find something to pique their interest. She again cautioned that some portions of the exhibit might disturb small children or people who aren’t familiar with the complete cycle of the food chain.

“It’s layered enough that even kids can enjoy it,” she said.

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

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Leipzig

The cosmopolitan city of Germany

Global Gumshoe

Ron Stern



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

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

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

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

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

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

by Nov. 9, the Berlin Wall came down, owing, in part, to the pressure exerted by the Leipzig residents.

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

Art and culture

In recent years, Leipzig has emerged as a tourist mecca with museums, restaurants and historical sites to explore. One such area that is being reclaimed is known as the Spinnerei. Situated in an industrial zone and constructed with tons of red bricks, the building was once the largest cotton mill in Europe. Today, it houses 12 galleries and around 100 artist studios, including works from artists like Neo Rauch of the New Leipzig School of modern German painting.

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



The Kroch-Haus building at the University of Leipzig (Photos by Ron Stern)

vendors turning the area into a farmers' market and offering everything from eggs to cheese to flowers. Each hour, the clock tower chimes as if to punctuate the unfailing spirit of the city.

Culinary

The so-called coffee culture is in full brew mode here, and



Specks Hof is the oldest original arcade in Leipzig.

from modern opera to Baroque music to ballets.

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

Beautiful buildings are everywhere and the Old City Hall is a glorious example of Renaissance-period architecture. On weekends, the adjacent market square comes alive with

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

You will never go hungry as Leipzig has more than 1,400 pubs and restaurants as well as sidewalk cafes. Many locals affectionately refer to the latter as LE's, from the German word *freisitz*. Sit outside and watch the world go by while indulging in local cuisine or beer. Grilled bratwurst with German mustard was something I could always find from local vendors, and this is simple, culinary nirvana when served on a crispy roll.

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

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

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

Shopping

There are many other things to see and do here, and shopping ranks high on the list by visitors. You can

start spending your euros as soon as you get to the Leipzig Central Train Station (one of the largest in Europe), which has been converted into a colorful three-floor, 140-shop retail extravaganza.

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

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

Transportation

Bicycles are popular in many parts of Europe, and exploring Leipzig by bike is a fun and leisurely way to see some of the city's most interesting sights. One company (Lipzi Tours) offers routes that run from downtown to Schleußig and Platgwitz, taking you along the Karl Hein Canal and eventually to the aforementioned Spinnerei. In addition to two-wheel transportation, there are tour buses and boat rides along more than 200 kilometers of waterways and canals that intertwine themselves around the city. The Leipzig Card provides unlimited public transportation and also special deals on tours, cultural events and restaurants.

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

—Contact Ron Stern at travelwriter01@comcast.net or visit his blog at globalgumshoe.com. This was a sponsored visit, however, all opinions are the author's.❖



The old City Hall building in Leipzig, Germany

Hotel Fregehaus

Katharinesnstrasse 11
Leipzig
+49 341 26393157

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

Lipzi Tours

Holbeinstraße 8,
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Tapping into her roots

Author, an appellate judge, writes short-story collection about Syrian immigrants

By Jennifer Coburn

If you ask most bestselling authors how they made it as novelists, you'll hear about workshops, writers' groups or backgrounds in journalism. Rarely will you hear a career trajectory like Patricia D. Benke's.

Benke was a San Diego appellate court judge who was being considered for the California Supreme Court when she told a newspaper reporter that she enjoyed writing fiction. Less than a week after the news story ran, a literary agent called her and asked if she'd like to write a book. This led to a four-book contract with Avon/Hearst and the Judith Thornton legal mystery series, which had a loyal following for more than a decade.

Initial print runs on Benke's books were 100,000. And her publisher splurged for extensive book tours where she was chauffeured to engagements in limousines.

"They gave me the royal treatment," Benke said.

But despite the success of her legal mystery books, the author was being pulled in a different direction entirely — a feeling that compelled her to write accounts of Syrian immigrants in the United States throughout the 20th century.

The result is a collection of 12 short stories, which Benke recently published independently, titled "Qudeen the Magnificent."

"I knew that walking away from the Judith Thornton series meant starting over entirely, but I had to write this book," she said. "I changed, and what became most important to me was sharing my great love of the immigrant experience."

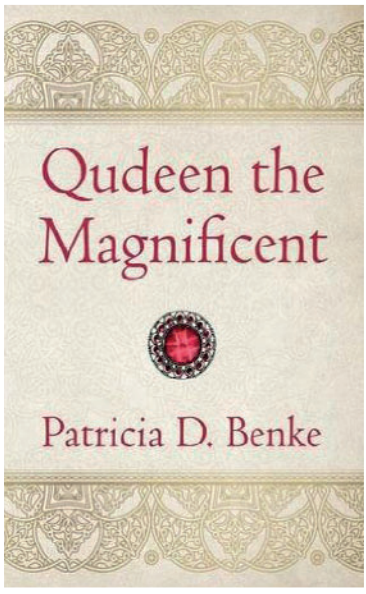
Her publisher told her she was on her own. Even her agent told her she was crazy. Benke said when she made this decision eight years ago, she understood the risks of abandoning her successful series to write about immigrants from a nation most Americans had never heard of, but took the leap anyway.

"I desperately wanted to write about immigrants," she said. "All of the stories are about Syrian girls, but the experiences are universal among people who maintain their deep connection to their past while embracing their new American culture."

Benke's family immigrated from Syria in 1911 where Christians were being persecuted. Throughout her life, Benke heard stories about Syrian immigrants in Pennsylvania where she was born, and California where she has spent most of her life. The stories are billed as fiction, although Benke said that many of the pieces have roots in real life.

"I see myself in 'The Beggar's Opera,'" she said of her story of a Syrian girl who forges an unlikely friendship with a homeless musician after World War II.

Benke said much of her imagery is drawn from her grandfather's accounts of his home in Aleppo, the largest city in Syria caught up in the throes of civil war.



"He told us stories about the castle and gave us recipes which they used for the mortar, and told us it was so strong it could never be destroyed," she said. "I always wanted to see the castle."

Sadly, the castle, and much of Aleppo, has been virtually decimated in recent years.

Benke said the characters in this book are immigrants who were all expected to assimilate. The expectation was not only from the community and institutions, but their families.

"I chose to approach the matter of assimilation and change through the eyes of young girls," she said. "They

were all expected to revere American governmental and cultural institutions, and history. Often times these institutions were intransigent in requiring the characters to adjust to America and not the other way around."

As "Qudeen the Magnificent" hit the bookshelves, a question Benke has been continually asked is whether she wrote the stories as a commentary on the current civil war in Syria or the United States' immigration policy.

"I started this book eight years ago when no one was talking about Syria and many Americans hadn't even heard of Aleppo," she said. "The book does not intend political comment or statements, but it does comment on the culture and lives of immigrants and addresses their assimilation, especially as it relates to young girls. For me, it was first and foremost an exercise in exploring complex universal themes. On a more literary note, it is about all people who are displaced and how they obtain acceptance."

Despite her literary success, Benke is keeping her day job on the Court of Appeals.

"I love the law and at the appellate level I'm engaged every day in writing appellate opinions. I find that being both analytical and creative helps me remain more agile in both areas of my life."

—Jennifer Coburn is a writer and author from San Diego. Reach her at jen@jencoburn.com.



Author and San Diego appellate court judge Patricia D. Benke (Courtesy of Patricia Benke)

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9/6

Sudoku Puzzle

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

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Puzzle answers on page 17

Uptown Crossword

Stately

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20								21				22		
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71					72						73			

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

ACROSS

1 Broad-topped hill
5 Pickets
10 Precipitate
14 Hebrew 6th month
15 Racemose inflorescence
16 Puritanical, as a law
17 Red cedar
20 Tennis. ____ ?
21 Cigar
22 French fem. saint
23 Register of abused pinball game
25 Hindu discipline
27 Comforted
31 Novelist-playwright Hughes
35 Old English money of account
36 Comes close
38 Un-inebriated
39 Bit
41 Hang
43 Hindu angel
44 Mah-jongg pieces
46 Graceful waterfowl
48 Pirate beverage
49 Black ink items
51 Evade

DOWN

53 Grooves
55 Eft
56 Catch
59 O'Brien and Boone
61 Make effervescent
65 Freshwater slider
68 Easy gait
69 Verify
70 Take care of
71 Suitable
72 Sutured
73 Greek Mars

26 Animal without feet
27 ____ Rica
28 Avifauna
29 Nabs
30 Sketches
32 Reich president, 1919_25
33 Skit
34 Bindlestiff
37 Franco's country
40 Viscount or baron
42 Made oneself popular
45 Cylindrical Buddhist mound
47 Water conduit
50 Postage and internal revenue
52 Layers
54 Goggle
56 Stuff from Gilead
57 E. Indian fragrant wood
58 Openmouthed stare
60 Put things away
62 Mime
63 Prong
64 Zed and omega
66 Feed the pot
67 Abel's mother

Puzzle answers on page 17

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UPTOWN CALENDAR

FEATURED EVENTS

‘The Conversation’

Saturday, March 25

InnerMission Productions presents “The Conversation” at 5 p.m. at Finest City Improv, 4250 Louisiana St. in North Park. “The Conversation” features monologues, poetry and performances created by San Diego women. The event will be presented as part of Support Women Artists Now Day, an international holiday designed to showcase the power and diversity of women’s creativity. Proceeds will be donated to A Reason to Survive and Art Reach, nonprofit organizations that provide training in the arts to underserved communities. For tickets, call 619-324-8970 or visit bit.ly/2nE7k8C.

Full-day Spring Break Camp

Monday, March 27–Friday, March 31

Bring your kids to Fleet Science Center to experience science, technology, engineering, art and math during spring break. First– through seventh-graders welcome. \$55 to \$70 per day. Camps run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Fleet Science Center, 1875 El Prado in Balboa Park. Visit bit.ly/2lThuPd.



‘I am a Girl’ documentary screening

Tuesday, March 28

The San Diego Coalition for Reproductive Justice, First Unitarian Church of San Diego and the Lawyers Club of San Diego present a documentary about what it means to be a girl in the 21st century. Light refreshments will be available. Social hour 5:30–6:30 p.m. and screening 6:30–8 p.m., 4190 Front St. in Hillcrest. Visit bit.ly/2mHeT34 and RSVP at KLamphere@cox.net.

Meet Councilmember Chris Ward

Tuesday, March 28

San Diego District 3 City Councilmember Chris Ward will share his experiences of his “first 100 days in office” with a Q&A session to follow. The Uptown Democratic Club presents this event at Joyce Beers Community Center, 3900 Vermont St. in Hillcrest. Social time is from 6:30 to 7 p.m.; the meeting starts at 7 p.m. Visit bit.ly/2nEFloP.



Councilmember Chris Ward

Free Immigration Forum

Tuesday, March 28

Free Immigration Forum presented by the San Diego LGBT Community Center, Casa Cornelia Law Center, Alliance San Diego and Ready Now San Diego offer this forum for those who are concerned about upcoming changes in immigration law. Includes confidential legal appointments, and answers to questions about immigration rights and qualification for immigrant benefits. 6–8 p.m. The Center, 3909 Centre St. in Hillcrest. For more information, call 619-263-3423 or email info@readynowsandiego.org or visit tinyurl.com/hnc69sg.

Meet the Artists Night

Friday, March 31

Meet and greet your favorite artists and craftsmen of Creative Crossroads while enjoying complimentary drinks all night from 6 to 9 p.m. at 502 University Ave. in Hillcrest. With more than 40 artists under one roof, there is so much creativity to discover. This mixer is open to the public. Guests can participate in a raffle for a chance to win a \$100 gift card to Creative Crossroads. Visit bit.ly/2nL48Fj.

‘7 Printmakers’ reception

Saturday, April 1

Seven San Diego printmakers will come together to create a show of skill titled “7 Printmakers.” This unique exhibit will include all originals from artists Raymond Brownfield, Robert Fritsch, Igor Koutsenko, Kathi McCord, Julianne Ricksecker, Sфона Pelah and Angelika Villagrana. The public is invited to meet these artists and learn about their processes on April 1, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Ladybug Art Center, 4685 Biona Drive in Kensington. Call 619-563-0082 or visit ladybugartstudio.com.

Free Concert: The Zzymzzy Quartet

Saturday, April 1

Celebrate Jazz Appreciation Month with the Zzymzzy Quartet’s classic jazz and gypsy swing music at 2:30 p.m. in the Mission Hills Branch Library, 925 W. Washington St.

see Calendar, pg 20

DIGITAL GYM GEMS



“Julieta” portrays a middle-aged woman who learns that her long-lost daughter has resurfaced in Madrid. Thus begins a painful reflection by Julieta into her checkered past, flashing back to the moments that define her life. Rated R. 107 minutes. Monday, March 27 to Thursday, April 6.



“Contemporary Color” is a performance event inspired by the phenomenon of color guard, or synchronized dance routines involving flags, rifles and sabers. Teams from the U.S. and Canada perform alongside an array of musical talent. Rated PG-13. 97 minutes. Friday, March 31 to Thursday, April 6.



“Staying Vertical” follows Leo, who is seduced by a woman who later gives birth to their child. She abandons them and Leo finds himself alone with a baby. Leo does whatever it takes to stay standing. Unrated. 100 minutes. Friday, March 31 to Thursday, April 6.❖

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

RECURRING EVENTS

Cinema Under the Stars: Films presented at an outdoor viewing space on various nights of the week. Upcoming films:

●“Passengers” 8 p.m. Friday, March 24 and Saturday, March 25

●“Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them” 8 p.m. Friday, March 31 and Saturday, April 1

Admission: members — \$16; box office — \$17; online reservations — \$19. 4040 Goldfinch St., Mission Hills. Visit topspresents.com or call 619-295-4221.

Mondays

North Park Toastmasters meeting: 6:30–8 p.m., weekly meeting at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 3725 30th St., North Park. 619-694-9148. 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.

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.

Wednesdays

Ikebana International meeting: 10 a.m. in Casa Del Prado, Room 101. The San Diego chapter of this Japanese floral arrangement organization meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Email Yuko Burkett with questions at yukosan@san.rr.com.

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.

Thursdays

Uptown Sunrise Rotary Club meetings: 7 a.m., weekly meeting at Panera Bread, 1270 Cleveland Ave., Hillcrest. Sdurotary.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 Thursday Market: 3–7 p.m., at 3000 North Park Way, between 30th Street and Granada Avenue, North Park, free. Northparkfarmersmarket.com.

Kornflower’s Open Mic: Signups at 6:30 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.

Courage to Change – Al-Anon meetings: 7:15–8:15 p.m., a weekly meeting for friends and relatives of alcoholics at Christ United Presbyterian Church (in the chapel), 3025 Fir St., South Park.

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: 8:30 p.m., chant and sing ancient and contemporary mantras celebrating love and life at Pilgrimage of the Heart Yoga, 3301 Adams Ave., Normal Heights. Free – donations welcome. Pilgrimageyoga.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 Firstuussandiego.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.

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

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

West African dance class: 5:30–7 p.m., Master dancer Djibril Camara from Guinea teaches these classes that are also a great workout for all ages and skill levels at La Vie Dance Studio, 325 W. Washington, Hillcrest. Lavie dance.

To view local community organization meeting information online, visit: bit.ly/2esLpLR.

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

FROM PAGE 1

BANKERS HILL

The project includes traffic-calming measures as well as improvements to protect pedestrians, such as curb extensions, rapid flashing beacons and high visibility crosswalks. Additional lighting and landscaping are on the wish list of enhancements — which are not provided by SANDAG or the city — but would have to be paid for by local community groups, such as property and business owners along the routes, or by a maintenance assessment district (MAD) that would need to be created. VanZeer said the project jumped its biggest hurdle



A bicyclist uses a protected bike lane, which is located between the sidewalk and the parallel parking. (Courtesy of SANDAG)

after clearing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) on July 22, 2016. Now in the final design stage, the project is expected to begin construction in 2018. The budget for the “Fourth and Fifth Avenue Bikeways” portion is \$13.2 million. Metro CDC moderator Leo Wilson took SANDAG to task for poor communication with Bankers Hill property and business owners. “SANDAG should bring property owners to the table regarding this project,” said Wilson, who received reassurances from VanZeer that she would comply. One potential problem appears to be landscaping and lighting. The Metro CDC, for example, wants the project to have enhanced landscaping and streetlights included midblock as a safety feature. VanZeer said she is waiting confirmation from the City Attorney that local parking revenue can be spent on those enhancements. Tom Fox, a parking committee member, said the agency has the money to pay for the enhancements as well as the blinking lights at crosswalks. Several Metro CDC members criticized the proposed acorn-style streetlights, saying

they create light pollution in the neighborhood instead of only focusing their beams downward to the street. Others begged for the elimination of street benches, saying they attract the homeless, and installation of trash receptacles that would prevent the homeless from scavenging and leaving garbage on the streets.

Uptown Gateway

Marcela Escobar-Eck, principal with the local land-use planning agency Atlantic Group, gave a brief talk about the Uptown Gateway concept. She showed a map outlining the Hillcrest core where a group of 15 property owners are hoping to launch the massive Uptown Gateway District project. The “gateway” to


Hillcrest is roughly between Fourth and Seventh avenues and Washington Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Escobar-Eck said one of the proposals calls for building an underground parking garage in the Rite Aid site, on Robinson Avenue between Fifth and Sixth avenues, with a park on top. She said since that concept was floated publicly, Gateway officials have heard negative feedback about underground parking, so they are now open to an above-ground parking structure with a park on the roof. Wilson said Metro CDC would recommend that shuttles run up and down Fourth and Fifth avenues to Bankers Hill, should the Hillcrest garage be built. Escobar-Eck said Gateway officials would work with local parking district officials about providing parking, but Wilson quipped that “parking money [is] for parking, not petunias.” To read more about our coverage of the Uptown Gateway project or the Atlantic Group, visit bit.ly/2nkqm3T.

Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic

John LaRaia, senior development director/capital provider at H.G. Fenton Company, told Metro CDC that his company is in escrow to buy the old

Rees-Stealy Medical Clinic located at 2001 Fourth Ave. LaRaia’s presentation was similar to the one made at the March 7 meeting of Uptown Planners. He said H.G. Fenton opposed the staff recommendation to the city’s Historical Resources Board (HRB) that the entire complex be designated as a historical resource. HRB was scheduled to vote on the matter at its meeting on March 23. The medical clinic was built in three different decades (1926 and 1928, 1938 and 1965) by two master architects (Louis Gill and Homer Delawie) for two of San Diego’s pioneer medical professionals, Drs. Clarence Rees and Clair Stealy. The HRB staff said the three distinct architectural styles are Mission/Spanish Eclectic, Art Deco and Brutalism. LaRaia indicted that H.G. Fenton was willing to preserve the original clinic and the Art Deco structure, but called the nearly windowless Brutalism building “problematic” to work with. Like the Uptown Planners, the Metro CDC members voted 13-0-1 to support efforts to save the first two phases of the clinic. They agreed with the developer regarding Section C, the Delawie addition. To read our coverage of the Uptown Planners meeting on this issue, visit bit.ly/2n6TVFy.

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



MICHAEL KIMMEL
Psychotherapist
Author of “Life Beyond Therapy”
in Gay San Diego
5100 Marlborough Drive
San Diego CA 92116
619.955.3351
www.LifeBeyondTherapy.com



San DiegoCA

Lovely, stunning, beautiful, gorgeous...those are the words your friends and neighbors will use to describe your home after you complete the renovation started by the current owner. This over sized 2 bedroom home features unfinished walls, unfinished floors, and no back exterior wall. It's a true diamond in the rough. Other features include a full set of plans, drawings, and permits. There is a single car detached garage with additional space for a casita, ancillary space, home office or gym.

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