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San Diego Uptown News



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Take a trip down the Rhine River with
travel writer Ron Stern



Art Around Adams features live painting, art vendors, music performances and more. (Photo courtesy of Art Around Adams)

"Anti-street fair" celebrates Adams Avenue businesses and highlights local work

Sara Butler | Editor

"It's just a really nice way to spend a Saturday in San Diego."

That's how North Park artist Jacki Geary describes Art Around Adams, a free two-mile music and art walk along Adams Avenue in Normal Heights and Kensington to be held on Saturday, June 2.

The annual event, founded by Papaha Gosline in 2004, started off with a handful of art displays at a few coffee shops — a skeletal version of what it is today. Now, 14 years later, the event has grown to include more than 80 businesses. Approximately 80 percent of those businesses are returning, with around 20 percent making their debut.

Local art, music, entertainment, culture and more are showcased at and around these Adams Avenue businesses. This year features 138 music performances, 18 stages, 75 impromptu art pop-ups and more than 70 artists.

see Art on Adams, pg 3

Opa!

Greek Festival
showcases 'labor of
love' in Uptown

Sara Butler | Editor

Walking into the Saint Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church on a spring Tuesday morning is a sight to behold. For two months, a huge group of people has filled the church's main hall once a week to diligently handmade trays of baklava and other pastries. Their efforts are for San Diego's Original Greek Festival, an annual event held by the church to promote Greek culture and bring the community together.

The 2018 festival, which will be held on June 8-10, is celebrating its 49th year. Its roots began



(l to r) Volunteer Ioanna Capetanakis with festival chairs Eleni Merziotis, Christine Tradas, Julie Karagianides, Vasiliki Mellos, Gina Balourdas and Christina Marantos (Photo by Sara Butler)

at the Scottish Rite Center in Mission Valley. Shortly after its start, the event outgrew the space and moved to Uptown. This year, the festival has expanded further — having secured the nearby parking lot to add more tents and mitigate the crowds.

Maria Platis, involved with the church and festival for years, said that the weekend is intended to spread awareness of the Greek church and heritage to the neighborhood.

see Greek Festival, pg 2

Uptown News BRIEFS

MUSEUM ACCESS GRANTED TO ALL

On May 29, six museums announced their joint participation in the project 'Museums for All,' a program that provides increased accessibility to cultural institutions for low-income families by offering free or deeply discounted admission tickets.

The six participating museums, mainly located in Uptown and Downtown, include: San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego — Downtown; Museum of Making Music; The New Children's Museum; San Diego Children's Discovery Museum; and San Diego History Center.

"We are proud to participate in 'Museums for All' for many reasons, chief among them being increased museum access," said Judy Gradwohl, president and CEO at The Nat, in a press release. "This program will help serve those who are interested in visiting but lack the financial means to do so. Our hope is that 'Museums for All' will help encourage more people to enjoy the rich museum experiences we offer in San Diego."

Participating museums must offer individual admission fees ranging from free to \$3 for individuals and families presenting a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card and a valid form of photo ID. An EBT card may be used to purchase museum admission under the "Museums for All" program and up to four tickets may be purchased per card.

For additional information about 'Museums for All,' visit ACM's website at bit.ly/2vH6sjg.

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Contact us

Editorial/Letters
619-961-1968
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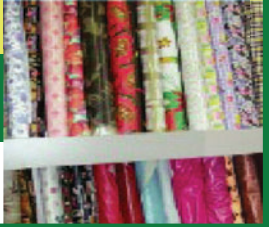


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FROM PAGE 1

GREEK FESTIVAL

"I think [starting the event] was a lot of desire to share the culture — our culture — with San Diego," Platis said. "And it's our major fundraiser. A lot [of the money raised] goes back into the church and a lot goes back into the community with the different projects we do."

Katherine Stewart is a member of the church and has been participating in the festival since it began in 1969, just two years after she moved to San Diego from Greece.

"We do nice church tours and people get to know a little bit more about the customs, and we have the dancing, which is very important," Stewart said. "We just try to bring all the culture — the food, the culture and the customs — together. That's the whole idea."

"Because all minorities are important, right? All the races are important. We want to be part of America and we like it," she continued. "I think that's why the Greeks have been so successful in this country, because they were able to assimilate but to keep part of their customs and their culture without imposing it on anyone else — we want to expose it."

The nearly five decade-old celebration takes place right outside of the 90-year-old church, located at 3655 Park Blvd. The site is in the heart of Uptown and sits between three neighborhoods: Hillcrest, University Heights and North Park.

Platis estimates 12,000 to 14,000 people attend every year — most are locals, but some travel down from other cities.

"I even had a family once that came because they saw us on TV and they were out here on vacation — a family on



Children performing traditional Greek dancing at last year's festival

(Photo courtesy of Maria Platis)

vacation from Ohio; they came and it was cute," Platis said, smiling.

The event is full of festivities, ranging from music to dance to drink, but one of the biggest draws is the food. Greek dishes and pastries are handmade by community members and sold throughout the weekend. Many of the local cooks use old recipes handed down through generations.

The menu is extensive — the complete listing can be found online — but a few of the items include gyros, féta fries, and saganaki, which consists of flaming Greek cheese served with pita bread. Food is served a la carte in the church's dining room. Meals are also offered outdoors at various Greek Food stations, which can be brought into the beer garden.

"Of course, the people like the food because it's all authentic and it is 'a labor of labor,' I call it," Stewart said. "Almost everyone tells us about the food, because we supposedly make the best food. You have to come and try it."

A new element at the long-time event is a pre-order pastry service. People hoping to get a

taste of the handmade goodies without the crowds or long lines can order desserts online and pick up at the festival. These include koulourakia, baklava, melomakarona, kataifi, and kourambietes; the items are also available in a variety pack.

Additionally, there is a beer garden in the church parking lot, as well as the Oracle Wine Lounge in front of the church. The beer garden is the hub of socialization full of lively music and dancing. Oracle Wine Lounge is a small space with a quieter, relaxing atmosphere that serves a large selection of Greek wines imported just for the festival, provided by long-time distributors.

Four bands will perform Greek music on the main stage in the beer garden, and the Oracle Wine Lounge will alternate local musicians all weekend. The headliners — coined The Olympians — travel down from Los Angeles and have participated in the event for 40 years.

"They're the main draw for all the dancing," Platis said.

Dancing is another tradition of the event. The church is home to a dance school and its director coordinates the event performances. Children as young as 5 years old dance at the festival. For attendees unfamiliar with Greek dancing, mid-day lessons will be provided by the school.

Families are encouraged to attend the all-ages festival. Though the little ones can't go into the beer garden or Oracle Wine Lounge, there is a Kids' Fun Zone. Parents can grab a drink and drop them off in a safe, supervised environment. Older children connected to the church lend a hand in managing this Kids' Zone, as well as provide help with other tasks throughout the weekend.

"The children get involved, they help where they can," Platis said. "They're little helpers to help in the Kids Zone and get you more water. They can get involved, and those are good memories to have. As time goes on and you're older you fondly remember those times, and maybe it helps keep you involved."

General admission is a \$3 donation, which goes directly to the church. There is also free admission on Friday night, as well as 11 a.m.–1 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, as "a nice gesture to the community." Additionally, children under 12, active military and first responders receive free admission all weekend long.



Jon Stamatopoulos, who owns Nunu's in Hillcrest and Turf Supper Club in Golden Hill, cooking up souvlaki for guests (Photo courtesy of Maria Platis)



(l to r) Volunteers Kitsa Koutsoukos and Mary Ann Joseph handmaking baklava for the event (Photo by Sara Butler)

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FROM PAGE 1

ART ON ADAMS

“Instead of making it like a street fair, it’s almost like an anti-street fair. Not to say anything bad about street fairs, but we don’t have huge vendor villages,” said Adam Rosen, the executive director of Art Around Adams. “We try to put the action on the sidewalks, in the businesses, in the parks [and] in the parking lots. So, it’s very open feel when you go there and there’s a lot of lively things happening.

“We try to have it organically pop up, whether it be a little table in front of a business or maybe the business is fully immersed with art all around the walls of the business — it varies from spot to spot,” Rosen continued.

Rosen, a former North Park resident, took over the reins in 2008. To put on the event, he enlists the help of his core team, which includes: Bart Mendoza of Blind Spot Records and Vania Zemora of SDML, who both help with booking bands; and Johnny Tran from Thumbnail Gallery, who curates the artists. Additionally, ‘day of’ volunteers help run the festivities.

Rosen and his team find artists using their online submission process, as well as through monthly art competitions. These competitions have been held for the last 10 months, and the winners of each competition have moved on to the final round — a juried and popular



More than 100 live music performances will be offered at the June 2 event. (Photo courtesy of Art Around Adams)

vote finale art contest during Art Around Adams.

Tran also curates a large chunk of the artists, which is how Jacki Geary found out about the event. Geary is a local artist who has called Uptown home for the last eight years. She has participated in the event for a couple of years, showcasing her work at different exhibits and storefronts around the avenue.

Geary’s art “tends to have a vintage slant” with old-fashion styles in female-centric portraits. This year, Geary’s work — including abstract art, prints of portraits and block prints — will be displayed in Mona Lizzy’s, a salon at 2610 Adams Ave.

She describes Art Around Adams as a creative space where locals have the

opportunity to connect.

“It’s just a really positive vibe walking through the streets and it’s a lot of creative energy there,” she said. “And then you see things that you would never have known before, like little restaurants or murals that pop up in the alleys.”

With five years under his belt, Normal Heights resident Paul Naylor is a veteran of the event and decade-long Uptown native, who previously lived in University Heights.

His artwork will be displayed at 4071 Adams Ave. in front of Buddies and Babes, formerly Kensington Pet Supply, for the third year. Animal themes prevalent in his pieces partially attributed to this ongoing pairing. Some of his other art plays around with lighting and is centered on “strange

landscapes and giant squid,” inspired by his love of old sci-fi and horror.

The artist also performed with the former local band Monsters from Mars a few years back. “Whether it’s visual art or music, [the event] is a fun scene to be a part of for sure,” he said.

“If I’m able to get away from my booth for a while, it’s like any art show — it’s amazing to see the kind of diversity in the art and whatever else is going on: the performance, the music, all that stuff,” he continued. “There’s so much going on. I feel like it’s very inspiring and broadens your horizons a little bit.”

Geary describes the event as a creative space where locals have the opportunity to connect with one another over art.

“I think the best part is

having everyone come by and actually being able to talk to the artists,” she said. “Some of the artists are set up, creating their work outside of these businesses. The interaction with the artists is really great, and the music is a lot of fun.”

“I really like meeting with people and talking with people,” Naylor added. “Artists are generally pretty introverted and I’m certainly not out being social a lot of the time. But it’s certainly nice having a connection with people. You never know what [piece of art] is going to really click [with someone].”

The all-ages event encourages families and hipsters alike to attend, including three beer gardens as well as a Kids Zone. Naylor noted that the day isn’t just for art lovers — there is something for everyone.

“If you’re a person who likes art and music, by all means this is going to be right up your alley,” he said. “But even if you think you’re not like that, I’m always amazed by the amount of people who find something that clicks, you just never know. There is such a huge variety of things going on; you might not be into any of the paintings you see, but there’s going to be fire performers and all kinds of really cool stuff.”

Because of the event’s growth, Rosen advises first time attendees to come early to find parking. Alternatively, he encourages visitors to utilize the free bike valet or two trolleys. One of these trolleys

see Art on Adams, pg 5

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The exterior of Solare, the restaurant in Liberty Station where Lotá works

Taste of success

North Park resident crowned best pasta chef

By Lucia Viti

Do you ever wonder what it's like to be named the world's best? North Park's Accursio Lotá, lauding the title of Barilla Pasta's World Champion 2017–2018, knows exactly how it tastes. Selected as one of two contestants to represent America, Lotá bested chefs from six countries through two grueling cook-offs that whittled 20 contestants to 10 in Milan, Italy. Lotá beat out those 10 contestants at the Academia Barilla in Parma, Italy, winning the competition.

Chosen by a panel of Michelin-starred judges — Caterina Ceraudo, Lorenzo Cogo, Alfio Ghezzi, Matteo Baronetto and Roberto Rossi — the culinary prodigy hailed the laurel wreath with his signature dish, Spaghetti alla Carbonara di Mare. Lotá, a 32-year-old father of two, described the international annual culinary championship — now in its sixth year — as stressful and nerve-racking. “The chefs were from five-star restaurants around the world,” Lotá said. “The quality was high. I didn't go with the attitude of winning. I went with the attitude of doing a very good job. I was surprised. I was happy with the quality of the food that I cooked. I was honored to represent the United States.”

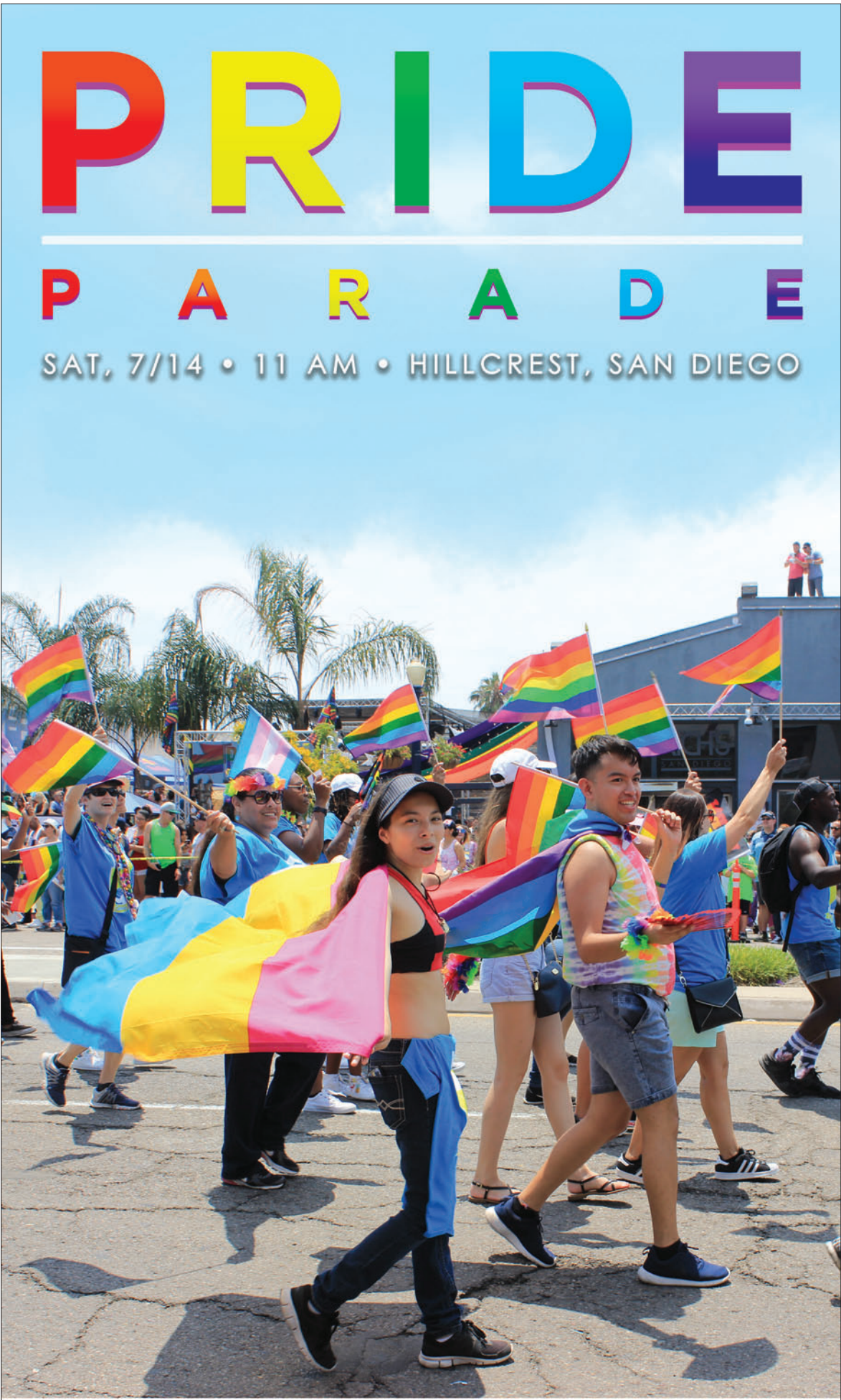
Lotá's dishes “organized and reinterpreted recipes based on a theme using Barillo Pasta.” In addition to winning the title, he was awarded a scholarship for a technical cooking class at Alma, the world-renowned international cooking school of Italian cuisine located in the Ducal Palace of Colorno, 10 kilometers from Parma. Despite competing against Michelin-starred chefs, Lotá was surrounded by a spirit of camaraderie. “The chefs were supportive,” he said. “Everyone was very nice. We shared recipes; it was very cool.” Barilla's Pasta Championship was not Lotá's first epicurean rodeo. Born and raised in the coastal town Menfi, Sicily, he began cooking authentic Mediterranean cuisine alongside



Accursio Lotá is the executive chef Solare and the Barilla Pasta's World Champion 2017–2018. (Photos courtesy of Solare)

his mother and grandmother. When he was not cooking, he harvested olives, milked sheep, and purchased freshly caught fish at the hometown's local fishing ports. Between the ages of 14 and 19, he attended cooking school. At 18 years old, he was selected to represent his school at a national culinary competition. The exposure caught the attention of Sergio Mei, famed chef of Milan's Four Seasons Hotel. Although successful under Mei's tutelage, Lotá yearned to experiment with his other great love — playing the drums. Sparked by his passion for music, the drummer moved to California at age 22. Yet the kitchen called Lotá again, who soon found himself cooking at the Biltmore Four Seasons in Santa Barbara for almost two years. The Marine Room in La Jolla followed suit.

see Pasta Champion, pg 5



(l to r) Brian Smerik, Tommy Smerik, Randy Smerik, Petra Belliti and Accursio Lotá



One of Lotá's pasta dishes



sdpride.org



FROM PAGE 2

GREEK FESTIVAL

In typical Uptown fashion, parking in the church's neighborhood is tough. There is free parking provided at San Diego Unified School District Offices, located at 4301 Campus Ave. off of Normal Street. A complimentary shuttle service will transport visitors to the heart of the action back and forth on all three days.

Two hundred locals fill 850 three-hour volunteer shifts throughout the weekend. Platis noted that every member of the church looks forward to the event in an effort to share their culture and connect with the Uptown neighborhoods and

overall San Diego region.

"We take a lot of pride in [the festival]," Platis said. "There's a lot of pride in presenting our best, making our best [and] being hospitable. It's a time when we can all get together and make new friendships without church, bring the young people up to start learning this and start helping. It's a tradition that spans the generations."

San Diego's Original Greek Festival returns to Uptown on June 8–10, from 5–11 p.m. on Friday, 11 a.m.–10 p.m. on Saturday, and 11 a.m.–8 p.m. on Sunday. For a festival flyer, map and more information, visit sdgreekfestival.com.

—*Reach Sara Butler at sara@sdcdn.com.*❖

FROM PAGE 4

PASTA CHAMPION

In 2012, he partnered with his wife Corinne to open Limone, a fine dining club that coordinated designer, pop-up and themed events. In November of the same year, Lotá went back to his roots to become the executive chef at Solare, Liberty Station's premiere Italian eatery.

Garnering numerous awards and accolades during his five-year tenure, Solare features southern Italian-style cooking, the way Lotá loves to cook.

"At Solare, we are a team," he said. "We cook lighter foods with more vegetables, tiny

amounts of butter with no cream. The food is fresh — market to table with less bread and meat."

Key ingredients, including tomatoes, oregano and special vinegars, are purchased from Italy; fresh produce such as long zucchini squash, basil and herbs are grown in small farm in Point Loma.

"Everything we do in Solare is simple and fresh," Lotá said.

"We're so very pleased with Accursio [Lotá]," said Randy Smerik, owner and general manager of Solare. "We — myself, my two sons and Accursio — have worked together with a vision to achieve everything Solare has become. I knew Accursio had the capability of winning the title of pasta champion, so I was surprised but not surprised. We celebrated in a big way."

"Everyone at Solare was very proud of me," Lotá said.

"Not only is Accursio a great chef, he's a great guy", Smerik continued. "Often you hear stories of chefs screaming, yelling and throwing pans. He's the exact opposite. He's kind and patient, especially with the new people we bring on board. Accursio's title is an amazing recognition for all of us. We're really proud of him."

The pasta champion's winning dish — along with a diverse offering of Italian food and cocktails — can be found at Solare, located at 2820 Roosevelt Road in Point Loma's Liberty Station.

—*Contact Lucia Viti at luciaviti@roadrunner.com.*❖



Local jewelry business Friendly Feathers set up outside of Discount Fabrics at last year's event (Photo courtesy of Art Around Adams)

FROM PAGE 3

ART ON ADAMS

— "The Comedy Trolley" — features family-friendly performances, handpicked by local comedian Emily Hope Allyn.

The Comedy Trolley is just one of many quirks the event has to offer that differentiates itself from other festivals, street fairs and the like.

Other unique elements include the "Super Awesome Showdown," where the intergalactic wrestling warriors will throw down in Unity Mason Lodge parking lot. That same stage will hosts magicians, circus performers and sword fighting shows.

Another eccentric component is 'Electric Giraffe Project,' a life size robotic giraffe that will literally roam the street alongside attendees. Designed by Frank Lawlor, the special guest has touch sensors and can be pet by visitors passing by.

This year's title sponsor is nonprofit CAF's Operation Rebound, a program dedicated to "strengthening the mental and physical well-being of veterans, military personnel and first responders with permanent physical injuries by providing them opportunities to use sports and fitness," according to the organization's website.

In addition to collaborating with sponsors for the festival, Rosen and the Art Around Adams team work with the Adams Avenue Business

Association, as well as the participating business owners, to get input on the event. Rosen said that they have seen a spike in attendance and business participation.

"A good number of people show up to the event and discover the Normal Heights/ Kensington communities through it," he noted. In fact, the San Diego Police Department estimated that last year the event brought out 30,000 people to Adams Avenue.

Part of the ongoing success of this decade old event is attributed to the close-knit neighborhood atmosphere in Uptown that may not be as prevalent in other parts of the region.

"I think the most wonderful thing about Normal Heights and Kensington — also that travels through North Park, South Park, even Hillcrest, etc. — is that there's really a sense of community that you don't get in other parts of San Diego, and that I really love," Rosen said. "You got this neighborly feel and vibe in these areas and they're really true communities, which I think San Diego's lacking a lot of."

Art Around Adams takes place on Saturday, June 2 from noon to 8 p.m. in the Adams Avenue Business District. An event program, map, and detailed list of exhibits, performers and businesses can be found online at artaroundadams.org.

—*Reach Sara Butler at sara@sdcdn.com.*❖

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San Diego Uptown News

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(619) 519-7775
Twitter: @SD_UptownNews
Instagram: @SD_UptownNews



EDITOR

Sara Butler
(619) 961-1968
sara@sdcnn.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Jeff Clemetson, x119
Albert Fulcher, x110

WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA

Sara Butler, x118

COPY EDITOR

Dustin Lothspeich

CONTRIBUTORS

Andy Cohen
Katherine Hon
Dr. Ink
Jean Lowerison
Frank Sabatini Jr.
Mark Muir
Ron Stern
Lucia Vita

SALES & MARKETING

DIRECTOR

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

ADVERTISING CONSULTANTS

Heather Fine, x107
Sloan Gomez, x104
Brenda Vergara, x114
Jim Scannell
Mike Everaert

ACCOUNTING

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

SENIOR INTERN

Eric Diaz

SALES INTERNS

Naja Chaidez
James Gonzalez

SALES ASSISTANT

Erik Guerrero

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Jess Winans

EDITORIAL INTERN

Jordan Damond

PUBLISHER

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

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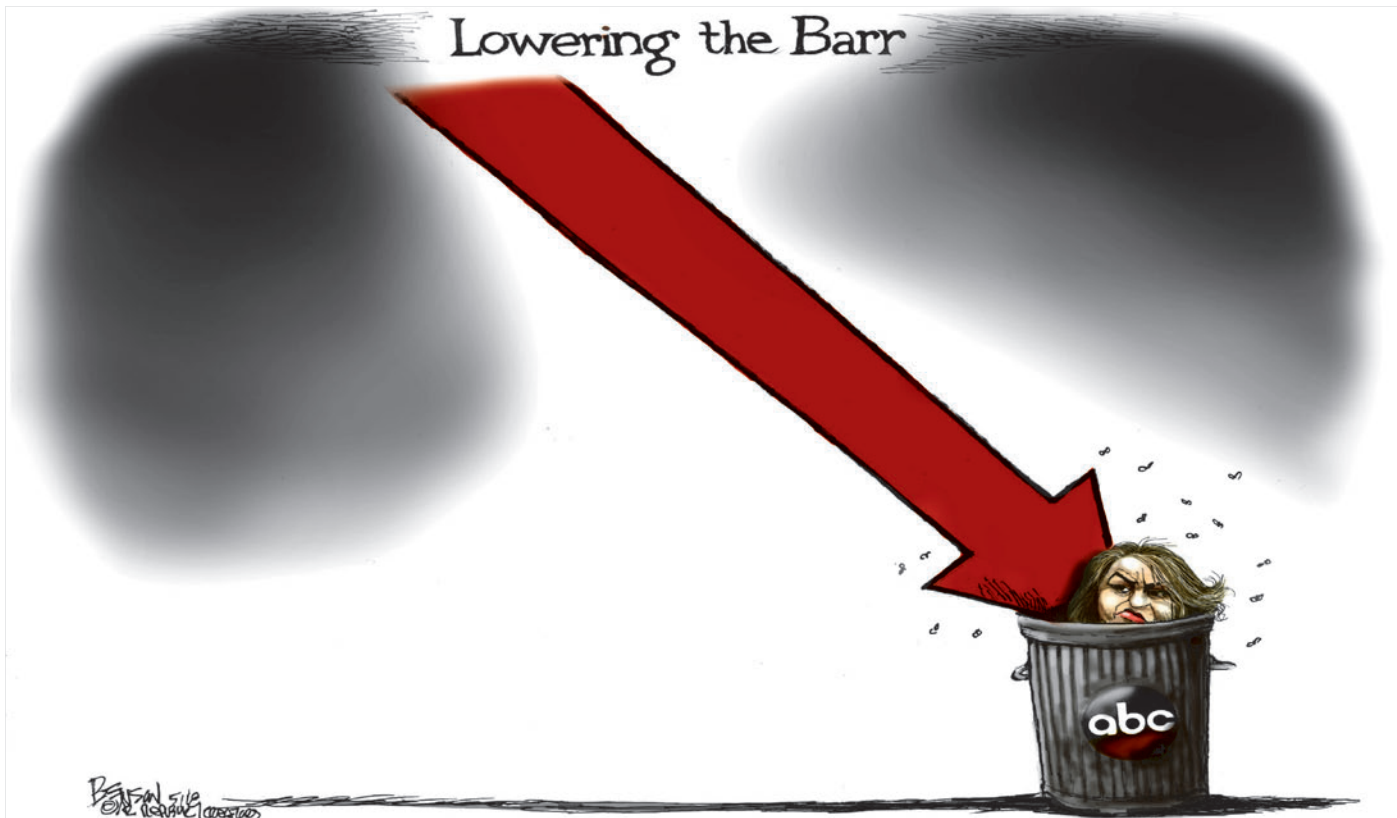
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Guest Editorial

Water tax proposal remains poor policy

By Mark Muir

Like a bad penny, a plan to tax water keeps turning up in Sacramento.

That's right — under two proposals circulating in the Capitol, California would start taxing the most fundamental resource on the planet. Such taxes would needlessly drive up costs for families already struggling to make ends meet and undermine the very goals that proponents profess.

Senate Bill 623 by state Sen. William Monning (D-Carmel) and a budget trailer bill supported by Governor Jerry Brown would add a tax to local residential and business water bills in the name of providing safe, clean drinking water to disadvantaged communities, mostly in the Central Valley.

There's no question that some Californians in low-income, rural areas don't enjoy the same level of safe drinking water delivered by the San Diego County Water Authority and its 24-member agencies. That's why the Water Authority and many other water agencies statewide have made it

a priority to promote sensible funding strategies to address this important issue. We are committed to delivering safe and reliable water, and we wholeheartedly support the goal of ensuring the same for all Californians.

But taxing water isn't the right approach.

Among the many problems with this is strategy is that it sets a bad precedent. California currently does not tax water or essential food products. However, even before the first proposed water tax has been voted on, two additional water tax proposals emerged in Sacramento. Both of those taxes would drive up water bills by as much as \$15 to \$20 each month.

The cost of living in California is already high, and taxing drinking water works against the very people that the funds are intended to help.

Of course, Californians overwhelmingly object to SB 623, legislation that would create a new tax on drinking water, according to a recent poll of likely 2018 voters conducted by Tulchin Research. In all,

73 percent said they opposed the Senate legislation. Over half said they “strongly opposed” the measure, while just 8 percent said they “strongly supported” it.

Thankfully, there are better alternatives.

California appropriately uses its general fund to pay for other important programs and social issues identified as state priorities, including public health, education, housing and disability services. The public supports using the general fund to pay for programs that serve and protect residents and communities in need.

Dozens of local water agencies, chambers and other groups have joined together to advance more appropriate funding solutions — a package that includes federal safe drinking water funds, voter-approved general obligation bond dollars, cap-and-trade revenues, agricultural fees related to nitrate in drinking water, and general fund money. With this approach, we can address an important issue for our state without adding a tax on our most precious natural resource.

—Mark Muir is the board chair San Diego County Water Authority.❖

Letters

Hello, goodbye

[Ref: “Rogers steps down as HTC chair,” Vol. 10, Issue 8, or online at bit.ly/2HZUU4U and “Letters,” Vol. 10, Issue 9, or online at bit.ly/2sv0nXQ]

You're so right Benny, Kath has been a gift for Hillcrest and the world at large. We will miss her but are happy that she has found her “dream job” and wish her all the best.

You, Benny, will be an excellent leader and I am looking forward to working with you as the HTC [Hillcrest Town Council] moves forward. The sign of a good board of directors is one that keeps moving forward while changing and growing and living up to its mission to provide a voice for its residents. You got this.

—Luke Terpstra, via our website.

Up in the air

[Ref: “Living under the airport flight path,” Vol. 10, Issue 2, or online at bit.ly/2H4fAEc]

Except for the safety concerns, I actually enjoy watching and listening to the planes fly over my home in

Bankers Hill. I am almost right under the flight path. The sound is not as loud and does not last as long as it does when they take off, and I used to live under the flight path when they took off, too, in Point Loma. In fact, I look forward to the planes flying in real low, and at night if I don't hear them it is now hard to sleep! (I also like sound of the train and trolley and of the freeway a few blocks away. I'm just weird that way.)

—Chris Forte, via our website.

Leaving home

[Ref: “So long, but not farewell,” Vol. 10, Issue 11, or online at bit.ly/2H3tjvh]

I wish you guys well. Maybe I am the only one thinking that I don't know one person who will travel to Paradise Hills to go to Babycakes. I've lived in San Diego for almost 30 years and I have no idea where Paradise Hills is located. I went to Babycakes because of the walking distance, location and the ambiance. This will likely become a hangout for straight couples or singles who want to mingle,

but there is no way that the gays are flocking to Paradise Hills for these cupcakes. Someone else will move into that prime location in Hillcrest and business will be booming no matter what it is simply because of where it is. You have been voted off the island.

—Derek Ellis, via our website.

A bite of North Park

[Ref: Chicken Pie Shop still serving after 75 years,” Vol. 5, Issue 7 or online at bit.ly/2H3TxxH]

This is a wonderful place to eat with fantastic food. We got the dinner. The servers were quick with getting us food. I have nothing bad to say about this place. I would like up see nutrition information on their products.

—Jessica, via our website.

—Letters to the editor are encouraged. We pull them from email, Facebook and comments left on articles on our website. If you'd wish to send a letter to the editor directly, email sara@sdcnn.com.❖

Heading to the voting booth

Congressional Watch
Andy Cohen

On June 5, Californians will head to the voting booth — if they haven't already mailed in their ballots — and choose, among other things, which candidates will move on to the general election in November. In the Congressional races, California is considered the epicenter of the Democrats' chances of retaking the House of Representatives for at least the next two years. If the Democrats can manage to wrest control of some of the seats currently in Republican hands, it would seem likely — at least according to conventional wisdom — that nationally the Democratic Party will roll.

Some reminders about the California primary election system: In 2008 and 2010, voters chose to revamp our state's election system in two key ways: First, was the way California draws its legislative and congressional district boundaries. Instead of a political process where the political party in control of the state legislature gets to draw the boundaries, California went to an independent redistricting commission with strict guidelines on how to fairly represent the voters in the state. No more gerrymandering.

Second, the state did away with political primaries, instead switching to a "top-two" primary

system, where the top two vote getters — regardless of party affiliation — advance to the general election in November. This system was meant to foster a less polarizing, more representative field of candidates, and to a large extent it has been successful. In the past, this system has been relatively devastating for Republicans, shutting them out of many races statewide. This time, however, it could work in Republicans' favor, particularly in the 49th District.

51st, 52nd, and 53rd Districts

In San Diego's three currently Democratic held seats, none are considered endangered, despite the LA Times' characterization of Scott Peters' (52nd) race as the 13th most competitive in the state. Neither of the nationally recognized congressional handicappers, the Cook Political Report nor Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball, list any of the three as competitive, and with good reason. The three incumbents, Juan Vargas (51st), Peters, and Susan Davis (53rd) are solidly entrenched with good reputations. None are facing a serious challenger in 2018, and none have done anything to draw the ire of their constituents. In fact, perhaps the most serious threat to Peters, Republican James Veltmeyer, lost to Susan Davis by 34 points in 2016.

Davis' most serious challenger, Morgan Murtaugh, is a personality on the ultra-conservative, San Diego-based One

America News cable network, which often makes Fox News look downright moderate in comparison. She's raised a mere \$28,000 (and spent \$7,000) and does not at all fit the district she is running to represent.

In each race, the incumbent has vastly outraised each of their challengers. And since we still live with a system where money matters, barring catastrophe, expect the incumbents to cruise to victory in November.

CA 49

Before Issa announced his retirement, there had already been a mass of Democratic challengers to the seat. But now a bevy of Republicans have jumped in like a pack of hungry hyenas on a meaty carcass.

Here's where the top-two primary system could actually hurt the Democrats this time around: There are four legitimate challengers for the seat, including Doug Applegate, who is back for a second shot at the title; Sara Jacobs, granddaughter of Qualcomm founder Irwin Jacobs, who has the endorsement of Emily's List; Paul Kerr, who has the endorsement of Scott Peters (D-52); and Mike Levin, who is touted as the progressive in the race, with the endorsement of Congressman Adam Schiff, the current ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee. All four have raised and spent tons of money. The problem is that with

the primary system the way it is, the Democrats might end up diluting the vote to the point where Republicans finish in the top two slots.

On the issues, there's really not much separating the Democratic field. They all support some version of Medicare for All; equality measures, particularly for women and LGBT community; they all oppose the Republican tax bill and the income inequality it exacerbates; and they all support comprehensive immigration reform and oppose Donald Trump's border wall.

Rocky Chavez, the current Assemblyman from Oceanside, is probably the best known of the Republican field. He is a moderate and has represented the area in the state Assembly since 2013. On the issues — like the rest of his Republican counterparts — his website is sparse. He supports increased military funding, tax cuts, and ... well, that's about it. Kristin Gaspar, the current San Diego County Supervisor, supports the border wall, tax cuts, the repeal of "Obamacare" and lowering health care costs (though she gives no hint at how that would be done). Diane Harkey of the Board of Equalization supports the border wall and lowering taxes. Policy positions for the Republicans do not appear to be of great concern.

I know I've harped on this race continuously in the recent past, but it happens to be the most consequential Congressional race of the five San Diego area seats and is the one most likely to change parties.

CA 50

Ordinarily, an incumbent under investigation by the FBI for campaign finance fraud would likely be better off retiring rather than suffering the embarrassment of defeat. But Duncan Hunter does not appear to be concerned by the "witch hunt," and the sad fact is that Republican voters in the age of Trump are not deterred by Republican candidates who are potentially criminals. Registered Republicans in the 50th District outnumber Democrats by 47,000.

Hunter's main Democratic opponents are Ammar Campa-Najjar, a small business owner and former Obama administration official; and Josh Butner, a former Navy SEAL medic. Campa-Najjar has outraised Hunter by nearly \$50,000, and Butner by \$110,000. Butner is more moderate, espousing far more middle-of-the-road positions on health care and national security (while not mentioning immigration and only touching on jobs and the economy). Campa-Najjar, like his counterparts in the 49th race, is detailed and a far more progressive-leaning candidate. In many other districts, although young, he'd probably be a rock star candidate.

Don't expect Trump voters, however, to be at all turned off by Hunter's ethically challenged tenure.

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



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A look at FilmOut LGBT Festival's 20th year

By FilmOut San Diego

FilmOut's annual San Diego LGBT Film Festival returns Thursday, June 7 and runs through Sunday, June 10.

The film screenings will be at Observatory North Park, 2981 University Ave. Tickets cost \$10–\$50 per show, online or at the box office.

For more information about each film, visit bit.ly/2kft11I. For post-festival coverage, pick up our next issue of Gay San Diego, out online and on newsstands June 8.

Here is the show schedule for the festival's 20th year:

Thursday, June 7
Co-presenters:
CICA, Smirnoff and
Anheuser-Busch

OPENING NIGHT

7 p.m.
'Ideal Home'
(U.S.)
91 minutes
Director: Andrew Fleming
West Coast premiere

The 20th anniversary Opening Night kicks off with Steve Coogan and Paul Rudd in a delightful rom-com with sardonic wit. They co-star as Erasmus and Paul, a bickering gay couple whose life is turned inside out when a 10-year old boy shows up at their door claiming to be Erasmus' grandson. Neither Paul, nor Erasmus, are ready to give up their extravagant lifestyles to be parents, but maybe this little kid has a thing or two to teach them about the value of family. With Jack Gore, Alison Pill and Jake McDoran.

With:
'Turn It Around'
(Netherlands)
9-minute short film
Director: Niels Bourgonje
West Coast Premiere

When 15-year-old Bram meets Florian at a house party, he immediately falls for him. There's only one problem ... nobody knows Bram is gay.

'Femme'
(U.S.)
17-minute short film
Director: Alden Peters
West Coast Premiere

After being shamed by an online hookup for being too femme, Carson must confront his own notions of masculinity and gender roles within the LGBTQ community.

Friday, June 8
Sponsor: Micky's

1 p.m.
Co-presenter:
San Diego Latino
Film Festival
'Al Berto'
(Portugal)
109 minutes
Director: Vicente Alves do Ó
West Coast Premiere

It's the summer of '75 in Sines, Portugal. Al Berto (Ricardo Teixeira), the writer, embodies an entire moving generation. He and his friends exude youth, eccentricity and hope for the future — but right after the fall of Portugal's dictatorship system, the country is not yet ready for his love story. With Jose Pimentao, Raquel Rocha Vieira, Jose Leite and Joao Villas-Boas.

INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Co-presenters:
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
and Promos RK
3:15 p.m.

'Mario'
(Switzerland)
119 minutes
Director: Marcel Gisler
West Coast Premiere

Mario (Max Hubacher) has fallen in love with new team member Leon (Aaron Altaras), who could pose a threat to Mario's chances of advancing his soccer career. Before long, their relationship is discovered by their team members and rumors begin to spread beyond the locker room. Mario realizes he must make a decision. Does he risk his fame as a soccer star or lose the only man he's truly loved?

FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHT

5:30 p.m.
Co-presenters:
RAGE and
Randall & James
'To A More Perfect Union:
U.S. v Windsor'
(U.S.)
63 minutes
Director: Donna Zaccaro
West Coast Premiere

This film tells a story of love, marriage and a fight for equality. The documentary chronicles unlikely heroes — octogenarian Edie Windsor and her attorney, Roberta Kaplan, on their quest for justice. Beyond the story of what became the pivotal case in the marriage equality movement and the compelling personal, legal and political stories behind it, the film also chronicles our continued journey as a people, as a culture, and as citizens with the promise of equal rights.

With:
'For a Change'
(Israel)
4-minute short film
Director: Keren Nir

Ofer is a transgender man struggling with his developing body and discovering feminine attributes while searching for self-acceptance.

7 p.m.
Co-presenter:
Roberts Electric Service
'Golden Boy'
(U.S.)
105 minutes
Director: Stoney Westmoreland
West Coast Premiere

James (Mark Elias) is a man who gambles on the dangers of being seen versus the quiet life of desperation and invisibility. Saved by CQ (Lex Medlin), a wealthy businessman with more going on than meets the eye and introduced to a world he's not ready to navigate. James chases his dreams -- while losing himself, one piece at a time. Trust. Seduction. Betrayal. Redemption. With Logan Fahey, Paul Culos and Kimberly Westbrook.

With:
'Night Shift'
(U.S.)
13-minute short film
Director: Chris Phillips
World Premiere

After a chance meeting years later, two men reignite an incendiary relationship forged by their mysterious shared past.

9:30 p.m.
Co-presenters: Horrible Imaginings, Cinema Junkie, The Film Geeks SD, and

iHorror
'Devil's Path'
(U.S.)
86 minutes
Director: Matthew Montgomery
World Premiere

This dramatic thriller is Montgomery's feature directorial debut. Two men (Stephen Twardokus and JD Scalzo) encounter each other on a wooded trail in a dangerous gay cruising park where they find themselves caught up in a deadly game of cat-and-mouse. With Steve Callahan.

With:
'Fish Tank'
(U.S.)
6-minute short film
Director: Neal Mulani
West Coast Premiere

When a college student goes to his first hook-up with a mysterious older man, he must determine if his anxieties point to a darker truth about his host for the night.

'Hookup'
(U.S.)
10-minute short film
Director: Stan Madray
West Coast Premiere

Adam is looking for love in all the quick places.

Saturday, June 9
Sponsors: SDGLN
and SDPIX

BEST OF LGBT SHORTS: VOLUME 1

11 a.m.
Co-presenter: U.S. Bank
Short 1: 'Lions in Waiting'
(Canada)
17 minutes
Director: Jason Karman

Ray, the newest hockey team member, fights to have ice-time after being hazed and finds the courage to be comfortable in his own skin.

Short 2: 'Marguerite'
(Canada)
19 minutes
Director: Marianna Farley
California Premiere

An elderly lady and her nurse develop a friendship that will push her to dig-up unconfessed desires and passions forcing her to make peace with her past.

Short 3: 'The Jealous Sea'
(U.S.)
13 minutes
Director: Reid Waterer

When Carlos discovers pictures of a nude male model taken by his photographer boyfriend, he becomes engulfed in jealousy.

Short 4: 'The Quiet Room'
(U.S.)
27 minutes
Director: Sam Wineman

When Michael's attempt at suicide awakens a psych-ward demon, he must stop her before she kills everyone in the hospital he connects with.

Short 5: 'Foxy Trot'
(U.S.)
15 minutes

Director: Lisa Donato

A married lesbian couple take ballroom dance lessons in a heteronormative class.

Short 6: 'Beard'
(U.S.)
18 minutes

Director: Christopher Crompton

West Coast Premiere

Gabe forces his best friend Chrissy to masquerade as his fake girlfriend to hide his sexuality from his peers.

Short 7: 'Be More Popcorn'

(Italy)
7 minutes
Director: Sara Corbioli

This animated film focuses on the awkward situations of Riley and her friends.

1:15 p.m.
Co-presented by:
American Institute
of Bisexuality
'Say Yes'
(U.S.)
96 minutes

Director: Stewart Wade
World Premiere

A young woman (Leah McKendrick) diagnosed with cancer tries to play matchmaker between her soon-to-be widowed husband (Patrick Zeller) and her bisexual twin brother (Matt Pascua). The conflict/resolve with terminal illness, mortality, compassion and sexual fluidity are all touched upon in this poignant and heart-felt film. With Shari Belafonte, Alberto Manquero, Stefanie Estes and Alexandra Paul.

With:
'Morning After'
(Canada)
15-minute short film
Director: Patricia Chica

After a long time abroad, a young man returns home and reunites with friends. A sensual game amongst them forces him to confront deep conflicts within himself that lead to a powerful awakening.

WOMEN'S CENTERPIECE

3:30 p.m.
Co-presented by:
FlawLes
and Gossip Grill
'Wild Nights with Emily'
(U.S.)
84 minutes
Director: Madeleine Olnek
West Coast Premiere

Molly Shannon plays Emily Dickinson in this cleverly witty dramedy. The poet's persona, popularized since her death, became that of a reclusive spinster — a delicate wallflower, too sensitive for this world. This film explores her vivacious, irreverent side that was covered up for years — most notably Emily's lifelong romantic relationship with another woman (Susan Ziegler). After Emily died, a rivalry emerged when her brother's mistress (Amy Seimetz) along with editor T.W. Higginson (Brett Gelman) published a book of her now infamous poems.

With:

'Fishy'
(U.S.)
6-minute short film
Director: Joseph Sulsenti

A man stranded in the middle of the ocean is saved in more ways than one by a mystical sea creature.

5:30 p.m.
Co-presenter:
Woods Real Estate Services
'The Fabulous Allan Carr'
(U.S.)
90 minutes

Director: Jeffrey Schwarz

Armed with a limitless Rolodex and a Benedict Canyon enclave with its own disco, this documentary shows how Allan Carr threw the Hollywood parties that defined the 1970s. A producer, manager, and marketing genius, Carr built his bombastic reputation amid a series of successes including "Grease" and "La Cage Aux Folles" until it all came crashing down after he produced the notorious debacle of the 1989 Academy

see FilmOut, pg 9

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FROM PAGE 8

FILMOUT

Awards. Interviewees include: Patricia Birch, Maxwell Caulfield, Steve Guttenberg, Nikki Haskell, Randy Jones, Randal Kleiser, Sherry Lansing, Lorna Luft, Michael Musto, Robert Osborne, Brett Ratner, Connie Stevens, Alana Stewart, Marlo Thomas and Bruce Vilanch.

With:
‘The Night Cleaner’
(Canada)
5 minute-short film
Director: Blair Fukumura

MEN’S CENTERPIECE
7:30 p.m.
Co-presenter: Ascent Real Estate Inc. and Lawyers Title
‘Still Waiting in the Wings’
(U.S.)
109 minutes
Director: Q. Allan Brocka

This film follows the trials and triumphs of actors waiting tables in Times Square. While dreaming of the Broadway stage, the reality of slinging hash under florescent lights mixes sweet aspirations with bitter drama. There’s no people like show people and there’s no telling what can happen when they’re pitted against each other. Nick Adams, Ed Asner, Carole Cook, Lee Meriwether, Patricia Richardson, Chita Rivera, Seth Rudetsky, Sally Struthers, Bruce Vilanch and Cindy Williams round out this heart-warming homage to Broadway with some delightful cameos.

With:
‘Luber’
(U.S.)
10-minute short film
Director: Jeff Sumner

A single, awkward businessman finds himself attracted to his hunky, rideshare driver but must fight for a chance with him when they pick up an annoying passenger who wants the driver for himself.

9:45 p.m.
Co-presented by:
Live Magazine TV and Sycuan
‘M/M’
(Canada/Germany)
81 minutes
Director: Drew Lint

Matthew (Antoine Lahaie) is a young Canadian new to Berlin. He’s come to make a fresh start, but he feels the isolation of living in a strange, new city. When he meets Matthias (Nicolas Maxim Endlicher) he is entranced. Beautiful and charismatic, Matthias is everything Matthew wants to be. Soon Matthew’s interest escalates, becoming an obsession. He begins to transform himself to embody the object of his desire, including cutting his hair and getting new clothes. When Matthias gets into a motorcycle accident, the opportunity is too perfect. Matthew is Matthias. In a coma in the hospital, Matthias’ waking life, dreams and memories blur. Where the real ends, the artificial begins.

Sunday, June 10
Sponsors: Gay San Diego, San Diego Uptown News

BEST OF LGBT SHORTS: VOLUME 2
Co-presenter: Banner Bank
Short 1: ‘A Stranger To Myself’
(Germany)
12 minutes
Director: Jannik Gensler
U.S. Premiere

A young guy hopes to fill his inner emptiness by having sex with strangers.

Short 2: ‘A Boy Named Skye’
(U.S.)
5 minutes
Director: Jimmy Elinski

Through the world of online dating, Skye tries to find a relationship. Downhearted by his failed attempts at love, he might find what he’s looking for when he least expects it.

Short 3: ‘Softcore’
(Canada)
7 minutes
Director: Varun Saranga
West Coast Premiere

Lila and Ashleigh are two bridesmaids who meet and are irrevocably changed through a humorous discussion about love, sexuality and lost relationships.

Short 4: ‘Meet Up’
(U.S.)
25 minutes
Director: Mark Abramowitz

With the promise of weed and a good time, an emotionally starved gay man decides to give an enigmatic stranger a ride home, completely unaware how the night will unfold.

Short 5: ‘Spark’
6 minutes
Director: Aharonit Elior

A girl finds someone to spark her flame.

Short 6: ‘No More We’
(Sweden)
14 minutes
Director: David Färdmar
West Coast Premiere

One morning it’s all over. “There’s No More We,” Hampus says — ice cold — to his fiancé Adrian. For Hampus it’s a total relief to break up from their destructive relationship, for Adrian it’s devastating.

Short 8: ‘Something About Alex’
(Netherlands)
18 minutes
Director: Reinout Hellenthal

A teenager struggling with his gender attempts to reconcile with his identity.

SAN DIEGO SPOTLIGHT
1:15 p.m.
Co-presenter: KPBS
‘San Diego’s Gay Bar History’
(U.S.)
56 minutes
Director: Paul Detwiler
World Premiere

Since WWII, no less than 135 gay bars have operated in San Diego and provided sanctuary for LGBTQ+ people to discover themselves and form community. These institutions have played an integral role in creating spaces for building friendships and fostering activism, as well as serving as spaces for both grieving and celebration. San Diego’s Gay Bar History examines the roles bars have played across three major time periods: after WWII until the birth of the modern gay rights movement in 1969; during the 1970’s and until the onset of HIV in 1981; during the AIDS epidemic (1981–1995), and beyond. Through archival photographs, historic footage, and interviews with bar owners, bartenders and prominent community members, the documentary provides a glimpse into the rich history of San Diego’s gay history and culture.

With:
‘Deviant’
(U.S.)
10-minute short film
Director: Benjamin Howard
Local San Diego Filmmaker

In the early ’60s, a sexually conflicted teenager finds faith and acceptance after escaping the tortures of electrotherapeutic conversion therapy.

‘Saltwater Baptism’
(U.S.)
17-minute short film

Directors: Russell Sheaffer & Jared Callahan
Local San Diego Filmmaker

Santiago is one week away from becoming the first college graduate in his family. For Santi, graduation is both an achievement and a relief; his conservative university has lifestyle by-laws, meaning that he has to hide his sexuality for fear of expulsion.

3:15 p.m.
Co-presenters:
FlawLes and Gossip Grill
‘Freelancers Anonymous’
(U.S.)
81 minutes
Director: Sonia Sebastian
West Coast Premiere

Rushing to get to her pointless job every morning sucks, and Billie (Lisa Cordileone) is not putting up with it anymore. After telling everyone to [expletive] off, she unfortunately has to break the news to her fiancée (Natasha Negovanlis). When she meets a ragtag group of women who are also looking for employment, Billie is struck with the idea of cultivating their skills to create an app, by designing a prototype for an investor launch party. Billie takes the risk of her life, lying to her fiancée in order to buy time until her plan for Freelancers Anonymous can come to fruition. When the wedding and the launch party are booked for the same day, it all comes to a head. With Alexandra Billings, Megan Cavanagh, Grace Rex, Amy Shiels, Haviland Stillwell, Jamison Scala, Jennie McNulty, Cassandra Blair, Jennifer Bartels and Mouzam Makkar.

With:
‘Gabber Lover’
(France)
13-minute short film
Director: Anna Cazenave
Cambet

Laurie and Mila, both 13 years old, dance to Gabber music on the shores of a remote lake. Mila is in love with Laurie and she wants to tell her.

5:15 p.m.
Co-presenter: Merrill Lynch
‘Every Act of Life’
(U.S.)
90 minutes
Director: Jeff Kaufman
West Coast Premiere

The story of the groundbreaking life and work of four-time Tony-winning playwright Terrence McNally — a personal journey through five decades of the American theatre, the struggle for LGBT rights, triumph over addiction, the power of the arts to shape society ... and finding love and inspiration at all ages. At 78 years old, McNally is one of the world’s most renowned, risk-taking playwrights, but he wakes up every day with the spirit of an ambitious and romantic young man. It’s that attitude, mixed with a quiet courage, that makes him one of the best American playwrights. Interviewees include: F. Murray Abraham, Christine Baranski, Zoe Caldwell, Tyne Daly, Edie Falco, John Glover, John Benjamin Hickey, Larry Kramer, Nathan Lane, Angela Lansbury, Joe Mantello, Marin Mazzie, Audra McDonald, Rita Moreno, Jack O’Brien, Billy Porter, Chita Rivera, Doris Roberts, Richard Thomas, Stanley Tucci, and Patrick Wilson, plus the voices of Bryan Cranston and Meryl Streep.

With:
‘Expiration Date’
(U.S.)
5-minute short film
Director: Shwenn Shunya Chang
West Coast Premiere

A poetic story about searching for an unexpired romance, a mélange of sexy fantasy and innocent love.

CLOSING NIGHT FILM AND PARTY
7 p.m.
Co-presented by:
West Coast and Family Health Centers of San Diego
‘Anything’
(U.S.)
97 minutes
Director: Timothy McNeil
Southern California Exclusive San Diego Premiere

Early Landry (John Carroll Lynch) is a kind and decent man. Grief-stricken over the recent death of his wife, Early moves from Mississippi to Los Angeles and into a run-down Hollywood apartment. He is loved by all his neighbors, especially transsexual neighbor Freda (Matt Bomer). The simplicity of their shared loneliness and growing affection must be reconciled with the complexity of their disparate backgrounds. As non-judgmental as its southern protagonist, the film is a deceptively quiet love story and an all too timely parable on the pressing need to bridge barriers and find common ground. With Maura Tierney.

With:
‘Mrs. McCutcheon’
(Australia)
17 minutes
Director: John Sheedy

Having always felt he was born in the wrong body, 10-year-old Tom chooses the name Mrs. McCutcheon rather than the name he was given at birth. Now at his third school he is having trouble settling in and finding acceptance with his peers.❖

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The Googie-style structure in Hillcrest that last housed **Bull & Grain** — and numerous other food and drink concepts before that — is springing back to life in preparation for a late-June opening of **Ad Libitum**.

Los Angeles transplant

and co-owner Mike Kan told Gay San Diego that the restaurant will have a contemporary feel and feature bourbon that is barrel-aged onsite. The space is undergoing minor cosmetic touch ups and the menu is still in the works.

Ad Libitum is a Latin, musical term for performers who decide which notes and tempos they will play. Kan is a classical-music buff and likes the term because of his disdain for labels and definitions. Thus, he hesitantly described the restaurant's bill of fare as "California cuisine," preferring to not put it into any particular context.

Executive chef Irene Yoon

will helm the kitchen. She is a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu with double degrees in French cuisine and baking, and she spent the last few years working for restaurants in Bali and Seoul.

Kan's business partners include Peter Shih, also a Le Cordon Bleu alum, and Jay Kang, a restaurateur who has opened hospitality ventures in Southern California, Las Vegas, The Bay Area, and the East Coast.

The cocktail program will spotlight house-made syrups and locally sourced ingredients. **1263 University Ave.**



The Air Conditioned Lounge's new "glampisphere" (Photo courtesy of Alternative Strategies)

What the heck is a glampisphere, you ask? The answer lies in North Park's **Air Conditioned Lounge**, which opened a groovy, outdoor space tailored for private events and business meetings. It features an elevated bar, retro-style tables and chairs, and

a soothing waterfall. Situated on the building's back patio, the glampisphere was created expressly to "ignite creativity and spark conversation among guests," according to Air Condition's public relations team. **4673 30th St., 619-535-6007, glampisphere.space.**

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Cocktails are served in vintage mugs and bowls at an iconic Chinese restaurant that reopened in La Mesa. (Photo by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

Fans of old-school Chinese restaurants have been heading to La Mesa since the recent reopening **Wong's Golden Palace** and its adjoining bar, **The Dragon Room**. The restaurant, which opened in 1966 by Chinese immigrants Stanley and Helen Wong, closed in August because of a kitchen fire. The couple's son, Jeff, who now runs the establishment, said damage was confined mainly to the structure's electrical and plumbing systems. The dining room and its original, ornate artwork

were spared and remain intact.

In an effort to attract a new generation of customers, a variety of sushi rolls will soon nudge their way onto a menu that is otherwise frozen in time. It features Chinese-American classics such as egg foo young, chop suey, orange chicken, walnut shrimp and more. Complementing the food are various cocktails still served in kitschy drink vessels ranging from Buddhas and angels to tiki barrels and moat-shaped punch bowls. **7126 University Ave., La Mesa, 619-465-9222.**



Members of St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church are gearing up for their annual Greek festival. (Photo courtesy of St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church)

Expect an abundance of spanakopita, pastitsio, mousaka and other Greek fare at the 49th annual **San Diego Greek Festival**, to be held June 8–10 at **St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church** in North Park. The three-day event features an "Opa!" beer garden serving Greek and domestic brews as well as ouzo; a wine lounge called The Oracle; and a main dining area where visitors can savor everything from Greek-style chicken and cheese-stuffed phyllo triangles to stuffed grape leaves and traditional green beans in tomato sauce.

An outdoor food area will feature legs of lamb, gyros, pork and beef souvlaki, flaming Greek cheese (saganaki), and more. All food items will be sold a la carte.

New to operation is a system that allows consumers to pre-order baklava and koulorakia cookies for pickup.

Festival hours are 5–10 p.m. on June 8; 11 a.m.–10 p.m. on June 9; and 11 a.m.–8 p.m. on June 10. Admission is free on the first day, and \$3 for each of the remaining days. **3655 Park Blvd., 619-297-4165, sdgreekfestival.com.**

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

Quarter pounders from a little burger chain

Restaurant Review

Frank Sabatini Jr.



In an age when you can out-bro your fellow bros by broadcasting your love for certain burgers, along comes a chainlet founded in Portland, Oregon that has yet to register on the radar of cool 30-somethings. Teens and fresh-faced college students, however, appear captivated.

I'm betting that the new Little Big Burger in Mission Valley won't put a competitive dent in places like The Friendly in North Park or The Balboa Bar & Grill in Bankers Hill, where their burgers are trending wildly among savvier audiences. Ditto for dozens of other kitchens throughout Uptown and beyond (Burger Lounge, Cali "O" Burgers, Rocky's Crown Pub, etc.), which probably aren't flinching a spatula over this In-N-Out Burger wannabe.

The menu at Little Big Burger lists four food items in grade-school font: hamburger, cheeseburger, veggie burger and truffle fries. I consumed all of them over a couple of visits. They're followed by two other entries: fountain soda and root beer float, neither of which I bothered ordering. (Give me cold beer or nothing with my burger.)

A sterile red-and-white scheme prevails, save for the bold geometric graphics on a large wall and the designer-gray color of another wall displaying merchandise.

Run by a franchisee through Chanticleer Holdings Inc. — the same company that owns Hooters — the mom-and-pop factor is blatantly absent. This is quite similar to all of the other burger chains operating within a two-mile radius,

including The Habit, In-N-Out, Shake Shack and Fuddruckers. In comparison, Little Big Burger is younger, cuter and smaller, with only about 17 locations in several states since launching in 2010. More are in the pipeline locally and nationally.

Strangely, since opening its two locations in the area months ago — both here and in El Cajon — neither offers a working phone number. So for now, pick-up orders can be placed via the website.

I love burgers just as much as any ravenous kid or foodie hipster. These are made with black Angus beef by Jensen Meat Company in Otay Mesa, which uses a 75/25 lean-fat ratio. (Only the San Diego locations source from Jensen.)

In addition, some of the cheese options are rather chic for a fast-food concept; chevre and bleu reside among the usual lineup of cheddar, pepper jack and Swiss.

So why my lack of affection for these quarter-pound pucks?

When I asked one of the Gen Z grill cooks if the meat is seasoned, he answered, "Only with a little salt and pepper." As it turned out, that was all I tasted. The flavor of the beef was overtaken.

Also, I'm not a fan of patties verging toward the shape of meatballs. These are small in diameter and chubby in stature. What you get are concentrated mouthfuls of meat in fewer bites compared to standard burgers — not necessarily a bad thing among some aficionados I know.

As the burgers sizzle on the griddle, they're squirted periodically with water. The cook said the H₂O helps lock in the moisture. He was right. It made for a reasonably juicy outcome.

What I did enjoy very much were the thick-sliced pickles

Little Big Burger

1620 Camino de la Reina
Mission Valley
littlebigburger.com
Prices: Burgers, \$4.25 and \$4.75;
Truffle French fries, \$2.95

on the burgers and the moist, springy brioche buns. As for the Camden's catsup and "fry sauce" you'll find in squeeze bottles throughout the smallish dining area, they were forgettable.

The catsup tasted flat. And the sauce — an equal mix of the catsup and Hellman's mayo — struck me as unimaginative, like something that might have tasted edgy when I was 10 years old experimenting with condiments.

A couple days later I ordered the veggie burger and truffle French fries. I had high hopes for the mushroom-based patty "made by some woman in San Diego," according to an enthusiastic employee. Rice, peas and carrots are apparently in the mix as well. But not even the tiny flecks of red chili peppers hiding in the pepper jack cheese I chose could pep up the nicely textured patty. Extra onions might have helped.

I'm officially done with truffle fries until places that serve them prove to me that the oil drizzled over the spuds is infused with actual truffles. Based on my research, the flavoring is an altered form of formaldehyde shunned by respected chefs. It's a hyped product that will hopefully disappear one day from every commercial kitchen.

Little Big Burger will surely be well-served by its location in



Little Big Burger in Mission Valley's Park Valley Center plaza
(Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

the Park Village Center, which offers a trolley station and ample parking for motorists willing to cheat on their favorite burger joints. My guess is that in their search for something sexier, few will say they found it here.

—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.❖



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I see vodka, I see France...

Come On Get Happy! Dr. Ink

Setting foot inside Et Voila French Bistro is like being catapulted into some cozy restaurant on a Parisian cobblestone street. The dark wood paneling, the hexagon floor tiles, and the imposing clock with Roman numerals hanging above the bar sends you far outside of San Diego faster than you can toss a fish taco into the air.

And that's a good thing if you're looking for a refined yet casual change of pace from the hipster hangouts dominating this locale. Et Voila relies strictly on its French roots and high epicurean standards to keep customers coming back, with no obvious theme required.

Previously, I had been here a couple times for dinner. Happy hour, offered only at the bar, is no less stellar. Aside from saving a chunk of change on well-executed cocktails and scrumptious noshes, you get to cozily interact with customers who are more interested in conversing than they are in endlessly thumbing their phones.

At least that was the case in two recent visits I made during happy hour, during one of which I found myself

chatting with a trio of middle-age customers on everything from travel and music to San Diego's dockless bicycles and the breathtaking "ravioli aux champignons" two of us were eating.

The mushroom-stuffed purses, served in a port sauce, are one of the bistro's signature dishes. You'd be remiss to overlook them, especially when they're a few bucks cheaper during happy hour.

On that visit, I paired the ravioli with a \$5 glass of Beaujolais — an early wine with a surprising, mature flavor — that offered a little more structure than the young, fruity profile I expected.

What is probably the tastiest cocktail I've had in a year materialized on my most recent visit in the form of a "Riviera Mule." It's constructed with Skyy Vodka, house-made ginger syrup, fresh passion fruit puree and lime juice.

Rarely do I encounter a cocktail that isn't overly cloying or too acidic. This had everything in between those two extremes going for it.

Then came my \$2 baguette with a few fancy balls of softened butter. According to the bartender, the loaves are shipped down from a bakery in Vancouver, Canada, then baked to order. The 5-inch hunk of bread was

wonderfully crusty on the outside, and airy and yeasty inside — exactly like what you'd score in any bistro or bakery in France.

Other drinks and dishes listed on the happy hour menu include 1664 French pale lager on draft; a "tequila mockingbird" made with orange curacao and fruit purees; a cucumber gimlet; lamb sliders with harissa aioli; escargots in garlic and parsley butter; and phyllo pastry stuffed with Reblochon cheese.

Regardless what you consume here, nothing disappoints.❖



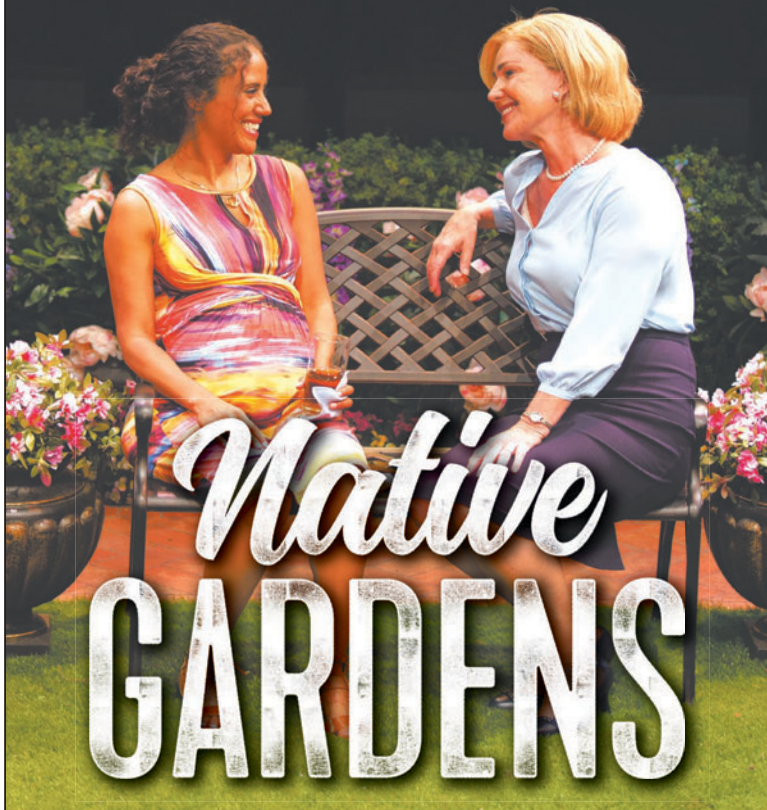
The stately bar feels cozy and European. (Photos by Dr. Ink)



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Kimberli Flores and Peri Gilpin. Photo by Jim Cox.

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through Friday
(until 6 p.m. on Saturday);
9 to 10 p.m., Tuesday
through Saturday

RATINGS

Drinks: ♂♂♂♂♂

The vodka-spiked Riviera Mule with its ginger syrup and passion fruit puree struck the perfect balance between sweet and tart. All of the cocktails use fresh and house-made ingredients, and the wine list offers some coveted finds from France. There are also a few craft beers on discount.

Food: ♂♂♂♂♂

From the house-baked baguettes to the hand-made mushroom ravioli, the food across the entire menu is deliciously upscale.

Value: ♂♂♂♂♂

Crafty cocktails that normally sell for \$12 each drop down to an easy \$7 while wines by the glass start at \$5, and fine noshes are priced on average at \$10 or less.

Service: ♂♂♂♂♂

As you might expect from a French-owned restaurant, the servers are well-trained.

Atmosphere: ♂♂♂♂♂

Old-style globe lighting, hexagon floor tiles and a handsome bar set the stage for what feels like a cozy restaurant in some quaint Parisian neighborhood.

THROUGH THE DARKNESS

A tale of survival, strength and support

Theater Review

Jean Lowerison



Sometimes it seems that world history, which has been advancing for centuries, is regressing to a more restrictive and oppressive place — especially for women.

Afghanistan — and particularly its capital, Kabul — was on the ancient Silk Road between Europe and the East. The country's natural riches made it a popular target for invaders including Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Great Britain.

More recently, the Soviet Union invaded the area in 1979, but withdrew a decade later, unable to overcome the ferocious opposition of the local populace.

The two women in Afghanistan at the center of “A Thousand Splendid Suns” not only confront the casual sexism all women deal with, but also the fundamentalist rules for women imposed when the Taliban took over the country in the late 1980s. These included bans on nearly everything, including education, driving and the ability to go anywhere alone. Women were pretty much confined to the kitchen and the bedroom.

Novelist Khaled Hosseini, whose family relocated to Paris in 1976 and then to San Jose, California in 1986, has written three international best-selling novels about his former home of Afghanistan. “A Thousand Splendid Suns” is one of those stories.

The book has been masterfully adapted for the stage by Ursula Rani Sarma. This joint production of San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater (ACT) and Theatre Calgary plays through June 17 at the Old Globe.

Carey Perloff, celebrating her 25th year as artistic director of San Francisco's ACT, takes the helm to tell this story of persistence and friendship.

Set in Herat and Kabul between 1989 and 2001 — on opposite sides of Afghanistan — “Suns” traces the lives of shoemaker Rasheed (Haysam Kadri) and his two wives, 30-something Mariam (Denmo Ibrahim) and 15-year-old Laila (Nadine Malouf).

Mariam is a country girl from Herat and the illegitimate daughter of Jalil (Jason Kapoor), who was married off by her family to get rid of her. Rasheed treats Mariam badly, partly because she has borne him no children.

Educated 15-year-old Laila (Nadine Malouf) is crazy about her father Babi (Joseph Kamal), an avid reader who reads poetry aloud to her. When Laila and her family are preparing to leave Kabul, Babi has so much trouble picking only a few books to take that Laila volunteers to pick five for him.

Laila always thought she'd marry childhood sweetheart Tariq (Antoine Yared), but the family doesn't move fast enough. When the bombing stops, Laila is left orphaned and wounded on the street. She's picked up and taken to a hospital by Rasheed, who found her unconscious. Then he takes her home and marries her, partly to save her from a worse fate — but mostly to serve him.

Needless to say, Mariam is not thrilled to share the house with this young interloper, even less so when she finds out Laila is pregnant and may be able to give Rasheed the child he wants.

Laila will learn what Mariam already knows: Rasheed is quick to anger and does not spare the rod. Mariam's mother had warned her as a child: “A man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always.”

The name of the game is adaptation and survival. “Suns” is the story of how these women make peace, establish a mutually supportive relationship, and manage to find the strength to persist despite the viciousness and violence of both Rasheed and society.

‘A Thousand Splendid Suns’

Through June 17
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or theoldglobe.org

The show has a terrific cast, including five original cast members. Ibrahim and Malouf, both veterans of the show, are as believable as Mariam and Laila are different in background and class.

Kadri's Rasheed has both a sense of decency and of entitlement, but his volubility makes him a scary presence to Mariam and Laila.

Several other characters are intriguing as well: Laila's deeply caring parents, excellently played by Joseph Kamal and Lanna Joffe; Antoine Yared as Laila's teen crush Tariq; and Nikita Tewani as Laila's first child, daughter Aziza.

Technical aspects of the show are very strong as well. The backdrops in Ken MacDonald's set, together with Robert Wierzel's lighting, almost give us an art show. The set pieces themselves are movable and suggestive.

Jake Rodriguez's sound design and David Coulter's original music are definite pluses.

“A Thousand Splendid Suns” is not to be missed.

—Jean Lowerison is a long-standing member of the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle and can be reached at infodame@cox.net.



Characters Laila (top) and Mariam (bottom) comfort a child (Photos by Jim Cox)

Journalism interns wanted

San Diego Community News Network (SDCNN) is looking for interns for its editorial department. Interns will assist in writing stories and news briefs; compiling calendar items; editing content and layout; and helping out with maintaining the website and social media platforms for all six of the SDCNN publications. This is a fantastic opportunity for students interested in learning all aspects of newspaper production.



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(l to r) Haysam Kadri as Rasheed, Denmo Ibrahim as Mariam, and Nadine Malouf as Laila

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Les Misérables

Broadway nonpareil takes over Downtown

By Jess Winans

Tony Award-winning Broadway production “Les Misérables” graced Downtown with its 2018 tour at the San Diego Civic Theater. Opening May 29 with a stellar performance, the cast and crew mesmerized the audience with staging and production, brought many to tears with emotional musical performances and had the full house in roaring ovations, beginning from the first act. And the acclaims never stopped.

The story begins with a supposed villainous hero, Jean Valjean (Steve Czarnecki in the May 29 production). Valjean (prisoner 24601) spent 19 years a slave to pay for his crime of stealing a loaf of bread to feed the starving son of his sister in the poverty-stricken streets of 19th century France.

To better understand the plot of the Broadway sensation, a little history is needed.

The play is set in 1832 under the rule of King Louis-Phillippe, following the closure of the French Revolution, there was a widening of the preexisting and notorious income gap we often think of when we think of pre-revolutionary France. Adapted from the novel “Les Misérables” by French novelist Victory Hugo, the musical adaptation has received as much acclaim as his novel,

considered one of the greatest novels of the 19th century.

With the widening of the pre-existing wage gap, combined with a cholera epidemic, provided cause for revolt against the French monarchy. But it was the death of beloved General Jean Maximilien Lamarque, on June 5, that was a catalyst to the June Rebellion or Paris Uprising of 1832. It is here where the play is centered.

Valjean escapes his chains and the control of officer and protagonist Javert (Josh Davis) and runs to a different town where he is unable to find work due to his criminal history and condemned by the townsfolk. Bent on hands and knees, surrounded by angry peers, Valjean is saved by the Bishop of Digne (Andrew Maughan) who takes him into his home and gives him food and drink. In return, Valjean steals silver from the bishop but when he is caught doing so, the bishop saves his life from prison again, giving him the silver, and then gives him more. He tells him to go, keep the silver, and be an honest man who does good with such fortune. For now, he was indebted to God.

Valjean moves to a poor town where he creates and manages a factory and eventually becomes mayor. One day a conflict erupts between the workers when it is revealed that one of the factory girls Fantine (Mary



“One More Day” performed by the cast of “Les Misérables” at the Civic Theatre on May 29 (Photo courtesy of Matthew Murphy)

Kate Moore) has a secret child who lives in a distant town with innkeepers whom she sent a monthly payment to take care of. The child goes by the name of Cosette (Elsa Avery Dees/Sophie Knapp). Being kicked out of the factory, Fantine desperately turns to a life of prostitution to be able to support her daughter. There, after turning down and getting into a physical altercation with a wealthy client, she is almost arrested but saved by Valjean. It is determined that she is ill but on her deathbed, she finds comfort in Valjean who swears to find and take care of Cosette.

Young Cosette is found wandering the woods alone at night on errand for exploitation innkeepers (Sarah Cetrulo and Monté J. Howell) who also fill the roles of antagonists and sources of comedic relief.

Valjean finds Cosette and tells her he will take care of her forever, buying her from the greedy innkeepers.

The two move from town to town running from Javert, with Valjean always on the run, clinging tightly to protect Cosette from his past.

Enter Marius, an educated student of the revolution and Éponine (Emily Bautista), the grown daughter of the innkeepers. A love triangle forms when it is revealed in a musical monologue that Éponine secretly loves Marius, but grown Cosette (Jillian Butler) catches his eye in a public park. Marius vows to find Cosette and eventually does so with the help, and heartbreak, of Éponine.

Éponine’s solemn performance “On my Own,” where she professes her unreturned love for Marius was dynamic, sad and endearing all at once.

In battle, Valjean saves Marius, knowing of his love for Cosette and Cosette’s love for him, and brings him to his daughter. The two marry and have a lavish wedding, maybe to show the contrast between classes in revolutionary France. Czarnecki’s rendition of “Bring Him Home” was moving beyond words, hitting every emotion intended in the lyrics, creating an atmosphere of grief and desperation for the love of his daughter and her future.

Sniffles filled the civic center as the curtains drew to a close to a rousing standing ovation. “Les Misérables” gave everyone everything a living musical could offer. It’s laughter over the innkeepers, tears for Eponine’s unrequited love, heartbreak for Valjean’s

intimacy, and fear from Javert’s search. The performance, with group vocals sometimes difficult to understand due to muffled sound, was greatly enhanced with vivid moving picture, smoke machines, mood lighting and brilliant orchestral compositions.

You don’t want to miss this limited time to see Broadway San Diego’s production of “Les Misérables.” For those that know this story, this cast brings new life into an already living, breathing musical paragon.

Directed by Laurence Connor and James Powell, with music by Claude-Michel Schönberg, lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer, original orchestrations by John Cameron, new orchestrations by Christopher Jahnke, Stephen Metcalfe and Stephen Brooker, musical staging by Michael Ashcroft and Geoffrey Garratt, costume design by Andreane Neofitou and Christine Rowland and set and image design by Matt Kinley inspired by the paintings of Victor Hugo, all get props for incredible performances that show that the arts are alive and thriving, and still desperately needed.

“Les Misérables,” as part of a national tour, will be playing at the San Diego Civic Theater at 1100 Third Ave. until June 3. For more information about the production or Broadway San Diego, visit bit.ly/2k4oDfp.

—Jess Winans is the editorial assistant of San Diego Community News Network, the parent company of San Diego Uptown News. Reach her at jessicamwinans@gmail.com.

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JUNE 26 – JULY 1, 2018

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North Park Historical Society receives county honor

PastMatters
Katherine Hon

This year, the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) marks its 10th anniversary as an independent nonprofit organization. In its first decade, NPHS produced three books, achieved designation of two historic districts and two master builders, organized eight annual classic car shows, and conducted countless walking tours.

Many of these accomplishments earned awards from the city of San Diego's Historical Resources Board (HRB). These achievements include publishing "North Park: A San Diego Urban Village, 1896-1946" by Donald Covington in 2007; reprinting Donald Covington's first book, "Burlingame, the Tract of Character" in 2010; and preparing "Images of America: San Diego's North Park," which was published by Arcadia Publishing Company in 2014.

In 2012, both the HRB and the Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO) commended NPHS for contributing to the designation of the North Park Dryden Historic District, a neighborhood of impressive Craftsman homes along 28th Street and Pershing Avenue from Upas to Landis streets. In 2014, SOHO presented a People in Preservation "Towering Achievement" award to NPHS for achieving national historic designation of the North Park Water Tower.

NPHS is proud of all of these awards but was especially honored last month to have the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors declare May 17, 2018 as "North Park Historical Society Day" throughout the county. The Proclamation, which was presented at the May NPHS meeting, reads in part:

"WHEREAS, the North Park Historical Society this year is celebrating a decade of fulfilling its mission to help preserve North Park's cultural and architectural history through research and educational outreach; and

WHEREAS, dedicated to exploring North Park history, the North Park Historical Society's roots go back to 1988 when the North Park Community Association's History Committee conducted research for a book about significant people, development, and events in North Park from the late 1800s forward; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the History Committee 'graduated' to become the North Park Historical Society, an independent, all volunteer, local non-profit organization; and

WHEREAS, since then, the group has continued to produce and market books, conduct



walking tours, write newspaper articles, organize educational presentations and events, share historical information, outreach to schools, and achieve historic designation of important neighborhoods, structures, and builders; and

WHEREAS, the North Park Historical Society has educated hundreds of people about local history and architecture on guided walking tours of the Burlingame Historic District, North Park Dryden Historic District, the commercial core centered on University Avenue and 30th Street, and Morley Field Recreational Area; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Diego is committed to recognizing and honoring those

organizations who are dedicated to the best ideals of public service, and The North Park Historical Society is one such worthy organization; NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT PROCLAIMED by Chairwoman Kristin Gaspar and all members of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on this 17th day of May 2018 that they commend THE NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY on the occasion of its 10th anniversary, and do hereby declare this day to be 'NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY DAY' throughout San Diego County."

NPHS is grateful to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors for the honor. The organization looks forward to many more years of successful projects to celebrate and protect North Park's unique history.

—Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990.❖



This Proclamation from the San Diego County Board of Supervisors declares May 17, 2018 to be "North Park Historical Society Day" throughout San Diego County. (Photo by Katherine Hon)

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

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

Classics

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13					14			15		16			
17					18					19			
20					21			22		23			
			24			25		26					
27	28	29					30		31		32	33	34
35				36				37		38			
39			40		41			42		43			
44				45		46			47		48		
49					50		51			52			
			53			54		55					
56	57	58					59		60		61	62	63
64					65			66		67			
68					69					70			
71						72				73			

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

ACROSS

1 Sugar producer
5 Use a shiv
9 Stare
13 Filmdom's Preminger
14 Musical direction
16 *The Quiet One* author
17 Ginger goodie
18 Greek finale
19 Havoc
20 Large black Turkish cap
22 Lid of La Paz
24 BPOE members
26 Actress Garr
27 Terminating early
31 Have recourse
35 Brisk energy
36 ___ a time
38 Pith sun hat
39 Victim
41 Celebrations
43 Pleasing
44 Subtropical felt hat
46 Ms. Burke
48 Abbess
49 Corn constituent
51 Flat hats
53 Moderate amt.

55 Opposite of aweath-er
56 Tress-management scarf
60 Lead on
64 Soviet sea
65 Examine
67 Storm-coat feature
68 ___ hat
69 Bias
70 ___ even keel
71 Filmdom's Sommer
72 Alphabetic sequence
73 Computer contents

DOWN

1 Pear variety
2 Lab burner
3 Short Latin phrase
4 See 29 Down or 68 Across
5 ___ cap
6 Woolen Scotch cap
7 Earns high grades
8 Procreated
9 ___ cap
10 Fever
11 Stream dam
12 Derivative of lotto
15 More docile
21 Voice
23 Writer Harte
25 Slammin' Sammy
27 Specif. dates
28 Painter's hat
29 ___ hat
30 Strong winds
32 Express a view
33 Come to mind again
34 Numerical group
37 ___ blue streak
40 Hasidic haberdash-ery?
42 Slender dagger
45 Frozen treats
47 Verily
50 Laughs
52 Way
54 Cap beginning
56 Low
57 Anagram for lair
58 Pitching no-no
59 "Man of the red earth"
61 Hebrides isle
62 Paint
63 Poet Millay
66 Resting place

Puzzle answers on page 17

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see Classifieds, pg 17

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FROM PAGE 16

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

Sudoku

Puzzle from page 16

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

FROM PAGE 1

NEWS BRIEFS



Visit Walkabout Australia
On May 25, Walkabout Australia opened at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park. The walkabout features an immersive 3.6-acre experience featuring kangaroos, wallabies, cassowaries, wombats and other Australian animals over

grassland, rainforest, wetland and desert habitats. “Australia is an extraordinary place, and we are thrilled to provide a snapshot of some of the wonders from Down Under at the all-new Walkabout Australia experience at the Safari Park,” Lisa Peterson, director of San Diego Zoo Safari Park, said in a press release. “Not only does Walkabout Australia allow us to connect people to Australia’s fascinating wildlife, but it adds another dimension to San Diego Zoo Global’s efforts to save endangered species, such as the cassowary and Matschie’s tree kangaroo.” For more information about the walkabout, visit sdzsafari-park.org/walkabout.

see News Briefs, pg 20

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Day 1: Amsterdam, Netherlands

If you decide to extend your stay, the Doubletree by Hilton is perfectly situated close to the Amsterdam Centraal station for train and tram service. From here, you can explore the Museum Quarter, Anne Frank House, shopping areas, restaurants and pubs as well as 100 kilometers of interconnected canals.

The Amsterdam City Card provides access to many museums and transportation as well as discounts on food and other services. Don't miss the free canal cruise.

Our Veranda Stateroom was surprisingly spacious (205 square feet), bright and modern with two beds, floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors opening to a veranda, and many amenities.

We were greeted by two staff members, who already knew our names, at the pre-sailing lunch on Aquavit Terrace. This is one of the great things about Viking — the service! The Vidar has a maximum capacity of 190 passengers, which evokes an intimate river-cruising experience. The international crew members really go out of their way to make you feel at home, doing their best to satisfy any request.

The adjacent bar lounge is an open and comfortable space. Beer, wine and soft drinks are complimentary during meals. However, guests can choose to add on a Silver Spirits Package (\$150 per person for a seven-night cruise).

The Vidar also has a library, internet-connected computers, coffee and tea stations, and an onboard concierge service.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served in the ship's restaurant, although you can opt for a bar-style menu in the Aquavit Terrace.

Guests can choose from a daily selection of entrees or pick something off the menu that's always available.

Day 2: Kinderdijk, Netherlands

After sailing through the night, our ship docked briefly at Rotterdam and then sailed onto Kinderdijk.

This small village in south Holland, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, features 19 windmills dating from the 18th century. Optional tours also included a visit to a Dutch cheese factory.

Day 3: Cologne, Germany

With a history dating back 2,000 years to the Romans, Cologne is one of Germany's four cities along the banks of the Rhine River. After being bombed heavily by the allies in World War II, the city has been rebuilt with a mixture of various types of architecture.

Don't miss a UNESCO World Heritage Site that escaped destruction during World War II, the 1880 Kölner Dom, which is the largest Gothic cathedral in northern Europe.

Other sites include the Hohe Strasse — or pedestrian zone with shopping, restaurants and boutiques as well as the chocolate museum, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, and House of 4711 perfumery.

Day 4: Koblenz and Rüdesheim, Germany

Our ship gently slid into dock in the 2,000-year-old city of Koblenz right at the famous German Corner, located at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle rivers.

Not to be missed is the cable car excursion to the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress. From there are sweeping views of Koblenz and both rivers.

From a large city to a small town, Rüdesheim is cozy, charming and picturesque. Located in the Upper Middle Rhine Valley, the area is known for its vineyards. There are also many excellent and scenic hiking trails that overlook the Rhine, ancient castles, and some of the finest Riesling

and pinot noir wines in the region. Plan on stopping at Bruer's Rüdesheimer Schloss for dinner.

Day 5: Heidelberg and Speyer, Germany

Heidelberg, located south of Frankfurt, is our next stop. Old and modern might be a good way to describe Heidelberg, and they are both integrated into the town's infrastructure. Pedestrian paths with cobblestone streets line the main shopping areas with church steeples and a towering city gate still majestically guarding the entrance to the town.

The 12th-century Heidelberg Castle is a great place to view the entire town. The castle was destroyed in earlier days, but the ruins are well preserved. A tour bus and local guide escorted us to the most interesting parts of the fortress, including the world's largest wine cask, which was apparently enough to keep 5,000 guests and castle dwellers in, shall we say, good spirits.

Other sights that should be on your must-see list include the Old Bridge spanning the Neckar River as well as the Student Prison.

The Vidar moved down the Rhine to Speyer where we met up with her via our bus. About a 30-minute walk from the river will take you to this town and its most impressive landmark, the Imperial Cathedral (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and the final resting place of eight emperors from the Holy Roman Empire.

Other noteworthy areas of town to explore include the Jewish quarter, German baths that date from 1126, and a modern Automobile and Technology Museum.

Day 6 : Strasbourg, France

Truly an international city, Strasbourg was selected as a UNESCO World Heritage of Humanity Site and is an amazing place to visit. The pièce de résistance is the Cathedral Notre Dame de Strasbourg.

Day 7: Breisach, Germany

This small German town is the docking point for a foray into the Black Forest, which lies to the east across the Rhine.

Viking offers a couple of



The town of Strasbourg (Photos by Ron Stern)



The windmills of Kinderdijk, Netherlands

excursions including an optional World War II tour to revisit historic battles fought here. We opted for the combination visit to the Black Forest and the medieval town of Colmar.

Sometimes called Little Venice, Colmar is picture perfect with lovely pastel-colored half-timbered houses, Gothic churches and canals intersecting the cobbled lanes. The Black Forest — or Schwarzwald (Black Woods, as it is known in Germany) — is somewhat of a misnomer since the entire area is a rich green tapestry. We visited a cuckoo clock factory, sampled authentic Black Forest ham, and learned how they make their famous Black Forest cake.

Day 8: Basel, Switzerland

This is the final stop along Viking's Rhine Getaway and the disembarkation point. You can choose to extend your trip here or go to another wonderful city — Lucerne, Switzerland.

One of the things that is very impressive about Viking is the organization. From the tour buses to local guides to the program director — ours was Nicole and she was fantastic — everything has been perfected down to a science. You will know when to get ready and leave, what to bring, and how you will be fed throughout the day.

The service is also impeccable. Every crew member is trained to put the needs of the guests first and it shows. I badly sprained my ankle at the beginning of my trip and couldn't find a suitable bandage to wrap it. Once the staff saw me limping, they scoured the local town and delivered just what I needed to my room — with a smile, of course!

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



The city of Koblenz, Germany



Germany's Cologne Cathedral

UPTOWN CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

'A Thousand Splendid Suns' Through June 17

The Old Globe presents a production detailing the epic story of three generations of Afghan women and their remarkable resilience. The show is a theatrical adaptation of the best-selling novel by Khaled Hosseini, "The Kite Runner." \$30-\$88. 8 p.m. at The Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way. Visit bit.ly/2jg8B1r.

'Hippie Days' Through June 17

GB Productions presents their annual melodrama set in a 1968 hippie commune. There will be a hippie clothes contest each night. \$11-\$14. 8 p.m. at North Park Vaudeville & Candy Shoppe Performance Art Theatre, 2031 El Cajon Blvd. Visit bit.ly/2sh05Um.

'Native Gardens' Through June 24

Young power couple Pablo and Tania purchase an upscale house in a historic neighborhood. But a disagreement with their next-door neighbors Virginia and Frank soon spirals into an all-out war of taste, class, and gardening. \$30. Various dates and times at Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way. Visit bit.ly/2scyALq.

Food Truck Fridays Through September 28

Kick off your summer weekends every Friday evening at Balboa Park's after-hours event. Visitors of all ages can enjoy live entertainment while eating dishes from a rotating selection of more than a dozen food trucks. Free. 4-8 p.m. at Plaza de Panama in Balboa Park. Visit bit.ly/2Bfr74N.



'Les Misérables'

Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg's Tony Award-winning musical returns to San Diego from its acclaimed Broadway return. Cameron Makintosh's new production has left critics in awe with its new staging and reimagined scenery inspired by the painting of Victor Hugo. Runs through June 3. Various times at San Diego Civic Theatre, 110 Third Ave. Visit bit.ly/2k4oDfp.

Summer Reading Program

Mission Hills Library presents their Summer Reading Program, with events encouraging kids to pick up a book happening throughout the month. The kick-off event will feature dancing and music from children's band Hulla-baloo. 4 p.m. at Mission Hills Library, 925 W. Washington St. Call 619-692-4910.

Rituals at Space Bar

Resident DJs Deadmatter & Israel will be play classic and new tracks throughout the night. \$5. 21 and up. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. at Space, 3519 El Cajon Blvd. Visit bit.ly/2xyr4AG.



Art Around Adams

Enjoy Adams Avenue in a friendly and relaxed environment where taste-makers and free thinkers mix freely with family and friends. Experience numerous art exhibits, music performances and more. Free. Noon-8 p.m. on Adams Avenue in Normal Heights. Visit bit.ly/2LFtP5W.



Closing Reception: Gloria Muriel's 'Beyond the Eyes'

Join Gloria Muriel as she demonstrates her technique in a live painting session on the closing weekend of her solo exhibition, "Beyond the Eyes." Free. 1-4 p.m. at Sparks Gallery, 530 Sixth Ave. Visit bit.ly/2kr2M1K.



Art/Eat/Art

Mid Century debuts the Tavares Collection, a private estate of over 80 prints, as well as the story of where they came from. Free. 6-9 p.m. at Mid Century, 3791-3797 Park Blvd. Visit bit.ly/2KREDwT.



3D Printing Workshop

Explore new frontiers in technology through a special workshop on computer-aided design (CAD) and 3D printing. \$85-\$95. Ticket includes all workshops. Noon-2 p.m. at The Fleet Science Center, 1875 El Prado. Visit bit.ly/2s6bQgc.

The Memories at Blonde Bar

Rock band The Memories perform with Jimmy Whispers. More guests TBA. \$5. 21 and up. 9 p.m. at Blonde Bar, 1808 West Washington St. Visit bit.ly/2kplEH2.



The Book Catapult: Caitlin Rother

New York Times best-selling author Caitlin Rother will discuss and sign her new book "Hunting Charles Manson: The Quest for Justice in the Days of Helter Skelter." Rother has written or co-authored 12 books, ranging from narrative nonfiction crime to memoir and crime fiction. Free. 7:30 p.m. at 3010-B Juniper St. Visit bit.ly/2J44JiF.

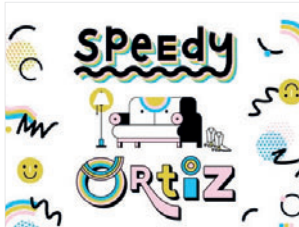
Future Human at The Merrow

Rock band Future Human perform their new tunes with The Gorgeous Boy Scouts and Blacks Beach Boys. \$5. 21 and up. 8 p.m. at The Merrow, 1271 University Ave. Visit bit.ly/2Luc16Y.



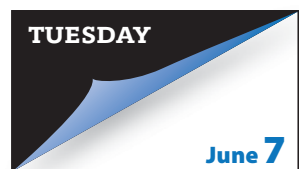
ROVE Abouts: 'Afoot and Afield'

Normal Heights outdoor gear shop, ROVE, offers a monthly speaker series designed to connect San Diegans with hiking, biking, nature and more. This month features Scott Turner, local hiker and co-author of the latest edition of "Afoot & Afield: San Diego County." Free. 6:30 p.m. at Rove, 3275 Adams Ave. Visit bit.ly/2tVLUIr.



Speedy Ortiz at Soda Bar

Indie-rock band Speedy Ortiz perform with Anna Burch and Winter. \$15. 21 and up. 8:30 p.m. at Soda Bar, 3615 El Cajon Blvd. Visit bit.ly/2s9dops.



FilmOut San Diego LGBT Film Festival 2018

FilmOut San Diego kicks off with its Opening Night Film and Party featuring

"Ideal Home," followed by film shorts "Turn it Around" and "Femme." Tickets \$10-\$50. There will also be an Opening Night Party at Sunset Temple, 3911 Kansas St. from 9:30 p.m.-midnight. The four-day festival features 17 films and shorts at \$10 per showing. All access passes for the entire film festival is \$150, which includes for entrance to all films, parties and events. Runs through June 10. Various times at The Observatory North Park, 2891 University Ave. Visit bit.ly/2rOIC1O.

Mission Hills Book Group

This month, Mission Hills Book Group will discuss "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" by Thornton Wilder. Read the book beforehand; copies available at the library's circulation desk. 10-11 a.m. at Mission Hills Library, 925 W. Washington St. Call 619-692-4910.



Crunk Witch at The Merrow

Electronic band Crunk Witch perform their own form of bass-punk music with Your Friendly Bartender, Girlboy and Digital Lizards of Doom. \$5-\$7. All ages. 9 p.m. at The Merrow, 1271 University Ave. Visit bit.ly/2seksuX.



San Diego Greek Festival

Get your annual fix of traditional and contemporary Greek food, music and dancing all weekend. Free. Runs through June 10. Various times at 3655 Park Blvd. Visit bit.ly/2H3Ys1H.



Griffin House at Soda Bar

Folk/acoustic singer-songwriter Griffin House performs. \$18. 21 and up. 8:30 p.m. at Soda Bar, 3615 El Cajon Blvd. Visit bit.ly/2s6ZN2P.



Young Rock Stars Square Off at Battle of the Bands

Recreational Music Center (RMC) debuts their

first-annual Battle of the Bands, featuring nine young rock bands comprised of music students ages 8-18. Event also features an awards ceremony, tasting lounge, silent auction, snack shack and more. Free. Limited seating; reserve online. 5-9 p.m. at White Box Live Arts Theatre, 2590 Truxtun Road. Visit bit.ly/2KOjfs5.



"This is Home" at MOPA

Join Museum of Photographic Arts (MOPA) for a celebration of international film, education on issues facing displaced people and inspiration to get involved. All ticket sales benefit IRC (International Rescue Committee) programs in San Diego. \$10-\$35. 6:30 p.m. at MOPA, 1649 El Prado. Visit bit.ly/2H3WSN4.



Yoga After Dark Festival

Venture Downtown for mood music and silent flow. Horton Plaza Park will transform into a wellness enthusiasts' dream for a one-night event where yoga and silent disco meet under the glow of the moon. \$30-\$45. 6:30 p.m. at Horton Plaza Park, 900 Fourth Ave. Visit bit.ly/2spOIt2.



Shy Boys at Whistle Stop Bar

Indie-pop band Shy Boys performs with Heavy Hawaii. Free. 21 and up. 8 p.m. at Whistle Stop Bar, 2236 Fern St. Visit bit.ly/21M8QAP.

Sketch Party & Videodrome at Whistle Stop Bar

Creating sketches and watch videos while enjoying food and drink. Free. 9 p.m. at Whistle Stop Bar, 2236 Fern St. Visit bit.ly/2H67QL4.



'Pain on the Dancefloor'

Lake Davis — San Diego-based singer, actor, choreographer and playwright — performs his new solo show. \$15-\$25. \$15 food/drink minimum per person. 8 p.m. at 3940 Fourth Ave., Second Floor. Visit bit.ly/2LqnD1R.

RECURRING EVENTS

Mondays

Lestat's West Open Mic

Weekly open mic event hosted by Robby Robertson every Monday. 6:30-11 p.m. at Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave. Visit bit.ly/2nWco63.

Tuesdays

Trivia Night at Brew Project

Here's Johnny! Answer five to seven rounds of questions and participate in team challenges for raffles and prizes. Weekly event hosted by Johnny Grant. 7 p.m. The Brew Project, 3683 Fifth Ave., Hillcrest. Visit bit.ly/2HmaogX.

Lestat's West Comedy Night

Weekly comedy night event hosted by Dustin Nickerson every Tuesday. 9-11 p.m. at Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave. Visit bit.ly/2nWco63.

Thursdays

North Park Farmers Market

Shop more than 90 tents of locally grown produce, artisan grocery items, prepared foods and hand-crafted goods. 3-7:30 p.m. at 3000 North Park Way, stretching from 31st Street to Utah Street, North Park. Visit bit.ly/2H9AItc.

Thursdays at The Ken

San Diego's late-night jazz jam convenes every Thursday night. Hosted by musicians Ian Buss, Robert Dove and Hugo Suarez. \$5. 10 p.m.-1:30 a.m. at The Kensington Club, 4079 Adams Ave. Visit bit.ly/2DFUTwS.

Saturdays

Golden Hill Farmers Market

Stop by the open community space to pick up California Certified Organic Produce from local farmers. 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at B Street between 27th and 28th streets, Golden Hill. Visit bit.ly/2DHRZrg.

Old Town Saturday Market

The street market features work from local artists including paintings, jewelry, photography and more. Every Saturday and Sunday. 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Harney Street and San Diego Avenue, Old Town. Visit http://bit.ly/2KvuTYW.

Sundays

Hillcrest Farmers Market

About 175 vendors offer a variety of locally grown fruit, produce, gifts, arts and crafts, flowers, and more. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on Normal Street between University and Lincoln avenues. Visit bit.ly/2FC4slg.

To view a comprehensive calendar of events happening throughout San Diego, visit our online calendar at bit.ly/2H1lz9m.

—Compiled by Jordan Diamond and Sara Butler. Email calendar items to sara@sdcdn.com.

Community meetings

Mondays

Bankers Hill Parking Committee
First Monday of the month. 5–6:30 p.m. at Merrill Gardens, 2567 Second Ave. in Bankers Hill.

North Park Maintenance Assessment District
Second Monday of the month. 5 p.m. at North Park Recreation Center, 1044 Idaho St. in North Park.

Bankers Hill Community Group
Third Monday of the month. 6:30–8 p.m. at San Diego Indoor Sports Club, 3030 Front St. in Bankers Hill.

Hillcrest Business Association Beautification Committee
Fourth Monday of the month. Visit bit.ly/2odx-T3m to confirm monthly meeting date. 3 p.m. at 3737 Fifth Ave., Suite 202 in Hillcrest.

Tuesdays

Adams Avenue Business Association
First Tuesday of the Month. Board of directors meeting. 8 a.m. at Normal Heights Community Center, 4649 Hawley Blvd. in Normal Heights.

North Park Main Street Design Committee
First Tuesday of the month. 5:30–7:30 p.m. at

North Park Main Street office, 3939 Iowa St., Suite 2 in North Park. 619-294-2501.

Normal Heights Community Planning Group
First Tuesday of the month. 6 p.m. at Normal Heights Community Center, 4649 Hawley Blvd. in Normal Heights.

Uptown Planners
First Tuesday of the month. 6 p.m. at Joyce Beers Community Center, 3900 Vermont St. in Hillcrest.

Hillcrest Business Association
Second Tuesday of the month. Board of directors meeting. 5 p.m. at Joyce Beers Community Center, 3900 Vermont St. in Hillcrest.

Hillcrest Town Council
Second Tuesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at Joyce Beers Community Center, 3900 Vermont St.

North Park Planning Committee
Third Tuesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at North Park Christian Fellowship, 2901 North Park Way in North Park.

Talmadge Maintenance Assessment District
Fourth Tuesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at Copley-Price YMCA, 4300 El Cajon Blvd. in Talmadge.

Wednesdays

University Heights Community Development Corporation
First Wednesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at 4452 Park Blvd., Suite 104 in University Heights.

University Heights Community Parking District
First Wednesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at 4452 Park Blvd. Suite 104 in University Heights.

North Park Main Street
Second Wednesday of the month. Board of directors meeting. 7:30 a.m. at North Park Main Street office, 3939 Iowa St., Suite 2 in North Park. 619-294-2501.

Old Town Community Planning Group
Second Wednesday of the month. 3:30 p.m. at The Whaley House, 2476 San Diego Ave. in Old Town.

Greater Golden Hill Community Planning Group
Second Wednesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at Balboa Golf Course Clubhouse, 2600 Golf Course Drive.

Ken-Tal Community Planning Group
Second Wednesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at Copley-Price Family YMCA, 4300 El Cajon Blvd. in Talmadge.

Burlingame Neighborhood Association
Second Wednesday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at the Eclipse Chocolate Bar & Bistro, 2145 Fern St. in South Park.

Mission Hills Business Improvement District
Third Wednesday of the month. 3:30 p.m. For meeting location, visit missionhillsBID.com.

North Park Community Association
Fourth Wednesday of the month. 6 p.m. at Lafayette Hotel, 2223 El Cajon Blvd. in North Park.

South Park Business Group
Last Wednesday of the month. 8:30 a.m. at Eclipse Chocolate, 2145 Fern St. in South Park.

Thursdays

University Heights Community Association
First Thursday of the month. 6:30 p.m. at Alice Birney Elementary School auditorium, 4345 Campus Ave. in University Heights.

Mission Hills Town Council Board of Trustees Meeting
Second Thursday of alternating months; next meeting March 8. 6 p.m. at 902 Fort Stockton Drive in Mission Hills.

Mission Hills Town Council Town Hall
Second Thursday of alternating months; next meeting is March 8. 6 p.m. at Francis Parker Lower School Library, 4201 Randolph St. in Mission Hills.❖

FROM PAGE 17
NEWS BRIEFS



Rachel Hurst of Kensington

Locals win 2018 Ruby Awards

Several Uptowners were honored at the San Diego Housing Federation's annual Ruby Awards, the county's largest affordable housing industry recognition event.

Held on Thursday, May 3, from 5:30–9 p.m. at the Prado in Balboa Park, recognized leaders who demonstrated excellence in the affordable housing community.

Among the honorees was Kensington resident Rachel Hurst. Hurst received the John Craven Memorial Award from her experience as the city of Coronado's director of Redevelopment and

Housing Services where she developed improvements for the city and Coronado Unified School District's facilities, such as the Village Theatre. Hurst was also recognized for her 11 years of service overseeing the development of the Coronado Senior Housing on Orange Avenue as well as her time spent as the housing and redevelopment director for the city of La Mesa and as a planner for Simi Valley, San Diego and Beverly Hills.

North Park Seniors, located on 4200 Texas St., was also honored. The apartment project consisting of 194 units was awarded the SDG&E Environmental Award and Innovations Award for sustainable development. In addition, North Park Seniors was recognized for partnering with the LGBT Center of San Diego to provide support to LGBT seniors.

Finally, Talmadge Gateway, located at 4422 Euclid Ave., was awarded the CSH Supportive Housing Award for its work done with the PACE program as well as housing 59 chronically homeless senior citizens. For previous coverage of Talmadge Gateway, visit bit.ly/2wFtM6F.

For more information about the 2018 Ruby Awards or to view the whole list of honorees, visit bit.ly/2KnSyK1.❖



Cox High Speed Internet Now Twice as Fast in San Diego

When it comes to the internet, one of the things consumers value most is speed. It frees up their time by completing tasks faster. It makes watching a movie or listening to music more enjoyable. And, for video game enthusiasts, it could be the difference between winning or losing.

So, how much speed do you need? That depends on how you're using the internet, and how many connected devices you have in your home.

Whether you're using the internet for basic search, paying bills, and shopping online, or are a multi-generational household with multiple connected devices streaming simultaneously, there's some great news on the internet speed front.

Cox Communications, which already offers some of the fastest consumer internet speeds in the nation, recently doubled the speed for most of its customers in San Diego County.

Download speeds for Cox High Speed Internet doubled for three of its service plans: Starter, Essential and Preferred. The speed increases went into effect automatically for all Cox High Speed Internet customers with those service plans in San Diego.

The new download speed for Preferred, the company's most popular tier of service, is now up to 100 Mbps.

The Starter and Essential plans are ideal for lighter users with one to five devices connected to the home network. The new download speed for Essential is now up to 30 Mbps and Cox Starter is now up to 10 Mbps.

"Speed increases are one of the many ways we continually add value for our high speed internet customers," said Suzanne Schlundt, Vice President of Field Marketing for Cox Communications. "Today, the majority of Cox customers in San Diego are now enjoying speeds twice as fast."

Even faster speeds are available with the company's Ultimate and Gigablast service plans, which have been made possible by continual investments in Cox's network coupled with the deployment of new technology and infrastructure.

Cox offers a variety of internet service plans, so households can select the option that best fits their needs. Take a short quiz on the speed advisor at www.cox.com to determine which speed is right for you.

Cox is also improving the in-home WiFi experience with Panoramic WiFi, ensuring wireless internet service is "wall-to-wall" fast throughout every nook and cranny of the home.

"Our internet customers have embraced Panoramic WiFi," said Schlundt. "Our technicians will literally walk your home from wall to wall to identify any dead spots and turn them into live spots so that you can have an optimal wifi experience in your home."

Cox plans to invest \$10 billion in its infrastructure over the next five years, with a focus on enhancing the customer experience inside and outside of the home. The company already provides its internet customers with access to more than half a million wifi hotspots nationwide.

Gig Speed Ahead

Cox, which was the first company to launch residential gigabit speeds in San Diego under the name Gigablast, has continued the expansion of gigabit speeds to households countywide. Gigabit speeds (1,000 Mbps) are the fastest residential internet speeds around.

When you have a gigabit connection, you can download 100 songs within three seconds, 1,000 photos in 16 seconds, and a two-hour movie in eight seconds. You can also run dozens of connected devices simultaneously at blazing fast speeds, which is key if you are planning on adding any of the increasingly popular smart home devices to your household.

For more information on gigabit speeds and to see how fast they are, go to www.cox.com/giglife.

7400 HARTFORD CT

Highly upgraded Serramar Tuscan/Mediterranean Style Plan 2 with 3 bedrooms plus loft and 2 1/2 bath, custom swimming pool, waterfalls, and spa. Upgrades including travertine floors, granite counter tops, custom interior paint. Expansive, panoramic views of the ocean, bay, Downtown, Coronado Islands, and all the way to Mexico to the south. This home is situated on a quiet cul-de-sac. This property shows like a model home and the private backyard is the ideal resort-style living and Caribbean-like oasis.

\$799,000

RICHARD T. WOODS
Broker Owner/Attorney
Woods Real Estate Services
930 W. Washington St., Ste.1
BRE #01412706

richtwoods@gmail.com
619.347.9866

WOODS
REAL ESTATE SERVICES
Serving the Greater San Diego Area

www.WoodsRealEstateServices.com

MICHAEL KIMMEL
Psychotherapist
Author of "Life Beyond Therapy"
in Gay San Diego
5100 Marlborough Drive
San Diego CA 92116
(619)955-3311
www.LifeBeyondTherapy.com