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San Diego Uptown News



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(l to r) Jeff Zlotnik and Maggie Lee in Dharma Bum Temple's gift shop, Buddha For You (Photo by Connor McBride)

Buddha for everyone

A look at the history of University Heights temple and gift shop

Sara Butler | Editor

A large, white building on the corner of Tyler and Campus avenues isn't quite what meets the eye.

To the average Uptown passerby, it may resemble a traditional Christian church, complete with a large cross atop the roof, painted glass windows along the perimeter, and

historic plaques and signage around the exterior. Some might be surprised to learn it is actually home to a Buddhist temple.

see Buddha, pg 8

Seeing 20/20

Future plans for El Cajon Boulevard begin to take shape

Sara Butler | Editor

Stretching more than five neighborhoods, El Cajon Boulevard is a vital point of connection for Uptown, as well as a crucial community asset.

So when The El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association (The Boulevard BIA) held a town hall this month about the El Cajon Boulevard's future, residents and business owners alike packed the house to offer their input.

El Cajon Boulevard 20/20 — also referred to as Blvd.



A bus rides through the west end of El Cajon Boulevard near Park Boulevard (Photo courtesy of The Boulevard BIA)

20/20 — is a "new vision for smart living, working and growing into San Diego's model transit-oriented community," according to The Boulevard BIA's website.

Blvd. 20/20 aims to accommodate the growing density in nearby residential areas and along the commercial corridor of El Cajon

Boulevard. Though El Cajon Boulevard extends all the way to East County, the plan specifically focuses on the west end, including the Uptown neighborhoods of University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, City Heights and Talmadge.

see Blvd. 20/20, pg 3

A tradition worth saving

North Park Toyland Parade marches on

PastMatters
Katherine Hon

Social media buzzed when the small nonprofit organization in charge of the North Park Toyland Parade canceled this year's event five days prior due to financial difficulties. Some said it was time to let the parade die because it was nothing like it used to be. But North Park Main Street, local businesses, city of San Diego's Special Events Department staff, and community members stepped in to save the day.

Was all the scrambling and last-minute effort worth it?

It is true that the Toyland Parade is not the juggernaut it once was. The tradition traces its roots at least as far back as 1934, when the North Park Business Men's Club and local merchants sponsored a Christmas celebration that featured decorated floats and four brass bands marching on University Avenue.

The following year, a police motorcycle escort led a procession of more than 50 local business entries in nine divisions, each division accompanied by a band or drum corps. Except for a short break during World War II, the parade continued to grow for the next three decades.

In 1954, an estimated 300,000 people flocked to North Park to watch 200 entries march more than two miles along University Avenue from 32nd to Arizona streets, and south to Morley Field. The parade included 30 floats, 24 bands, 26 marching units and five live reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh. In 1958, the San Diego Zoo

see Toyland Parade, pg 13

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– Connie M.



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FROM PAGE 1

BLVD. 20/20

Ultimately, Blvd. 20/20 hopes to find a balance between vehicles, public transportation and pedestrians in order to mitigate traffic, parking and safety issues that Uptown residents, business owners and visitors currently face.

“With so much being built on The Boulevard, and so many residents moving in, we have to think about how we’re all going to make it and get along, park next to each other, park in front of each other’s houses, take bikes safely [and] walk across the street,” The Boulevard BIA President Tootie Thomas said.

The group held its second town hall on Dec. 4 at The Rock Church in City Heights, which discussed Blvd. 20/20 and focused on mobility. Mary Lyndon, executive director of Housing For You Matters, facilitated the event, which featured more than seven speakers.

Councilmember Ward, who serves on multiple council boards including the Infrastructure Committee, called Blvd. 20/20 a “robust mobility paradigm,” that could help reach Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals, as well as provide more reliable and frequent transit. Additionally, he noted the need for “meaningful, community-serving amenities,” as well as his hopes for easier pedestrian access for businesses and lower parking standards for the area.

Sharon Kuney, Metropolitan



Community members gather at the Blvd. 20/20 town hall on Dec. 4
(Photo by Sara Butler)

Transit System (MTS) chief of staff, described the Blvd. 20/20 plan as “a win-win for everyone.” Though optimistic about El Cajon Boulevard’s mobility future, she admitted that long-term changes — including median lanes dedicated for buses and linking El Cajon Boulevard to the trolley — would take “a lot of planning, political will, and community support.”

As a short-term solution, Kuney suggested a pilot program — a trial run that would dedicate the third lane of El Cajon Boulevard to busses, simply using paint to separate the bus-only lane. To start, she said the pilot program could start with the intersections most impacted by traffic congestion such as 30th, Texas and 43rd streets.

This idea of a pilot program for a bus-only lane became a common theme of the night,

supported by many speakers and audience members. One of these proponents, Sherry Ryan, is a city-planning faculty member at San Diego State University and teaches geographic information systems, transportation planning, and land-use planning.

She provided an overview of El Cajon Boulevard’s past and focused her presentation on “missed opportunities” of housing and transit development throughout Uptown, such as the El Cajon Boulevard Study of 2017 and the 2014 Mid-City Rapid Bus Project. To avoid another missed opportunity, Ryan stressed the need to recognize that transit and density go hand-in-hand.

“Transit needs density, and density needs transit — you can’t develop densely if we’re all driving, there’s not enough space,” Ryan said, adding that

the six travel lanes do not contribute to transit-oriented development. “If we’re really serious ... we need to allocate space to other modes [and] need to rethink what we’re recommending.”

In addition to hearing from local leaders, a keynote speaker video chatted into the town hall from New York. Kirk Hovenkotter, program associate at Transit Center, offered examples of comparable streets around the country who are making steps toward innovative transit and mobility options. One example was a bus lane in Everett, Mass. — a street that he referred to as a sibling to El Cajon Boulevard — who piloted a successful pop-up bus lane that has since become permanent.

Following presentations, attendees wrote sticky notes of what they would like to see changed on El Cajon Boulevard and placed them on five poster boards around the room. Referencing mobility options of transit ridership, walking, biking, scooters, and car shares, the five questions asked were:

1. How can we improve getting on the Boulevard as a resident?
2. What are your preferred method(s) of transportation on the Boulevard?
3. What are your ideas for enhancing mobility to improve businesses on the Boulevard?
4. How do we better accommodate all forms of transit?
5. What would invite more people to the Boulevard?

After the all the sticky notes were placed, The Boulevard

BIA board member Danny Fitzgerald studied the boards and provided a brief summary of the trends he noticed on the walls. Fitzgerald said that most of the comments were about public investment — including the need for parks, plazas, storefront improvements, wider sidewalks, trees, cleaning and public art — and the overall “lacking a sense of place” on El Cajon Boulevard.

Additionally, he added that an initial tally revealed the crowd voted 12-4 on alternative modes of transportation to cars, with six for buses, four for cars, three for walking and two for biking.

“When it came to the question about how to better accommodate all forms of transportation, there was really nothing about cars,” Fitzgerald said. “It was prioritizing away from the car-designed boulevard that is there today.”

After the summary, the floor opened to audience feedback, discussion and debate.

One attendee took an audience poll of who lived within one to three miles of El Cajon Boulevard, revealing more than half of those in attendance were nearby residents. She said it was crucial to “communicate with the residents who are going to be most impacted by these changes,” which elicited applause from the crowd. Another attendee, Jen, expressed the importance to engage the businesses along El Cajon Boulevard in continued conversations, as possible

see Blvd. 20/20, pg 8

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In remembrance

Mama's Kitchen celebrates annual Tree of Life Ceremony



Mama's Kitchen held its 27th annual Tree of Life Ceremony on the common grounds of Village Hillcrest with a candlelight vigil on Dec. 1, World AIDS Day. (Photo by Albert H. Fulcher)

 Albert H. Fulcher
Contributing Editor

Candles were lit as the San Diego Gay Men's Chorus sang at the candlelight vigil in remembrance for those that have passed before due to complications from HIV and AIDS. As solemn as the moment was, Alberto Cortéz, executive director of Mama's Kitchen, said it was also a night for celebration with the advancement of treatment and prevention for AIDS and HIV.

Rocking the Ribbon was the theme of the night, remembering the times when those suffering from HIV remained hidden, ostracized and marginalized because of their illness. Created by a group of 12 New York artists, the red ribbon became the most recognized symbols of the decade, signifying awareness and support for those living with HIV, fighting the stigma, and those that were lost.

Cortéz said the event acknowledges the AIDS epidemic across the globe, memorializes those who have passed, and celebrates accomplishments and people that made a difference in the fight against HIV. He also said this event looks to create awareness about the current realities of HIV, the importance of prevention, and the resources available today to fight the suppression and transmission of the HIV virus.

"Resources are available for people to access that have helped bring us to a place where we can finally eliminate the transmission of HIV, which may sound like a pretty ambitious goal, but more than ever we believe that it is obtainable," Cortéz said. "We need to be more vocal about the milestones we have made [in the fight against HIV]. We need to be more acknowledging about the advances we have made and more vocal about the resources that are available for folks that are living with HIV. We also need to recognize the resources to the folks that are vulnerable to becoming HIV infected to reduce or eliminate the risk of infection."

Cortéz said over recent months and the past couple of years, a lot of changes were implemented at Mama's Kitchen.

"We have expanded our mission to serve people with other critical illnesses," Cortéz said.

"We have increased access to services for people with cancer, we started a pilot program earlier this year for people with congestive heart failure and soon we will be initiating a project that is focusing on people with Type 2 diabetes and we are making significant improvements to the quality of service that we are providing."

Cortéz said Mama's Kitchen is sharing a message of what it has learned in serving people with HIV, which provides the organization an opportunity to expand that net and impact other lives — regardless of who they are or what they suffer with — and to make their lives better.

Rep. Scott Peters gave thanks to all of the staffers, volunteers and donors who supported the people that were "shut in and shut out" over the past 27 years.

"For those people, it means the world to them," Peters said. "It is nothing that any government could do. It is a person to person thing and means a lot. It's Christmas time and the story of Christ is the story of a God that saves. And there is no better message than Mama's Kitchen about saving people. For me, as a Christian, it is awe inspiring to see the love that you give these folks. That's an example."

State Senate pro Tempore Toni Atkins said she loved Mama's Kitchen and its expanded mission. She shared that her brother-in-law died of AIDS and her mother of cancer. She noted Mama's Kitchen eagerness to serve anyone in the community proves that it continues to be the incredible organization that is has been since its smaller beginnings.

Atkins said she was aware that the event was "rocking the ribbon," but also mentioned that this year's theme was about transparency, accountability and partnership, and that it was the partnerships that she wanted to focus on. She added that her seat at the state allocates money which goes through the county and distributed throughout community organizations.

"There is a lot of conversation about PrEP and PEP and pushing us to do more," Atkins said. "I will say that HIV and

see Mama's Kitchen, pg 7

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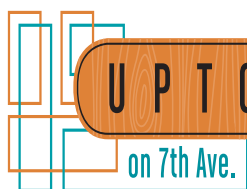
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Run, Keeler, run!

Englishman runs from Lubec, Maine to San Diego for spinal cord research

By Jess Winans

Eric Keeler was getting pretty bored of his daily routine at home in the United Kingdom. So he decided to run across the United States to raise money for Spinal Research.

“When I was 6 or 7 years old, someone turned on the news back in the U.K. and someone was about to start a run across America. I thought that must be the best way to learn about a country,” Keeler said. “When I started doing some research for Spinal Research, I figured why not give it a go.”

Keeler was introduced to Spinal Research — a nonprofit in the U.K., which researches treatments for spinal cord injuries — five years ago while training for the London marathon.

“I signed up for the marathon way too late and was looking through the chart of charities to run for, and Spinal Research was the only one I was connected to,” he said. “I have friends who have broken their backs from accidents, so at the time I had a connection to the charity. The more I’ve learned about them, the more I wanted to fundraise for them.”

Seven months ago, Keeler

quit his job and began his run in Lubec, Maine.

His run lasted 188 days and covered 16 states including New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Illinois, Colorado, New Mexico and others. Keeler ran for eight hours straight during the day, pushing his cart with his personal belongings, food, water and tent. At night, he would eat, explore and camp out.

Keeler’s run was remarkably smooth, and he shared pictures and memories eating chicken wings in Saratoga Springs, New York; enjoying a beer in Battleboro, Vermont; eating a lobster in Lubec, Maine for his birthday; buying sneakers in Phoenix, Arizona; and other memories on his blog.

Things took a tumultuous turn, however, in Iowa when he was run off the road by a large truck.

“The driver was on his mobile [phone], drifting over onto my narrow hard shoulder. I moved as far as I could off the road when I saw him coming,” he said. “Thankfully, there was a huge, deep ditch running alongside the highway. He didn’t see me, not at all, and he could have finished me off there and then.”



Eric Keeler hits the Pacific Ocean after a seven-month marathon from Lubec, Maine to San Diego raising money for spinal cord research on Dec. 3. (Photo by Jess Winans)

After that incident, Keeler decided to take a day off to “catch his breath” and stayed at a hotel. He planned to run another eight hours that day and camp out at night.

“Whilst holed up in my motel, I got a phone call from the receptionist saying, ‘Look out of your window, but stay inside!’” he said. “There were two tornadoes in the far distance in just about the same place where that evening’s campsite would be. This [his time in Iowa] gave me the conviction that I could pretty much make it through anything else.”

On Monday, Dec. 3, at 11:55 a.m., Keeler reached the finish line at Mission Beach, running under a Spinal Research banner into the Pacific Ocean.

“Thank you for coming out,” Keeler said after he got out of the water. “This trip was 3,800 miles, 7.2 million steps, 16

states, eight pairs of shoes, 50 pounds and two oceans.”

Keeler was greeted by his brother, sister, mother and father; Thomas Curran, a San Diegan who is walking across America later this year to fundraise for children’s cancer research; a couple of passersby’s and a young man who heard word of Keeler’s trek from a Facebook video posted on the page “Yes Theory Fam.”

“I saw something from the Yes Theory Fam Facebook page and was like, ‘Wow, this guy is doing an amazing journey,’” Tyler Henson said. “I woke up today and checked my Facebook feed and I saw that [Keeler] was finishing here and I was like wow. So, I canceled everything I had planned today, like work and school, and I was like alright, I’m coming down here.”

Keeler isn’t sure what his next endeavor will be but said

he will be returning to the U.K. for the holidays.

“When I started, I thought I had seven months to figure it out what to do next, but now I’m not sure,” he said. “I’ve become a lot more content with what’s going through my head and what’s going on. Before, I was always worried about what I was gonna do next, what job I had or if I would get to go on holiday next year, all the stuff that clouds your brain. Now I’m like, let’s see what happens. I’ve become a lot more content with being in the moment.”

In total, Keeler has raised \$13,957.48 for Spinal Research.

To learn more about Eric Keeler, visit corner2corner.run. For more information about Spinal Research, visit spinal-research.org.

—Reach Jess Winans at jess@sdcdn.com.

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Guest Editorial

New Council, new year — It's time for city leaders to act with new urgency on climate change

San Diego's Climate Action Plan was rightly been hailed for its bold, aggressive commitments to tackle climate change head-on, but there's been a lack of follow through. The new City Council should change that.

By Sophie Wolfram

[Editor's note: This editorial first appeared in the Voice of San Diego on Dec. 7. View the original article at bit.ly/wolfram-vosd.]

In 2018, amid the heat waves and wildfires wreaking devastation across California, it seemed that every week brought a new report underscoring the need for mobilization on an unprecedented scale to slash emissions and stabilize the climate. It's clear that there is no time to waste. The good news is that San Diego has a plan.

The city's Climate Action Plan has rightly been hailed for its bold, aggressive commitments to tackle climate change head-on. The two most powerful emissions reduction strategies in the CAP are shifting to 100 percent clean energy and transforming how we move about our city and region. But these two strategies have been fraught with political challenges and a lack of will to follow through. That looks ready to change.

In late October, Mayor Kevin Faulconer announced his support for a community choice energy program, signaling a new willingness to tackle climate change, even as it means opposing powerful interests. Monday's City Council inauguration marks a new day at City Hall and offers the potential to begin a shift in our transportation system as well.

Now is the time for our city, where for most people a car is a virtual requirement to take care of basic daily needs, to embrace a future in which communities are knitted together by convenient bike and pedestrian networks, as well as frequent, fast and affordable transit. It's time to evolve

from a city where almost everyone drives alone to a city where 50 percent of all commutes are made by biking, walking and transit.

That's the plan anyhow. So far, the city has held back on implementing some of the CAP's key elements, according to Climate Action Campaign's 2017 CAP Report Card.

For three years, the city has been flying blind on transportation, with no roadmap to meet its targets. The City Council needs to do more to ensure completion of the long-promised transportation master plan within six months, charting a strategic path to those mobility targets. And to ensure swift and well-coordinated implementation of that plan, the City Council should advocate through the budget process for the creation and hire of a director of mobility as an executive-level position within the mayor's office, overseeing a new Mobility Department that is empowered to envision, build, operate and maintain a transportation system in which biking, walking and transit are competitive with driving.

The city of San Diego is not alone in these endeavors. The collective movement for transportation justice has gotten a boost by Councilwoman Georgette Gómez, who chairs the Metropolitan Transportation System and is seeking the Council presidency. As MTS develops a 2020 revenue measure to fund transit, the City Council should demand that the agency prioritize funding no-cost transit passes for youth to eliminate income as a barrier to mobility, as well as increasing frequency along major routes and improving night and weekend service.

And as our city grows into its new power at SANDAG, the City Council

and mayor should speak out, loudly and often, to insist that the 2019 Regional Transportation Plan update maximizes alignment with our local climate goals. The support of and partnership from the San Diego Association of Governments will be pivotal in transforming mobility in San Diego, and that help must be fought for and won by the city's elected officials.

Finally, we depend on our city leaders to deliver key projects on aggressive timelines in the near term. It's time the City Council and mayor complete the six-mile protected bike network planned for downtown by the end of 2020, and the highest priority bike projects in the Bike Master Plan, on high-collision corridors of University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard, by the end of 2019.

With city leadership devoted to aggressively implementing equitable transportation solutions, San Diego can become a place where kids breathe clean air, walkable neighborhoods strengthen social connections and a sense of belonging, biking offers a safe and healthy way to meet daily needs, and transit is quick, convenient, affordable and — especially in urban core neighborhoods — more attractive than driving.

By building a transportation future that prioritizes biking, walking and transit, especially in underinvested communities, San Diego can do its fair share to stop the climate crisis that's threatening civilization as we know it. The time is now, and San Diego is counting on its leaders to act.

—Sophie Wolfram is director of programs at Climate Action Campaign and a San Diego resident.*

FROM PAGE 4
MAMA’S KITCHEN

AIDS is not a gay disease, but it took the LGBT caucus at the state of California to push in the budget to get more. We did an additional \$5 million this year to enhance comprehensive local services. San Diego County gets \$425,000 of those dollars. Every one of those dollars goes to individuals directly.”

Part of that money is used to fund HIV testing to high risk populations. Atkins said the message for today is “to know our status.” Atkins said that now there are PrEP assistance programs that provides medical out-of-pocket costs for medications. An additional \$2 million was allocated to expand the PrEP assistance program, as well as financial assistance for PEP and PrEP. Also, there is full cost coverage for uninsured individuals under the age of 18 and for those who cannot use their insurance for confidentiality and safety reasons, and for individuals whose insurance does not cover.

“For me, who lost my brother-in-law, my nephew grew up without his dad,” Atkins said. “My cousin, my dear Aunt Betsie — the kindest woman in the world — had to watch her son die before anyone ever knew what the disease was. So when I look at that tree [Tree of Life] and I see the names and I think about all the people that we have lost, the world would be a very different place if all those people were here. It is for them that we continue to work in the fight.”

Councilmember Chris Ward said the education, prevention, treatment, visibility, and ending the stigma is all helping to bring HIV transmission to zero. “I promise that we are going to get there because we get together on days like World AIDS Day,” Ward said. “There are so many parts of the world that do not have the treatment and education and are very stigmatized, much more so than we find here in America. When we find the pathways here in the community we need to continue those pathways until we get to zero worldwide.”

Cortéz said Mama’s Kitchen was giving its first annual Humanitarian Award. The purpose of which is to acknowledge work, effort, and impacts that have gone above and beyond in making our community a better place. He said it was a joy to announce San Diego County Supervisor Ron Roberts as the first recipient.

“Ron [Roberts] has been an early advocate for HIV here in San Diego for 35 years, providing access to the resources that he can to make our community a better a better place in response to the AIDS epidemic,” Cortéz said. “He has facilitated funding that has provided for the essentials needs of our [Mama’s Kitchen] organization and allowed our mission to move forward. For that, I am grateful.”

Roberts delivered Mama’s Kitchen’s three millionth meal, four millionth meal, five millionth meal ... and eighth millionth meal.

“His availability to help us spread the mission and the awareness of HIV in my estimation is exceptional and it hasn’t just been with Mama’s Kitchen,” Cortéz continued. “It has been with other organizations over the years as we continue our fight with this epidemic.”

Roberts said in working with Mama’s Kitchen he has seen much accomplished through this organization.

“Getting to zero is not just a slogan,” Roberts said. “In two years we have seen incredible reductions in the number of new cases of AIDS in San Diego. From 2016 to 2017 there was a 20 percent decrease. We are going to get to zero. We are going to get this done sooner. The only thing standing against us is getting to the people that need this information and them acting on it. There is no excuse for anybody to take advantage. There are no financial barriers out there, there’s no waiting list. We have the availability to the drugs that people need.”

Dr. Adam Zweig, medical director of AIDS Healthcare Foundation, spoke for the fourth year at this event. This year, Zweig wanted to touch on some points that he felt needed repeating. He said people tend to focus on the important people in our lives that were lost to AIDS but looking forward to a future of a cure and the eradication of AIDS and HIV transmission is becoming a reality. But, he added that as a community, we should focus a little more on the present and to be honest with ourselves.

“With such effective treatment and prevention many of us have become somewhat complacent when it comes to HIV and AIDS,” Zweig said. “Community activism has waned, and we’ve lost many AIDS organizations out of the perception that there is no longer is a need. Nothing is further from the truth. We know that a person that is living with HIV can live as long as someone that is negative. We know that viral suppression pretty much eliminates the risk of transmission. With little risk from those HIV people on meds [medications] and the increase use of PrEP for those at risk, why do we continue to see increases in transmission rates in people of color, women and transgender groups?”

Zweig said he could argue that much of the blame can be based on stigma.

“Stigma prevents people from getting tested and seeking prevention care,” he continued. “Sadly, what concerns me the most is the significant amount of stigma generated within our own community. When I see patients, I really have no advice to give on how to avoid the sting of rejection and the embarrassment that my patient will face when they disclose their status to another partner. Likewise, I have no advice on how to avoid PrEP shaming that often happens when men using PrEP are labeled as promiscuous. So I think our own community has a little bit of work to do before we can claim success to HIV treatment and prevention.”

—Albert Fulcher can be reached at albert@sdcdn.com.

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FROM PAGE 1

BUDDHA

Dharma Bum Temple, originally founded in 2006, moved into the University Heights neighborhood back in April 2017. After the temple outgrew its original Downtown location, they stumbled upon a 91-year-old building that used to house a Swedenborg congregation. (Swedenborgianism is “an open-minded, forward looking Christian church” originally founded in 1789, according to the church’s website.)

When temple co-founders and Hillcrest residents Jeff Zlotnik and Maggie Lee stumbled upon the space, they knew it was the right fit.

“It had been a spiritual place for 90 years — why not keep it a spiritual place for another 100 years,” Zlotnik said, noting the calming presence and energy of the building. “We’ve tried to keep everything original that was safe or functional.”

The journey to acquiring the building wasn’t an easy feat — the temple had to raise half a million dollars in three and a half months for the down payment. Zlotnik said few people thought they would pull it off, and even he was skeptical himself.

If they couldn’t raise the funds, the historic property was set to be sold to developers to turn into condominiums. Despite not knowing much about Dharma Bum Temple, the neighborhood rallied behind them, including the church’s old reverend, the University Heights Community Association, and individual Uptown residents. With the community support, the temple was able reach the fundraising goals and move into the building.

And just like the building, a first impression of Zlotnik may not be what you expect of someone running a Buddhist temple. He is a westerner who grew up Jewish in Del Cerro as “a spoiled, middle-upper class kid” who was angry, depressed and got into lots of fights.

When Zlotnik went to college at University of Arizona, he



(l to r) Lee and Zlotnik outside of the gift shop; the Buddha For You signage was recently painted by a member of the community. (Photo by Connor McBride)

read a book about Buddhism that sparked his interest in the philosophy. However, it wasn’t until he was 28 years old that he visited a Buddhist temple in San Diego, where he “looked at a Buddhist statue and [his] whole life changed.” He said he went from a “young, big shot consultant making a lot of money and buying a lot of stuff” to a traditional Buddhist lifestyle, involving himself with various local temples and eventually moving to a Taiwan monastery for a year.

When he moved back home, Zlotnik saw a revolving door with westerners who wanted to learn about Buddhism, but did not feeling comfortable exploring its philosophies. Many San Diego temples operate as cultural centers, with barriers for westerners who may lack knowledge of tradition and

language. After floating around different temples for about 10 months, he wound up founding Dharma Bum Temple.

“[I’m just] a Jewish kid running a Buddhist temple in a Christian Church,” Zlotnik said, laughing. Though the mixture may seem odd, this juxtaposition is a direct reflection of the temple’s mission. Ultimately, the temple’s focus is to integrate Buddhism with Westerners in an approachable way.

Those white “church” doors are always open, welcoming anyone in to the building to use the meditation rooms or library. The temple’s schedule offers a wide range of classes for all ages and walks of life. Drawing about 70 people each time, its most popular class

see Buddha, pg 9

FROM PAGE 3

BLVD. 20/20

removal of parking spaces would affect them.

In regard to parking, Thomas said that there is not a need to discuss the loss of spaces yet, as the current six lanes of traffic on El Cajon Boulevard should suffice for any initial changes, such as the much-discussed pilot program.

“We don’t want to remove parking — we know it is important for a thriving business district,” Thomas said.

David Moty, who is vice chair of the Kensington-Talmadge Planning Group, noted his concern that traffic improvements on El Cajon Boulevard wouldn’t make the traffic go away, but rather move it into the residential areas. Ryan responded that the pilot program could test that,

and they could also develop a diverting program to make it inconvenient for drivers to use neighborhoods roadways.

San Diego Association of Governments’ (SANDAG) future light rail transit system was also debated. One attendee named Larry said that he saw the MTS pilot program for buses as a “temporary fix” until the SANDAG system is built, which is slated for the year 2050. He said he didn’t understand why the Blvd. 20/20 plan was considering the proposed MTS bus lanes when SANDAG would come in and revert everything back in 30 years.

“Even though there are two different plans ... I think it’s very important to have a solution now that is affordable that you can put in quickly until you get to that point where they have funding,” Jen responded.

Other discussion points included a possible integration of the planned Meade Avenue

bikeway with Blvd. 20/20; a shared bicycle and bus lane for space considerations; a concern about Local Route 1; and the possibility of a community shuttle from the trolley to Rapid Bus Stops; among others.

All of the input and data collected from the town hall will go into the decision-making process of the Blvd. 20/20 plan, which is expected to be unveiled in January 2019. The Boulevard BIA assured the attendees that their voices were heard and would be considered during this undertaking.

Though the tone of the evening was predominately positive, one of the written notes on the wall arguably reflected the reason everyone gathered in the first place.

“Right now, I prefer to stay off the Boulevard,” it read. “Let’s change this.”

—Reach Sara Butler at sara@sdcnn.com.✳

ASK KATHY:

A COLUMN ABOUT REAL ESTATE ISSUES

Kathy McSherry



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My Real Estate Recap 2018

In the Spring of 2018, we had more of a Seller’s market where multiple offers on the same property were being seen and days on the market were short. Prices were up and Sellers were getting top dollar for their homes; that is if it was priced right and showed well. A shift was being noticed around late June of 2018, or early July 2018. At first it felt like a pause in the market. Again, this is depending on location and price point. But overall, homes were selling fast with limited inventory.

In Mission Valley, I noticed a slow down about end June 2018. The listings that I would take in July through September eventually ended up lowering their prices by about \$30,000. This is what the market decided. As valuable as a good agent can be, no one can predict a turn or shift in the market that quickly. And, ultimately it is what a willing, able, and qualified buyer agrees to pay for someone’s home that determines the selling price. An interesting lesson on listing within a 5-month timeframe taught me how timing can be crucial. The problem is no one has a crystal ball, and those in the active real estate market feel the shift literally as it’s happening or within weeks. I watched as other listings in Mission Valley started out of the gate too high. I call this real estate suicide. Setting a price too high can ultimately alienate your true buyer. The risk then becomes that your property will look stale and people begin to question what is wrong with it, and now consider offering a much lower price. Remember the goal is to achieve the highest price in the shortest amount of time. Also with the shift in pricing, typically comes longer days on the market regarding selling your home.

However, the long-term purchase of real estate is known to reap great benefits and sound for long term investing. As interest rates rise buyers get skittish. We all knew that 3% interest rates would not last forever. As interest rates hover in the high 4’s, I am reminded of when my parents bought a home in the mid 1970’s at over 11%, and my first home in Las Vegas in 2000 at 6.5%. Overall, I believe in real estate and its ultimate value. I think if you can’t afford a certain home, then try for a slightly smaller home or in a different location, so that you can get into the game of real estate and land in home ownership. Of course, this depends on one’s financials and personal circumstances. But overall, the long-term benefits and the many different financial possibilities that are associated with home ownership make it the ultimate American Dream! Here’s to a great 2019 in real estate.

Best,
Kathy

Kathy McSherry is a veteran Realtor
in Mission Valley with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage
Email questions to her at kathymcsherry@outlook.com
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FROM PAGE 8

BUDDHA

is “Introduction to Buddhism and Meditation,” held every Saturday morning and Tuesday evening, serving as a first step for those interested in the practice.

“I always say we’re a Buddhist temple filled with everybody who is not Buddhist,” he continued. “We’re just un-enlightened folks trying to get through our day – I think that’s what makes this place work so well, because people can come in and see a person who really looks no different than they are going through the same crap and figuring it out together.”

Buddha For You

An interesting element of the Dharma Bum Temple is Buddha For You, the temple’s gift shop located in the same building. Though it has only been in the Uptown neighborhood for a year, its roots began back in 1998.

Its original owner, Alfred Baron, was in his 70s when he opened up the “strange little Buddhist shop sitting at the end of El Cajon Boulevard,” Zlotnik said. Baron was also a westerner whose wife was from Thailand; she ran an Asian restaurant called Best Thai Food in the same plaza as the store.

When Baron decided to retire and move back to Thailand with his wife in 2009, he (gently) harassed Zlotnik and Lee to take it over. At the time, the



Classes are held in Dharma Bum Temple’s meditation room, which includes cushions, chairs and church pews.
(Photo by Connor McBride)

pair was in their third year running the Dharma Bum Temple at its Downtown location — and had no interest or experience in running a retail store, let alone the manpower or resources. Yet after a few weeks of going back and forth, Zlotnik and Lee decided to take the leap.

“We were the only ones crazy enough to say yes [to the offer],” Zlotnik said. “Because to us it wasn’t a business — it was a way of life. Nobody in their right mind would take over a Buddha business.”

Zlotnik said he and Lee initially struggled with the idea of having the shop, since consumerism often goes against Buddhist teachings. But he said they now see it as a way to share the teachings and bring people into the temple.

But taking over the shop — while also running the temple — wasn’t a simple path. Zlotnik said that in the beginning, selling \$30 worth of inventory “was a good day.” Hidden in the Campus Plaza Shopping Center, the location didn’t bring in as much business as they hoped for.

To keep it alive, they decided to move into the old Starbucks in the College Area. Turning commercial into traditional, they used the coffee shop’s iconic dark brown shelving to display Buddhas and turned the Starbucks bathroom into a meditation hall. This meditation hall began drawing many college students, and soon the following was large enough to host weekly classes — eventually starting up the nation’s first-ever Buddhist fraternity, Delta Beta Tau.

Despite the success, the distance between the temple and the gift shop was still difficult for Zlotnik and Lee, who often put in 60-hour weeks. When the temple moved into the University Heights location, they finally had the opportunity to house the gift shop next door. Lee, who was the legal owner of the gift shop, donated all of the inventory to the temple, establishing it as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with all proceeds going back into the temple. Approximately seven volunteers run the shop, including Zlotnik and Lee.

“We don’t use the temple or meditation to drive people to the store — we use the store to drive people to that [passively],” Zlotnik said, adding that the space also serves as a gateway for some people to find the temple.

“This culture likes stuff — and if that’s what it takes for them to find a sense of peace in their life ... they use the objects as moments to slow down and breathe, and that’s beautiful,” he continued.

Originally from Taiwan, Lee uses her cultural knowledge to fill the shop with intentional and meaningful goods directly from Asia. The inventory includes various Buddha statues, singing bowls, jewelry, books and more. Lee also provides oversight with her knowledge of traditional Buddhism, helping to guide and influence the temple’s direction.

Buddha For You’s 20th anniversary celebration will be held on Dec. 15 from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. There will be a meditation and discussion inside the temple, followed by a small pilgrimage around the street to walk everyone down to the store to participate in a chant and enjoy food donated from the owner of Hillcrest restaurant Lotus Thai. It will be casual, open-house style event featuring art projects for kids, an all-ages movie viewing, and a presentation with an oral history of the building.

“Without Buddha For You, this whole community that we built would not be here – it truly would not,” Zlotnik said.

To learn more about Dharma Bum Temple or Buddha For You, visit thedharmabums.org — or just swing by University Heights to experience it for yourself.

—Reach Sara Butler at sara@sdcdn.com.

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I turn 50 in May of 2019. My son was away at college when I began this journey. When he returned home, he asked "where's my dad", while looking at me. My wife can wrap her arms around me now, as I have dropped about 35 pounds.

Additionally and most importantly, is what has happened to my blood pressure. When I began this journey with Fitness Together Mission Hills, initial blood pressure readings were 157/111 and I was being treated medically with drugs to manage my high blood pressure. Though still a tad high at my last retest on 9 20 18 at 138/90, my Doctor has begun to lower the dosage of drugs to manage my blood pressure, as I continue to get lighter, leaner and fitter with the ultimate benefit being how my heart operates.

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'Looking for Christmas'

A heartwarming holiday musical for all

Albert H. Fulcher
Contributing Editor

If you're looking for a friendly, warm story that upholds the meaning of Christmas for the entire family, look no further than The Old Globe's world premiere of "Clint Black's Looking for Christmas." Based on the album of the same name by Grammy Award-winning country music legend Clint Black, the play is a story of love, faith, and the strength of family and friends told through the singer-songwriter's lyrics and music. With a few exceptions, all of the songs are from the album or songs he wrote specifically for this play and intertwined into a chocolate-box tale. Black

worked extensively with writer James D. Sasser and The Old Globe to bring his first piece of theatrical art to San Diego. Once it debuted, the play was extended through Dec. 31.

And it's no wonder, as "Looking for Christmas" is a beautiful story with an exceptional message for the holiday season. The plot centers around Staff Sergeant Mike Randolph (Aaron C. Finley), who returns home right before Christmas, but only after tragically losing his best friend just days before the deployment was over. Carrying the ghost of his friend Douglas Miller (DeLeon Dallas) with him, they go through conversations as Mike tries to deal with the guilt, anguish and

problems in reconnecting with his family, friends and society. It is with the help of his wife, young daughter and his ghostly friend that he's given chances to find the spirit of Christmas once again.

The musical brigade begins with Mike and his wife Ellie (Kaylin Hedges) video-chatting, which leads to the musical basis of the play, "Looking for Christmas." Finley exhibits the classic country vocal sound with a few of Clint Black's signature breaks in his voice, that for the Clint Black fan, is a sure pleasure to hear. With a voice beyond her years, their daughter Jessie (Liana Hunt) is a remarkable talent for her age and brings childlike wonder into the play's storyline.

For those familiar with Black's album, you will hear the classics "Looking for Christmas," "The Coolest Pair," "Christmas for Every Boy and Girl," and "Under the Mistletoe." With the addition of new Black songs in the collection, there are some amazing numbers not to be missed.

The widow of Miller, Alissa (Syndee Winters), who attempts to cope with the holiday season with as much difficulty as Mike, produces a most compelling evening, soloing two of Black's originals for the play. Winters' performance of "Me and the Moon" leaves the audience in



(l to r) Ellie Randolph (Kaylin Hedges), Jessie Randolph (Liana Hunt) and Mike Randolph (Aaron C. Finley) in a heartwarming reunion after Mike returns from deployment in Afghanistan. (Photos courtesy of The Old Globe)



Cast members of "Clint Black's Looking for Christmas" perform the Christmas story at their local church.

awe — as does her performance with "Never Knew Love."

This heartwarming tale is perfection for the holiday season and San Diego is fortunate to be ground zero in the production of this play. The Old Globe has another definitive classic to add to its already impressive repertoire.

This play is 90 minutes with no intermission, but sadly, it

goes by as quickly as the holiday season. The venue is quaint with no bad seats in the house and the entire ensemble brings the joys of the holidays with a relevant message of peace, hope and joy.

For more information, visit theoldglobe.org.

—Albert Fulcher can be reached at albert@sdcnn.com.

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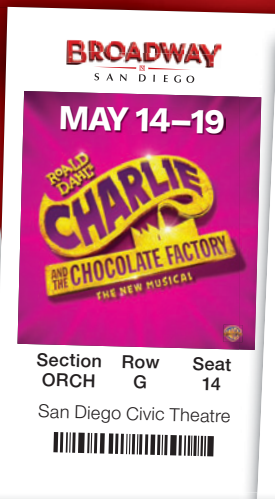
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Finding Scrooge at Cygnet

Theater Review

Jean Lowerison



What is it about the Christmas season that brings out the grouch in some people? Is it all that talk about peace, joy, love and brotherhood?

San Diego theatergoers are typically blessed (if that's quite the word) with two Christmas grumps. A few weeks ago, we saw the arrival of that moldy green monster, the Grinch, stomping around the Old Globe and trying to ruin everybody else's Christmas.

Now it's the British contingent's turn, with that penny-pinching, no-good Ebenezer Scrooge polluting politeness by "humbugging" around and snarling at those nice ladies collecting for charity.

Cygnet Theatre is back with its fifth edition of "A Christmas Carol," a jolly, scary, funny, festive musical retelling of the old Dickens story.

Yep, it's all those things in turn — sometimes all at once.

This year Director Sean Murray has opted for minimal staging and maximal music. His score including two new songs and new verses for old favorites "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" and the French carol "Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella."

The ghosts? They're different, too. Christmas Past is a trio of women all in white; Present is David McBean in a voluminous full-length green velvet coat. The last — Christmas Yet to Come — is the scariest, complete with ominous-looking black cloth draped from the ceiling.

It all works for two reasons: a good story, adapted by Murray, with music by Billy Thompson; and a stunningly talented cast of seven who sing, play, dance and portray multiple characters. (Okay, six do — the old grump just gets to grouse a lot.) Most are returnees; all are magnificent.

By now, Tom Stephenson has perfected the geezer Scrooge,



Show veteran Tom Stephenson as Ebenezer Scrooge (right) in 'A Christmas Carol,' which runs through Dec. 30 at Cygnet Theatre (Photo by Ken Jacques)

who has misplaced his humanity but may eventually find it again.

David McBean, master of over-the-top characters, has a great time at the top of the show as Marley, who enters dragging heavy metal chains "forged in life" and warning old partner Scrooge of what might await him. He also plays young Scrooge's buddy Dick, who works with Ebenezer at Mr. Fezziwig's — and, of course, Christmas Present.

Patrick McBride is great as Scrooge's frozen-fingered clerk Cratchit, father of Tiny Tim, and as young Scrooge's jolly old boss Fezziwig, who throws a terrific holiday party for his employees, where they "gather together to party all night and celebrate Christmas Day."

Melissa Fernandes brings attitude to Scrooge's beleaguered (harried?) housekeeper Mrs. Dilbur, as well as kindness to Mrs. Cratchit and her multiple talents to a few other characters.

Melinda Gilb amuses as Mrs. Fezziwig, a young Cratchit and one of the charity solicitors. Charles Evans, Jr. makes a sympathetic young Scrooge. Both are fine as several other characters as well.

Megan Carmitchel exudes charm as young Scrooge's girlfriend Belle, and shows her versatility as the Cratchits' daughter Martha and in other roles — notably the voice of the puppet Tiny Tim.

'A Christmas Carol'

Through Dec. 30
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at 7:30 p.m.
Friday at 8 p.m.
Saturday at 3 and 8 p.m.
Sunday at 2 and 7 p.m.

Tickets: 619-337-1525
or cygnettheatre.com

Andrew Hull's set is simple and effective; Jeanne Reith's costumes are lovely; and Kyle Montgomery's lighting and Matt Lescault-Wood's sound design are both excellent.

Katie Banville's elegant choreography — and the rest of the musical events — are ably supported by music director Patrick Marion, who plays an onstage piano.

Let's face it: it's not Christmas without Scrooge, and Cygnet's the best place to find him.

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



(l to r) David McBean, Melissa Fernandes, Tom Stephenson and Charles Evans, Jr. (Photo by Daren Scott)

Critic's Choice
The San Diego Union-Tribune
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San Diego Downtown News

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THE OLD GLOBE (619) 23-GLOBE TheOldGlobe.org
From top: The cast of Clint Black's Looking For Christmas; Edward Watts. Photos by Ken Howard.

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Front row (L-R)
Pomme Koch Broadway's The Band's Visit Jenna Dioguardi Off-Broadway's The Wolves Adam Chanler-Berat Broadway's Amélie Marcia DeBonis Off-Broadway's Small Mouth Sounds

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Photo credit: the cast of The Year to Come; photo by Jim Carmody

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

Avoid scams during the holidays

By AARP, Fraud Watch Network

As we near the holiday season, online shopping increases and so do online scams. Only use trusted sites to make transactions on the internet and be wary of steeply discounted items. Sometimes scammers will attempt to lure you into making a purchase with phony online sales. In addition, if you plan to buy or sell your own goods online, use a website or application that uses proper safety measures to ensure that you don't lose your money in the process.

Fake jobs

Over 500,000 people take seasonal jobs during the holiday season. Scammers like to take advantage of seasonal workers by posing as potential employers on third-party websites. When prospective employees apply for these job listings, they will be asked to provide personal information such as their date of birth, address and Social Security number for "verification purposes." Scammers can then use this information to steal your identity. One big red flag to look out for is a job which offers a lot of money for very little work. If the position seems too good to be true,

it is probably a scam. If you have questions about a job listing you see online, go directly to the business website or give them a call.

False rentals

Many people travel during the holidays to visit with family and friends. Be cautious of false rental advertisements on the internet. Do not use third-party websites to book hotels and be particularly wary of home rentals. Verify listings through online consumer feedback before you close the deal. Some scammers will copy photos and details from real rental listings. They then accept pre-payment for booking the house or apartment. You may only discover that you have nowhere to stay on the day you're supposed to check in. Never give someone money before you see the place you are supposed to stay, and always verify the listing with hotels directly before booking any rooms.

Fraudulent companies

During the winter season, we see an increase in scammers calling consumers and pretending to be a representative from their local utility provider. The fraudster will claim that your previous

payments haven't cleared or that you owe them money. They will tell you that if you don't pay the outstanding balance over the phone, your power, heat or water will be turned off within the hour. The swindler will insist that you didn't pay the bill — even if you know you did — and will tell you to pay over the phone with a credit card or a

cash transfer. Scammers are banking on your fear that your heat will be shut off during the cold winter season in order to collect your personal information. Hang up and call your utility provider directly to confirm your billing status.

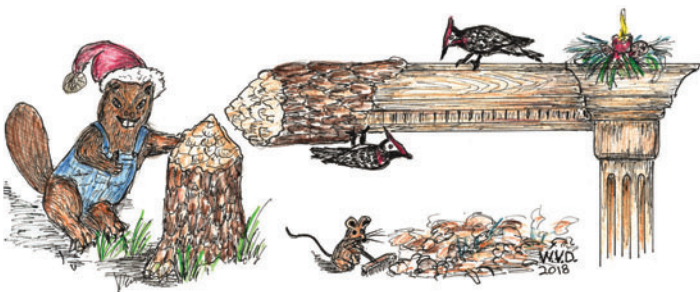
Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

—AARP, formerly the American Association of Retired Persons, is a U.S.-based interested group whose stated mission is "to empower people to choose how they live as they age." For help from AARP, call 877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork.



American Security Mortgage invites the community to its annual light display in Bankers Hill to celebrate the holidays. The Forward House at First and Ivy streets will be lit up every night throughout the month of December from 5-10 p.m. for public viewing. Additionally, there will be a celebration with candy canes for kids of all ages from 5-8:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 14. ❖

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FROM PAGE 1

TOYLAND PARADE

provided camels and handlers in costumes. That year, the U.S. Marine Corps drove several tanks along University Avenue advertising its Toys for Tots campaign.

The 1966 parade included 25 bands and was led by the 30-member Long Beach Silver Mounted Police posse riding matching palominos. The parade was described as “one of the biggest holiday events in the county” in the San Diego Union’s Dec. 4, 1966 issue.

In spite of this success, the parade did not happen in 1967.

“The North Park Toyland Parade — San Diego’s biggest — has been canceled. The reason: freeway construction in the vicinity of 32nd & University,” Frank Rhoades reported in his Oct. 6, 1968 San Diego Union column. The parade would remain canceled for nearly 20 years.

North Park Business Club members confessed they allowed the Toyland Parade to die because it was a complicated event and the construction of the Interstate 805 freeway at University Avenue was an excuse to give it up. The decline of neighborhood retail due to the rise of regional shopping malls contributed to the loss of the parade. The San Diego Union’s Sept. 22, 1969 issue predicted: “Chances are it never will be revived.”

But that prediction was wrong.

In 1985, the parade came back to life. Patrick Edwards — long-time North Park businessman and the 2018 parade’s Grand Marshal — petitioned the City Council to create the North Park Business Improvement District (BID) in 1984. The city approved the request in 1985.

Edwards’ wife, Kristen Arrivee, told him it was important to restart the Toyland Parade, which had been a regular event in North Park



North Park Historical Society member Victor Flake has been the man behind the famous dancing water tower for six years. The costume was constructed by The Old Globe Theater’s props department in 2013 to replace Vincent Rivera’s aging 2008 paper version. (Photo by Sharon Turner)

when they were growing up. And with the help of the community, they did. The 1985 Toyland Parade famously featured an elephant provided by the zoo.

“The parade was more or less a statement that we are a community and that we cared enough to come together,” North Park resident Midge Neff-LeClair said in an interview, which was referenced in the San Diego Union-Tribune’s Dec. 3, 1993 issue.

That sentiment still holds true. What the current parade lacks in splendor it makes up for in homegrown charm. The entries may not include horses, camels or military tanks, but this year there were dogs on rolling paddle boards, floats created by Jefferson Elementary School students, and two water tanks: the North Park Historical Society’s dancing water tower, and a two-dimensional version constructed by North Park Little League.

For Edwards, the effort has always been worth it.

“I must say that when the community joined in and walked University Avenue after the last entry, I felt that I was part of a real community,” Edwards said after this year’s parade. “Seeing the parents and kids join in celebrating the parade like that gave me a lot of pride to have played a part in the renaissance of the North Park Business District.”

For Angela Landsberg, executive director of North Park Main Street — the successor



North Park Little League participants ready their entry featuring the iconic water tower in the 2018 Toyland Parade. (Photo by Steve Hon)

organization of the 1985 BID — saving the parade was essential.

“The North Park community is deeply connected to its history and the Toyland Parade is a big part of that,” Landsberg said. “When I heard that the parade had been canceled, I knew our job at North Park Main Street was to ensure that the show would go on!”

And with the help of the community, it did.

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



U.S. Marine Corps tanks rumbled along University Avenue in the 1958 Toyland Parade. (Photo courtesy of Joe Schloss)

6 SMART HOME ESSENTIALS

With so many devices and home automation available these days, turning your house into a smart home is easier than you might think. But, there are some things to keep in mind when deciding which devices are essential – and what kind of internet service you’ll need to maximize your smart home experience.



- **A home speaker that doubles as a virtual assistant.** Current models can answer questions, turn on lights, play video, access virtual assistants like Siri or Alexa, share weather and news updates, act as a timer, and play music on demand. Some models even help you shop online.
- **Home cameras.** The latest in home monitoring such as Cox Homelife allows for remote live video viewing from your smartphone, video recording and customizable notifications.
- **Smart lights.** Replace existing light bulbs with energy efficient bulbs that can be controlled remotely with a few taps on your smartphone or tablet. Cox Homelife has an automation feature to control indoor and outdoor lights, bringing you (and your pet) peace of mind while you’re away from home, as well as saving energy and money.
- **Smart locks.** Remotely control doors in your home. Features can include voice commands, customized chimes, activity logs, integration with other smart devices, and special codes for friends, dog walkers, and deliveries.
- **Smart thermostats.** Programmable thermostats allow you to remotely turn the air and heat in your home up and down, and on and off. Save money and energy, and arrive to a warm or cool home.

- **Smart Search entertainment.** There are many options to watch TV and stream content online, and Cox’s Contour TV service brings smart search options, Netflix integration, a voice-controlled remote, and cool apps together into one service that is easy to navigate. Speak into the remote to find the programming you want to watch – use a famous movie quote, the title of a show, a genre, or the name of an actor. You can even say “free movies,” and available titles in the On Demand library will pop up.

Just as important as the devices you select is the internet service you choose.

In San Diego, Cox Communications recently doubled internet download speeds automatically for the majority of its customers at no additional charge. Preferred, the company’s most popular tier of service, is now up to 100 Mbps, while Essential and Starter, which are ideal for lighter users with one to five devices connected to the home network, doubled to 30 Mbps and 10 Mbps, respectively.

For households with multiple family members who want to connect dozens of devices simultaneously, are heavy gamers or have the need for the fastest speeds around, Cox’s Gigablast service offers download speeds of 1 gigabit (1,000 Mbps).

Take a short quiz on the speed advisor at www.cox.com to determine which speed is right for your household.

Cox is also improving the in-home internet experience with Panoramic WiFi, which provides “wall-to-wall” WiFi coverage so you have a connection wherever you may roam in your smart home.





A chimichurri steak sandwich from a gourmet sandwich shop that opened in Mission Valley (Photo courtesy of Wich Addiction)

The 33-year-old **Saffron Thai** in Mission Hills has opened a second location in La Jolla in a 2,000-square-foot indoor/outdoor space formerly occupied by **Chipotle**. The expansion comes nearly two years after Saffron's founder, Su-Mei Yu, teamed up with San Diego-based hospitality firm, Karina's Group. Fans of the India Street location will find many of their favorite dishes at the new outpost, such as the signature Thai-grilled chicken, noodle soups, various stir fries, and robust curries. 1055 Torrey Pines Road, 858-263-4324, saffronthai.com.

The much-anticipated second location of **Wich Addiction** is up and running in the **Friars Mission Center** shopping plaza in Mission Valley. Launched originally six years ago in Sorrento Valley by Mark Manning and his wife, Dyann (an alum of the Culinary Institute of America), their newest spot brings to the area

Look for dishes such as curry chicken puff pastries, tofu soup, roasted pork loin and various breakfast dishes with Asian flair at **The Nood Bar** in North Park, rumored to soft open in early January.

an array of gourmet sandwiches that change so frequently, the shop doesn't issue printed menus. The choices are instead updated regularly online and listed on a large menu board inside the eatery, which previously housed **Elva's Bowls & Wraps**. 5664 Mission Center Road, 619-269-7269, wichaddiction.com.

According to preliminary information stated on the eatery's incomplete website, the space will also feature a cozy bar lounge that seats up to 40 guests. 4596 30th St., noodbar.com.



A brewery with a New Zealand slant is preparing to open on Park Boulevard. (Photo courtesy of Kairoa Brewing Co.)

The flavors of New Zealand are sailing into University Heights next month as the

Fast food alert:

Vegetarians who think they're dodging saturated fats at **Panda Express** when ordering meatless dishes should note that nothing is the fast-casual restaurant is conducive to their diets. After following up with the company on a tip we received from a surprised vegetarian, it was confirmed the chow mein and re-fried rice are made with chicken broth, and the vegetable egg rolls are deep-fried in the same oil used for various

10-barrel **Kairoa Brewing Co.** completes reconstruction of a nearly 100-year-old building at the corner of Park Boulevard and Madison Avenue. The project, spearheaded in part by New Zealand native Shanan Spearing of nearby **Red House Pizza**, promises a menu of "New Zealand comfort food" and small-batch beers using that country's hops. The spacious two-level structure will feature rooftop seating and areas tailored for private and public events. 4601 Park Blvd., kairoa.com.



Vegetarians beware of this chow mein from a popular Chinese food chain (Google)

meats. The menus are the same at all Panda Express locations, which include Hillcrest, Mission Valley, Fashion Valley Mall and the Midway District. pandaexpress.com.

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— Jan Delair, age 63, retired

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Keaton Henson of Saiko Sake & Sushi Bar is now a certified sake specialist. (Photo by Arlene Ibarra)

After plunging into an intensive syllabus on the making and usages of sake, and then completing an exam on the subject, sous chef Keaton Henson of **Saiko Sake & Sushi Bar** (2884 University Ave.) in North Park has become a certified sake specialist. He earned the level 1 achievement through the Sake Educational Council, which offers certification training programs globally.

"Sake is such a diverse beverage and it takes a lot of study to understand it," said Henson, who sometimes cooks with the Japanese rice wine and also tends bar at **Saiko Sushi** (116 Orange Ave.) in Coronado.

The course was held in Las Vegas, and the level 2 program for becoming an advanced sake specialist will be held in 2020 in Japan.

"I've already reserved my spot for it," Henson added.

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

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Lunching behind a popular red door

Restaurant Review

Frank Sabatini Jr.



When restaurateur Luciano Cibelli took over The Red Door in Mission Hills earlier this year, he chose not to tamper with the restaurant's farm-to-table reputation. Though despite keeping the name and adhering to ingredients sourced from local farmers and artisan purveyors, the changes he made are unmistakable.

The exterior paint job is now mustard-orange, a standout color that contrasts curiously to the red door entrance, which became a hallmark of the restaurant when sustainable food advocate and urban farmer Trish Watlington founded it nine years ago. Part of her business included the adjacent Wellington Steak & Martini Lounge. That space eventually became Bar by Red Door, which Cibelli upholds as a cocktail lounge featuring live music Thursdays through Sundays.

The Red Door's culinary concept is also different. It morphed from Watlington's American-European cuisine into what Cibelli calls "comfort food with Italian flair." That isn't to say the menu is all about lasagna and meatballs though. Indeed, surprises await.

Cibelli is a native of Milan. He's worked in restaurants since the age of 14 — in Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Germany and New York City. Most recently, he ran the former Mama's Cucina Italiano in Pala Casino Resort & Spa before splashing into Mission Hills, where he says The Red Door fills to capacity many nights a week.

We came for lunch. It was a mellow scene of mostly well-dressed business folk savoring things like seasonal sautéed vegetables; fried eggs with bone marrow; lamb burgers with mint aioli; and house-made pastas in various presentations. As for the swooped-up banana cream pie I spotted at another table when we first arrived, it wasn't forgotten at the end of our meal.



Chef-owner Luciano Cibelli ran restaurants in several countries before purchasing The Red Door. (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

One of the more unlikely dishes you'd never expect from a passionate Italian chef is vegan nachos. To our astonishment, they rivaled those found in modern, meatless restaurants.

Cibelli constructs them from flour tortillas made by a "local Mexican grandma." They're cut and fried to order, dusted in some sort of addicting chili seasoning, and then drizzled in vegan cheese sauce made from cashew cream. In addition, pico de gallo and tenderly cooked black beans drape the chips, which practically disintegrated in our mouths from single, gentle bites.

The soup of the day — on a cool, rainy day no less — was cannellini bean with elbow macaroni and snipped herbs. Almost identical to pasta fagioli, every slurp snuggled our taste buds with warmth and pleasure.

Cibelli makes his own fennel-spiked sauce.

sage, which surfaces in a few dishes such as orecchiette pasta with mushrooms and brandy cream sauce, plus an outstanding flatbread that unites the crumbly sausage with basil pesto and buttery fontina cheese. For that, 00-grade flour imported from Italy is used for achieving an airy, lightweight crust that doesn't leave you bloated even after shoveling down a couple extra pieces.

The same flour goes into Cibelli's house-made pastas, which include irresistible thin, wide noodles known as pappardelle. Hit them with ground beef, pork and veal braised in red wine, and you've arrived in pasta Bolognese heaven. Thankfully, the portion was generous because I couldn't get enough of the stuff. Make sure to request Parmesan Reggiano to sprinkle over it for extra pizzazz.

My lunchmate went gaga over his braised short rib sandwich served on a puffy house-made bun. The sample I took revealed super-tender beef in a lush wine sauce that paired brightly to feta cheese and fried onion strings layered over the meat. A garden salad con-

The Red Door

741 W. Washington St.
(Mission Hills)
619-295-6000
thereddoorsd.com

Lunch prices:
Soups, salads and starters,
\$7 to \$16
Sandwiches, burgers, fish
tacos and pasta dishes,
\$12 to \$19
Dinner prices:
Soups, salads and starters,
\$7 to \$16
Pastas and other entrees,
\$19 to \$38

taining fresh lettuces and crisp radishes rounded out the plate.

We didn't ignore the booze options, of which there are many. My companion threw down two full pours of exquisitely structured Kieu Hoang Napa Valley Cabernet while I nursed a spunky "Earl's Night Out" cocktail. The drink combines pepper-infused gin with lemon and

see Red Door, pg 17



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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Parma-Cucina Italiana
3850 Fifth Ave.
San Diego, CA 92103
619-543-0049
parmaitaliankitchen.com

The inspiration for the restaurant came from the owners’ fondness of their original hometown of Parma, Italy which is well known for its Parmigiano cheese, Prosciutto di Parma and the world’s most famous pasta maker, Barilla. Parma-Cucina Italiana offers Northern Italian cuisine, fresh ingredients and simple presentations.

Celso, a combination of Geppetto and Super Mario, is the chef and his specialty is, of course, pasta! Don’t miss his lasagna, tortellini or his penne salsiccia and remember to ask about his special creation of the day. Franca is the dessert chef with unforgettable creations such as homemade Tiramisu, Torta Manuela named after her daughter, and the “to die for” Profiteroles alla Nutella, which is always a crowd pleaser. Their style can be best described as homemade cooking combined with a dash of love and exceptional flavor.

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South Park’s neighborly cantina

Come On
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Dr. Ink

They say the Paloma is Mexico’s most popular tequila-based cocktail. More so than margaritas, which on this side of the border tend to steal our affection if only because Palomas aren’t an option in many Mexican establishments.

But they’re eagerly slung at Del Sur Mexican Cantina, the Mission-style structure replete with an intimate bar, colorful dining room, and faux bell tower that looms over this stretch of 30th Street.

The cocktail is typically comprised of an uncomplicated mix of tequila, grapefruit and lime juices, simple syrup, and a shot of soda water. Though here the recipe hits its premium with the fresh fruit juices and a jet spray of fizzy, semi-sweet Squirt that replaces the club soda.

“The bartenders are always willing to adjust the sweetness,” said a fellow patron named Natasha, who was enjoying a day off from her bartender job at the nearby Whistle Stop. The Paloma is her go-to drink at Del Sur, although on this day she veered off track and ordered a mango-chili margarita instead.

“The fresh ingredients they use in their drinks are key,” she added while expressing her disdain for plastic straws as I vigorously sipped my Paloma through one.

“Straws are for getting people to drink faster. For environmental reasons, I want to eliminate them,” she stressed.

She’s right. I sucked down that Paloma remarkably fast, due in part to its citrusy zing and titillating sweetness from the Squirt, which was my favorite childhood soda.

During happy hour, Palomas and mules are both \$7 (normally \$9). House margaritas are \$6 (regularly \$8), and a pitcher of margaritas is \$30, which saves you \$12. A few draft beers such as Tecate and Negra Modelo are also a couple bucks less than usual, selling for only \$3 apiece during this time.

Nachos, quesadillas, tostadas and flautas are in the offing



The completed Paloma with a floater of Squirt soda



Del Sur greets at the commercial gateway into South Park.
(Photos by Dr. Ink)



Bartender Sabrina Mitchell shakes up a Paloma.

**Del Sur
Mexican
Cantina**

2310 30th St.
(South Park)
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Happy hour: 4 to 6 p.m.
Monday through Friday


for \$7 or \$8 per item. They’re about \$3 less than normal.

“We don’t reduce the portion sizes,” noted Sabrina Mitchell, the vivacious bartender who gave me a play-by-play on the making of my Paloma. She also helped me decipher the happy hour offerings on a menu card using the world’s smallest font.


I ordered the quesadilla with carnitas, reluctantly passing up an option of jackfruit, which blew me away when I tried it here previously for dinner. The trendy tree crop contains flesh that resembles chicken. It’s available in the quesadillas or nachos.

RATINGS

Drinks: 
A focused selection of beer, wine and cocktails are reduced in price during happy hour. They include Tecate, Sangria, margaritas, and a refreshing semi-classic Paloma made with fresh fruit juices and topped off with Squirt.

Food: 
The carnitas quesadilla offered a generous layer of braised pork inside the tortillas. Nachos, flautas and tostadas with a choice of proteins are also on the happy hour menu.

Value: 
Savings on food and drink run \$2 to \$3 per item.

Service: 
The staff is warm and outgoing. And Sabrina the bartender will happily explain how your drink is made.

Atmosphere: 
The dimly lit bar area and dining room offer a rustic, Spanish feel accented by colorful wall sections that resemble serape blankets.

The carnitas sated my hankering for pork, which was layered with cheese between two large flour tortillas — no gourmet spins, just a classic quesadilla with meat.

Del Sur’s vibe is friendly and upbeat. Its happy hour is a laid-back affair, which allows you to rub elbows with the regulars and perhaps learn a few cocktail tips.❖

Puzzles Sponsored by:



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

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.

9/6

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Puzzle answers on page 18

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			

CREATOR'S NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

ACROSS

1 Spill the beans
5 Pamphlet
10 Baseball stat.
13 Norse gods
15 Musical variety show
16 Rowing essential
17 Movie critics
19 Cell constituent
20 Final
21 Metric unit
22 Benedict
23 Soil mates?
27 Holy: Fr.
29 Ripen
30 Comedy duo
34 Spanish priest
36 Sign of a hit
37 Tenant
38 Dance
40 Psychic ability, briefly
42 Former American actress
43 Surface thawing
45 Cheers bartender
47 Small missile
48 19th C. lithographers
51 Creek
52 Rope
53 Extensive properties

55 Asian country
57 Exactly, with tee
59 Small child
60 Bauxite, e.g.
61 '40s legislative two-some
66 Women's grp.
67 Stone marker
68 Site of "Kennebushport"
69 Turn right
70 Danger
71 1981 film

DOWN

1 College degs.
2 Garland
3 Balaam's mount
4 Actor-folksinger
5 Italian three
6 Country singer McEntire
7 Unwilling
8 Panacea
9 Vietnamese holiday
10 Prolific musical collaborators
11 Loud noise
12 Savings accts.
14 Drive back
18 Italian currency

22 Expunged
23 Stratagem
24 Brazilian river
25 Two-time Drama Critics' Award Winners
26 Certain
28 1987 Oscar winner
31 Italian physicist
32 Term of affection
33 Buns
35 Greek marketplaces
39 French affirmatives
41 Lay a foundation
44 Possessing a will
46 Former Washington socialite
49 He adds the crowning touch
50 Rage
54 Floral perfume
55 Name in Louisiana politics
56 Indonesian islands
58 King in Norse mythology
61 Cooking abbreviation
62 Linden or Holbrook
63 Trevino's concern
64 Finale
65 Aye

Puzzle answers on page 18



(Photo courtesy of pxhere.com)

Finish the year strong

Now's the time to recommit to your goals

Fitness

Blake and Gwen Beckcom



Why wait until Jan. 1 to become focused on your health and wellness goals? Believe it or not, now is as good of a time as any to dust off your resolutions that you made at the beginning of 2018 and make sure you complete them before the year comes to a close.

If you've found the chaos of work, family, and life obligations has gotten in the way of your healthy objectives for the year, stop — right now — and take the steps to change course. Here's how to do it, today.

1. Toss the junk.

Rid your pantry and work snack drawer of junk. While you can't control what other people are eating, you can control what you're eating. If there are unhealthy chips, candy and sugar-laden treats in your own home, car, bag or desk, then today is the day to get rid of it all.

Put it all in the break room for others to eat, donate it to a food bank, or just accept it all needs to go and toss everything in the trash. Once it's gone, don't buy it again.

2. Write down your SMART goals.

Did you say "I want to lose weight" this year as a goal? How about switching up that statement to be a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and

Timely) goal that you can strive for through the end of the year, with a measurable result.

Try this: "I want to work out for 45 minutes, four days a week, every week, through the end of December 2018." Even though this goal doesn't talk about weight loss, it is tangible, and you can attack it head on. Try writing down just two or three SMART goals for the rest of the year and pin that paper up on your fridge, mirror and computer screen.

3. Tell others and find a healthy buddy.

While a trainer might be there to help you stay motivated during your workouts, it's also great to find another friend who wants to recommit to being healthy throughout the remainder of the year (and beyond, of course). Let those around you know you're focused on exercising and eating mostly healthy food, so they can support you and try not to steer you off course. Maybe even find someone who wants to try out healthy restaurants with you!

While you don't need to be perfect in your effort, it's important to make small changes in the right direction. And won't it feel good going into the new year on track to make 2019 your healthiest year yet? With these steps, you can set yourself up for success right now to be a healthier and happier you this year and next.

4. Book your workouts.

Call your personal trainer (or sign up for one!) and recommit to your regular weekly

sessions. Get those training sessions scheduled on the calendar a month in advance, so that you can work on building strength, mobility and cardiovascular health to help you feel great entering 2019.

If you're already working with a trainer regularly, then add an extra session each week to up your game for the rest of the year. If you do not have a trainer, and think you can do it solo, book your own training sessions on your day timer and show up for them. Hold yourself accountable and get after it! The hardest part of any fitness program is starting and once started, showing up.

Though things around us of late may seem out of control — and actually are at times — we need to choose to focus on what we can control.

We can control our nutritional choices, which by and large control our moods. We know that being mindful of nutrition can lead to better outlooks, because we have more fuel in the tank to deal with life. Our thought life, if left unchecked, can control us — and since foods have an impact on our mood, it seems practical to focus there.

And we can also control how we move. Movement has a cascading effect on our entire well-being. It is often said that "A body in motion, stays in motion."

You can do it.

—Blake and Gwen Beckcom run Fitness Together Mission Hills. Contact them at fitness-together.com/missionhills or call 619-794-0014.*

FROM PAGE 15

RED DOOR

honey, resulting in a comforting sting to the back of the throat that turned sweet and soothing after a few seconds. Whoever created the cocktail deserves a golden bartender award.

Lunch ended with the

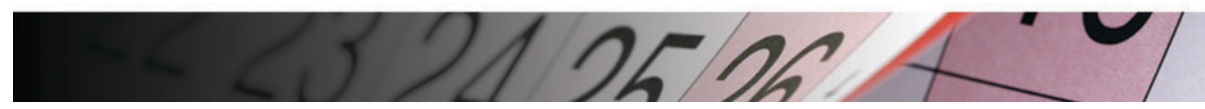
banana cream pie, a graham cracker disk loaded with chocolate, caramel, slivered almonds and sliced strawberries. The hardy dessert over-compensated for the lack of banana cream pie at my Thanksgiving dinner this year.

Everything we packed away during lunch was divine. Nothing even fell into mediocrity. I can now understand why reservations are recommended

if you come knocking on this windowed red door for dinner. No doubt, the restaurant's fine legacy continues.

—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.*

UPTOWN CALENDAR



FEATURED EVENTS

FRIDAY

Dec. 14



San Diego Gem Faire
Find the perfect holiday gifts for every budget at the San Diego Gem Fair. Fine jewelry, crystals, gems, beads, gold and silver, minerals, and much more. Browse from over 100 exhibitors from around the world. Take advantage of jewelry repair and ring sizing while you shop, as well as free hourly door prizes. \$7 for admission. Scottish Rite Event Center, 1895 Camino del Rio South. For hours and more information, visit gemfaire.com.

Gallery Grand Opening
The San Diego History Center has announced the unveiling of a special new gallery exhibition dedicated to local artist Bob Matheny. A rare exhibit featuring works from a living artist, many pieces will be displayed for the first time to the public. The grand opening will take place from 4-6 p.m. Free. 1649 El Prado. For more information or to RSVP, visit bit.ly/2FU3VMT.

SATURDAY

Dec. 15



'Jingle' with SDGMC
The San Diego Gay Men's Chorus presents its annual holiday show, "Jingle," at the Balboa Theatre. Join the 200 singers, dancers and musicians of the San Diego Gay Men's Chorus as they work their holiday magic in two live performances. Show starts at 8 p.m. with a follow-up performance on Sunday, Dec. 16 at 3 p.m. Tickets start at \$27. 868 Fourth Ave. Find tickets and more information at bit.ly/2FyG4SX.

Hillcrest Car Show
Rev your engines and join classic car collectors for a "tire-kicking" good time at the Hillcrest Classic Car Show. This monthly show allows avid collectors to share their love of cars with the community. So roll down your windows, crank up the tunes, and cruise on down to the Hillcrest pride flag to check out dozens of classic cars. Free. 1-4 p.m. Visit bit.ly/2BSQJ73

Buddha for You's Anniversary Party
Buddha for You Gift Shop invites the community to an

open house to celebrate its 20-year anniversary. There will meditation, food, art, movies, a ribbon cutting ceremony and more. All ages. Free. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. at Dharma Bum Temple, 1531 Tyler Ave. Visit buddha-for-you.com.

SUNDAY

Dec. 16



Parade of Lights
The 47th annual San Diego Bay Parade of Lights returns this year to dazzle crowds along the bayfront. Ships will float through the bay decorated to this year's theme: "Tropical Island Christmas." A parade will take place at 5 p.m. Parade will start at Shelter Island and end at Ferry Landing in Coronado. Free. Visit sdparadeoflights.org.

X-mas Holiday Concert
The First Unitarian Universalist Church presents its twist on holiday entertainment. Featuring San Diego chamber choir SACRA/PROFANA, the concert will present new arrangements of traditional Christmas carols, fun takes on holiday classics, and contemporary pieces on themes of winter and solstice. Admission is \$25 or \$10 for students and military. 4190 Front St. Tickets available at bit.ly/2GAbgLy.

The Nicky Awards
The 43rd annual Nicky Awards are nearly here! Join what has been called "the gay Academy Awards of San Diego" and pay tribute to those in the LGBT community who have helped to make a difference and improve the quality of life of those around them. Located at the Courtyard Marriott at Liberty Station, with the red carpet rolling out for guests at 7 p.m. Tickets start at \$65. Visit nickyawards.org.

TUESDAY

Dec. 18

Sisters' Saturnalia
The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence will host their annual Saturnalia celebration this year at FruitCraft winery. Join them as they recognize their accomplishments throughout the year and celebrate the winter solstice. Doors open at 6 p.m., meeting will begin at 7 p.m. 477 University Ave. Visit bit.ly/2Eg5N0P.

WEDNESDAY

Dec. 19

Little Italy Holiday Market
Get some last-minute holiday shopping done as the Little Italy outdoor market is turned into a winter bazaar, with vendors offering handmade and personal items and gifts for sale. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 600 W. Date St.

THURSDAY

Dec. 20



Hippy Sabotage
Sacramento based EDM duo Hippy Sabotage will play The Observatory on their Beautiful Beyond tour. \$25. Doors open at 7 p.m., shows starts at 8 p.m. 2891 University Ave. Purchase tickets online at bit.ly/2GcDa6A.

SATURDAY

Dec. 22

Painting in the Park
Pink Easel, a creative group offering workshops in art, invites you to join its picnic-style painting session where guests will create three 4-by-4-inch mini canvas panels with acrylic paint. All supplies provided. 10-11:30 p.m. in Balboa Park, located outside the Botanical Building. \$25. 1549 El Prado. Purchase tickets at bit.ly/2FA2rHI.

Talmadge Art Show
The Holiday Talmadge Pop Up Art Show returns at the Talmadge home where it all started. There will be 20 artists selling handmade crafts including clothing, pottery, jewelry, purses and more. Two food trucks will also be offered. Join in the holiday celebration and shop for those last-minute gifts. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 4514 Norma Drive. See a list of artists at bit.ly/2Fxx0FE.

WEDNESDAY

Dec. 26



Winter Science Camps
The Fleet Science Center will hold classes exploring STEM and computer science fields over the holiday through Jan. 4 (excluding New Year's Day). Curriculum for grades one through three incorporates

important skills using science, technology, engineering and math. For grades four through six, the Fleet will offer computer science and programming camps. Kids will learn how to create different elements of a 2D video game, using features of the popular game "Fortnite." \$65-\$75 per day. Times vary. Details and registration at bit.ly/2rhLgR1.

FRIDAY

Dec. 28

Chromeo at Spin
Canadian electro-funk duo Chromeo will be at Spin Nightclub for their Head Over Heals tour. Don't miss out on the chance to catch this intensely funky pair on stage, and dance till dawn at this late-night show. \$25. 10 p.m.-4 a.m. at 2028 Hancock St. Buy tickets at bit.ly/2rt3YoS.

MONDAY

Dec. 31

Solar Turbines 5K
The 24th annual Solar Turbines Run/Walk will take place at the Port of San Diego Holiday Bowl Parade this year. The race starts at 9:45 a.m. on the corner of North Harbor Drive and West Ash Street. More than 100,000 spectators are expected. Registration for the race is \$40. Visit bit.ly/2FWjvHX.

TUESDAY

Jan. 1



Spreckels New Year's Concert
Ring in New Year's Day with a concert celebrating the 104th anniversary of the Spreckels organ. Organist Jared Jacobsen will perform. Admission is free. Show begins at 2 p.m. 1549 El Prado. Visit bit.ly/2GezEsC.

SATURDAY

Jan. 5

A Night of Fantasies
Join The Merrow for a one-of-a-kind cabaret fundraiser. Funds raised will be split evenly between San Diego Leather Pride 2019 and a charitable organization chosen by the performers and volunteer staff of A Night of Fantasies. A special happy hour will run from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Show begins at 5:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$10. 1271 University Ave. Visit bit.ly/2ruiFbm.

ONGOING EVENTS

'Jewels of the Season' Through Dec. 30
The Timken Museum of Art has partnered with SDSU's School of Art and Design to bring an expansive display of decorative holiday ornaments. For the third year, the museum will be filled with glittering, handcrafted ornaments, with more than 1,400 distinct pieces. In addition, guests can create their own holiday ornaments in the exhibition's workshop.

'A Christmas Carol' Through Dec. 30
Cygnit Theatre's holiday smash hit is back for its fifth season. Guests are invited to enjoy the holiday classic adapted from Charles Dickens' timeless tale of hope and redemption. This reimagined, fully staged production features original new music, creative stagecraft and puppetry, and live sound effects. Tickets start at \$45. 4040 Twigg St. For tickets and show times, visit bit.ly/2qI82Bt.

'Holiday Magic' Through Dec. 31
The Spanish Arts Village presents a festive exhibit in its Studio 23 just in time for the holidays. Guest can enjoy refreshments while viewing paintings, jewelry, sculptures and glass art. Studio 23, also known as the Southwestern Artists' Association, is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. Exhibit is free. 1770 Village Place.

'Rococo Rivals and Revival' Through Dec. 30
The Timken Museum of Art has announced its upcoming exhibition, "Rococo Rivals and Revivals," which explores the distinctive style that flourished in the 18th century. The exhibition includes loans from the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, University of San Diego's Print Collection, and several private individuals, as well as objects from the Timken's own permanent collection. Free. 1500 El Prado, The Timken Museum. Visit timkenmuseum.org.

'Dr. Otic's Miraculous Old Town Showdown' Through February 2019
Dr. Otic's Miraculous & Audience-Powered Old Town Showdown — similar to "Who's Line is it Anyway?" — is a fun and interactive show based entirely on audience suggestions. Showdown performances are every Friday and Saturday night, but each show is a unique experience created on the spot by our talented ensemble of improvisors. Reservations recommended. \$14-\$17. All ages; family-friendly. 7-9 p.m. at Old Town Improv Co., 2415 San Diego Ave. #103. Visit bit.ly/dr-otic.

Looking to get involved in your neighborhood? A full list of community planning meetings, town councils and the like can be found on our website at bit.ly/uptown-meetings.

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/LestatWest.

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/BrewTrivia.

Thursdays
North Park Thursday 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/ThursMarket

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/ThursKen.

Fridays
Free Friend Fridays
Looking for a co-working space with value-aligned social entrepreneurs, artists, nonprofit professionals and local start-ups? Collective Impact Center offers a complimentary day pass to use shared desks and office space. Bring your laptop and check in on social media with hashtag #cicfreefriend-friday for free Wi-Fi. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Collective Impact Center, 3295 Meade Ave. Visit bit.ly/free-Fridays.

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/GHMarket.

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 bit.ly/OTMarket.

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/HillcrestMarket.

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

—Compiled by Jules Shane and Sara Butler. Email calendar item requests to sara@sdccn.com.

WILLIS ALLEN REAL ESTATE'S *Metro Office is Officially Open!*

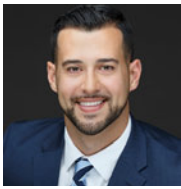


The Metro office is located at 2875 Fifth Avenue in Bankers Hill at The Park, which is comprised of luxury residences and 2 commercial spaces and is ideally located in the heart of Uptown. Our ground floor location affords maximum exposure and accessibility. Within proximity to Balboa Park, fine restaurants, museums, shopping and more. This contemporary, sleek office allows us to market growing San Diego neighborhoods and attract agents looking for an innovative, tech-savvy brokerage.

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