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(left photo) A volunteer whose donation will help a stranger. (top right photo) A person packing a bag with the donation to transport across the country. (bottom left photo) Donors give away stem cells and bone marrow at the donation center. (Photos courtesy Be The Match)



Changing lives one flight at a time

By ELAINE ALFARO

It all started with a middle school friendship, untapped free time, and a life-changing nonprofit organization needing volunteers.

Brenda Patrick, originally from the Bay Area but now a local in

La Mesa, sought a new avenue for her spare time after retiring from a lifelong career in nursing. It turned out her best friend since seventh grade would connect her to her retirement vocation.

She introduced Patrick to Be The Match, a nonprofit organization that plays a role in every

bone marrow and blood stem cell transplant in the U.S.

Patrick left retirement in Oct. 2020 and has since traveled as a volunteer Be the Match courier to almost 20 states — transporting blood marrow and stem cells to

SEE **BLOOD COURIER**, Page 3

Schools look for more normalcy in COVID era

By DAVE THOMAS

Companies, organizations, schools and more are adjusting how they go about doing business again amid another winter surge of the coronavirus.

Several universities and schools in San Diego announced recently they would return to virtual classes to begin the 2022 spring semester. For many students and staff, virtual classes are not new.

School officials said delaying the start of in-person classes until early February serves two purposes. First, it helps to better



Helix High School is one of the few schools that has returned to in-person instruction. Of course, the school has many safety measures in place amid the coronavirus surge. (Photo courtesy Helix Charter High School)

SEE **SCHOOLS WITH COVID**, Page 19

NEWS BRIEFS

GROSSMONT HOSPITAL RAISING FUNDS TO BUILD NEUROSCIENCES CENTER

The Grossmont Healthcare District (GHD) recently announced it will allocate up to \$4 million in matching funds toward the development of the new Sharp Center for Neurosciences at Grossmont Hospital.

The GHD board unanimously approved the expenditure that will be dispersed in \$1M increments as the funds are obtained by the Grossmont Hospital Foundation.

The new center will be created by remodeling and expanding the existing rehabilitation center into a multi-department facility which will treat inpatient and outpatient populations suffering from stroke or other brain and spinal conditions.

Once complete, the Center for Neurosciences will provide a total of 50 licensed beds. The new facility will create a full continuum of care for patients requiring these highly specialized services, featuring an inpatient progressive care unit, an inpatient rehabilitation unit, and a new 16-bed neuro-intensive care unit. The design will also include physical therapy and occupational therapy gymnasium areas.

In 2019, the Board of Directors committed a \$4M grant toward Sharp Grossmont Hospital achieving designation as a Comprehensive Stroke Center, elevating care to a higher level for patients who require intensive care and specialized techniques that aren't always available at most primary stroke centers. The investment served as a first step in supporting development of a center dedicated to brain and spine care at the district hospital.

"Our vision is to create a single center of excellence where

SEE **NEWS BRIEFS**, Page 4

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Blood courier

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

patients in need. She even traveled on New Year's Day this year.

After her extensive career in nursing and, specifically, a decade working in the kidney transplant department at Kaiser in San Francisco, it was a natural transition for Patrick.

"The whole concept of transplant and all of that is very familiar to me," said Patrick.

However, Be The Match showed her a new vantage point in the transplant process.

"My first journey was to a children's hospital, and I was so nervous about getting the paperwork right," said Patrick. "Until you do a trip no matter how much experience, no matter how old you are, it's still nerve-racking at first."

As a part of the job, Patrick must fill out a series of paperwork detailing the donor and recipient numbers, infectious disease results, etc. Patrick is additionally tasked with carrying onto the plane the medical products while flying.

"I'm given a satchel and inside it you have a cooler and ice blocks," said Patrick. "There's a specific way you have to prepare it before you leave. I carry a backpack and just the satchel."

Amid this new transition and learning process, Patrick embarked on her first trip during the pandemic when vaccines were not available.

"Be The Match was really needing people who were willing to do this and could do this," said Patrick. "Prior to vaccinations, you were really taking a chance by bringing COVID-19 home to loved ones. A lot of people who volunteer happen to be associated with somebody who got a bone marrow transplant. They were extremely cautious and a lot of people stopped traveling."



Volunteers handling donations (Photos courtesy Be The Match)

With over a year under her belt, she's adjusted to pandemic complications within crowded airports and limited space, all while maintaining composure and organization.

"What's required of this job is paying attention to detail, being able to think on your feet if something happens, and not letting things rattle you," said Patrick.

This volunteer work, even within an ever-changing environment, has changed the trajectory of her retirement life for good—especially as she reminisces on her first trip.

"It still kind of chokes me up," said Patrick. "I was so involved in thinking about what I had to do and getting things right that it didn't dawn on me that I was making a delivery to a child and that kid was going to get a transplant. It's not till you're completely done that you think, 'Somebody in the next day or two is going to get a transplant and it's going to save their life.'"

From coast to coast, Patrick helps change the lives of hundreds of patients. However, she has never actually met any of them, and according to her, that is okay.

"I don't need to meet them, just to know that the little part that I played actually helped," said Patrick.

In addition to learning how to do the paperwork or setting up her transport satchel, Patrick said she learned the most from witnessing others' willingness to help strangers.

"I think that the main thing [I've learned] is how selfless some people are," said Patrick. "They're not giving it to a family member, they're giving it to a stranger."

There is one trip in particular that remains ingrained in her memory because of a demonstration of generosity.

"I was sitting there waiting in the lobby for the medical products and this family comes out and there was this boy – he didn't look older than 15 though he had to be 18 [for the procedure]," said Patrick. "He had on a shirt that said 'I just donated.' Here it was 7:30 p.m. at night, in the middle of winter, and he had been there all day donating to somebody he didn't know. That's been the biggest lesson: how important donation of any kind is and that people are continuing to do it."

If you want to learn more about Be The Match or get involved with volunteer opportunities, visit their website at bethematch.org.

—Elaine Alfaro is a journalism student at Point Loma Nazarene University and a former intern for the La Mesa Courier.



A bag with the donation inside at the airport



Packing a donation box



Most volunteers only bring a small carry-on with their donation.

Why Homeowners Leave Thousands Behind When Selling Their Homes

La Mesa – A new report has just been released which reveals 7 costly mistakes that most homeowners make when selling their home, and a 9 Step System that can help you sell your home fast and the most amount of money.

This industry report shows clearly how the traditional ways of selling homes have become increasingly less and less effective in today's market. The fact of this matter is that fully three quarters of homesellers don't get what they want for their homes and become disillusioned and worse financially disadvantaged when they put their homes on the market.

As this report uncovers, most homesellers make 7 deadly mistakes that cost them literally thousands of dollars. The good news is that each and every one of these mistakes is entirely preventable. In answer to this issue, industry insiders have prepared a free special report entitled "The 9 Step System to Get your Home Sold Fast and For Top Dollar". To order your FREE copy of this report, call toll-free 1-800-270-1494 and enter 1000. You can call anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Preliminary hearing scheduled for accused murderer

By Neal Putnam

A La Mesa man accused of killing his husband and fleeing the state in 2020 will have his preliminary hearing on Feb. 23, 2022 after being extradited here.

Daniel Scott Jordan, 45, is charged with killing Kevin Powell, 38, on Aug. 10, 2020. Powell was stabbed at least 50 times, according to Deputy District Attorney Eva Kilamyan.

Kilamyan said the number of stab wounds indicated it was “a particularly heinous murder.” She noted the victim was found in bed with a knife imbedded in his chest.

Jordan has pleaded not guilty in El Cajon Superior Court after he was extradited from Reno, Nevada. He remains in the George Bailey Detention Facility without bail.

Two homicide detectives made the discovery Aug. 11 when they made a welfare check on Powell in the 4400 block of Carmen Drive in La Mesa where he lived with Jordan.

Jordan has agreed with his attorneys to delay his preliminary hearing several times in the last year.

Powell’s absence was first noticed when he missed two Zoom meetings Aug. 11, 2020 where he worked for the City of Chula Vista in the human resources department.

Powell was a frequent participant in the annual AIDS Life Cycle event, according to his obituary. Many former employees posted tributes online to him.

“We are heart broken by the tragic death of our friend and colleague, Kevin Powell,” said Chula Vista City Manager Maria Kachadoorian after news of his death occurred.

“We will miss his enthusiasm, professionalism, and commitment,” said Kachadoorian.

—Neal Putnam is a local court reporter.

Hearing set for alleged hit-and-run driver

By Neal Putnam

A Feb. 22, 2022 preliminary hearing has been set in the 2021 death of a promising young medical student who was the victim of a hit and run in La Mesa.

The driver of a white Ford F150 pickup truck struck Jok “Michael” Joseph Jok, 18, on Feb. 27, 2021, on Bancroft Drive just south of Golondrina Drive in La Mesa.

Jok was taken to a hospital around 9:10 p.m., but he died six days later on March 5 from head injuries. The driver fled the scene.

La Mesa Police alerted the public with photos of the vehicle from security cameras. They announced the arrest of Scott Douglas Satterfield, 61, of Spring Valley, on April 8.

Satterfield has pleaded not guilty to a felony charge of hit and run in which someone died. No allegations of drunk or impaired driving were brought as he was not identified or arrested until five weeks after the incident.

Satterfield remains free on \$25,000 bond.

Jok had begun an accelerated bachelor’s program at UC Riverside that would have led him to medical school, as he wanted to specialize in neuropharmacology, according to his obituary.

His parents came to the U.S. in 1998 as refugees from Sudan and his father became a case manager to help other refugees in San Diego. Jok was born in 2002.

“We struggle to imagine the world without Michael, and trust in God’s goodness for his wellbeing in the life beyond the one we know, which is unquestionably dimmer without him in it,” stated his online obituary.

He is survived by his parents, step-mother and siblings. He graduated from La Jolla Country Day School in 2020.

He was described as “quick witted and clever” and being “a truth-teller who cared deeply for his closest circle of friends,” according to a Facebook post in his honor.

—Neal Putnam is a local court reporter.



Jok “Michael” Jok at his high school graduation (Courtesy photo)

News briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

patients will be treated from start to finish— in one location — with experts dedicated to neurosurgical, neurological, and complex spine care, as well as movement disorders. At this time, a center of this magnitude does not exist in San Diego, and we are thrilled to be the first.” said Scott Evans, Sharp Grossmont Hospital CEO.

The total cost of the Sharp Center for Neurosciences is \$58.2 million. Construction is expected to start in the Fall of 2022, with completion taking place in Spring 2024.

“We are proud to support our community hospital in their building a Center for Neurosciences to serve East San Diego County residents with the highest quality brain and spine care in the region,” said GHD Board President Virginia Hall, RN. “These investments will create a full continuum of care for patients requiring these specialized services.”

.....

DEANO’S PUB GRAND OPENING

On Saturday, February 5th Deano’s Pub is being welcomed to La Mesa’s business community. This newly renovated bar has been transformed into a friendly neighborhood bar.

Deano’s Pub is located at 5286 Baltimore Drive in La Mesa. In addition to watching a favorite team on the big screen TV’s, listen to live music and enjoy Karaoke during special evenings. Deano’s Pub is the perfect place

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 8



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Julie Boyadjian

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A fond farewell

By JEFF CLEMETSON

Happy new year! January brings in the first issue of the Courier papers that I have helmed since September 2015. For me, this new year also brings in a new opportunity to expand my reach as a journalist and so this new year will also bring a new editor of the Courier to take my place. But I did not want to leave these pages without commenting on my years here and to thank the many contributors who made my job easier and more gratifying in serving the community.



In my first issue as editor of the Mission Times Courier, I wrote the following in an editorial introducing myself to the readers: "The world is full of big problems and big stories, but the ones that are close to home can be just as important to us and our neighbors."

I tried to make my focus in these pages to be the local issues that you found important, that you held a stake in and cared about.

Community newspapers like the Courier are only as strong as the readers who trust them, so I have always aimed to fair in my reporting and in the views expressed in the opinion pages. In a time when much of the news industry is looking to capitalize on readers or viewers with a certain political or social bent because advertising to select audiences is easier (and often more profitable), community papers still rely on the old model of trying to garner as much respect and trust from all the residents in their distribution area, not just those with a predetermined ideology. If you found my reporting to be otherwise, please know that fairness was always paramount to my intention and that I was always working to be better.

Most of all, I hope you learned as much from reading about our community as I did from reporting about it. The experience I gained and lessons I learned here, I hope to take with me as I expand my horizons to report on all of the San Diego region as a reporter for the San Diego Business Journal.

And I hope you welcome my replacement Dave Thomas with the warmth you have shown me over these years. And most of all, have a happy new year!

—Jeff Clemetson is the now former editor of the Mission Times Courier, College Times Courier, La Mesa Courier and Mission Valley News.

Fletcher: I am proud to now represent the Jewel of the Hills

Fletcher Notes

By NATHAN FLETCHER



I am excited to be La Mesa's new representative on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

As your elected County Supervisor, it's my job to make sure the County of San Diego is working for you. The last few years have certainly been tough, but I am ready to look ahead with some optimism that things are getting better!

Our focus this year is to be a County you can count on. We're spending 2022 focused on actions that make your life better — safer communities, action on homelessness, good jobs and affordable housing and childcare. To ensure we're doing that to the best of our ability, it is the County's responsibility to be aware of your City's strengths, opportunities and challenges.

After the new district boundaries were finalized, I was excited that the City of La Mesa was a new community in the Fourth Supervisorial District. I quickly set-up a visit to better familiarize myself with your community. City Councilmember Colin Parent hosted my visit and gave me a tour.

We visited with the County workers at your library on Alison Avenue. You have a great library and I learned that the community really utilizes it. I'll be looking into ways we can expand its service offerings



La Mesa City Councilmember Colin Parent (l) and County Board of Supervisors Chair Nathan Fletcher in front of La Mesa City Hall as Fletcher tours the new city he represents. (Photo courtesy Office of Supervisor Nathan Fletcher)

and possibly the usable space in the building.

Another stop we made was to check out a potential site for transit-oriented housing. We need to find viable areas to build more attainable housing for working families. La Mesa has some sites that may give us a chance to build housing near transit, which also helps to lower greenhouse gas emissions. In my dual role as Chair of the Board of Supervisors and Chair of the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, I'll work with our teams to explore building more affordable housing here.

I also had the opportunity to talk with some residents, those I spoke to made it clear they care about the area and want to see it continue to thrive. To achieve that, you need good leaders within your city government. I met your City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Police Chief and other members of the council.

They're passionate about delivering results and I look forward to working collaboratively with them to get things done.

My visit earlier this month was the first of many. Members of my community team have already started meeting with La Mesa community leaders, nonprofits and business owners. We plan to be present and accessible to you. If you need to contact our office, please call us at (619) 531-5544 or email nathan.fletcher@sdcounty.ca.gov and follow me on social media. To invite me and my team to your organization's meeting, request a proclamation or grant, and learn about the work we're doing, visit supervisorNathanFletcher.com.

—Nathan Fletcher is the San Diego County Supervisor representing the Fourth Supervisorial District and he serves as Chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

Letters

SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS, NOT PRIVATE, SPECIAL INTEREST SCHOOLS

Re: "Guest editorial: California deserves school choice" [Volume 11, Issue 12 or bit.ly/3skAieA]

Yes, California does deserve better, much better. Too bad but for at least 50 years the California school system has been under attack by secular, special interests and Budget Hawks with an agenda.

First off, if you starve school funding, (which by the way started with Ronald Reagan in his time as California's Governor in the 1960s — his agenda was to cut, cut, cut; Pete Wilson, cut, cut, cut schools; every single Republican governor in my life time has done the same: cut, cut, cut) what could we possibly ever expect? Of course the school system in California is and has suffered, right along

with our children.

My mother was a school-teacher during those years. She brought schoolwork home every night, worked weekends at her school for her children. She never made much money, but gave much more than those who benefitted will ever know.

As we all know, teachers have for years been underappreciated, underpaid and left in many instances to bridge the "budget gap" out of their own pockets and sacrificing their weekends and time off to make the best of the system that seems to never really meet the needs of students.

Public schools must prevail to make an education for all students. Charter and private schools for too long have been able to reach in, skim off public funds for their special interests. Again, fully funding public schools could once again bring back the best schools in the country — California's

claim in the 1960s. No longer, thanks to private, special interests in education. Remember, private schools, must achieve one goal first: profit! Not education, profit.

So, yes California students, our communities, our families, our industry and business all deserve better. If there is one investment that a society can make, it should be the advancement, education and nurturing of our children. Not for-profit private schools, charter schools or some other fashion of education, secular or not. Every child deserves the best chance to succeed. Many families cannot get their child to a special school, a private school, a charter school, what happens to these children?

Build Back Better — build back for our children, our communities and our country, not special interests. Yes, California does deserve better.

—Randy James, La Mesa

Don't get scammed into buying a phony COVID test

DA Notes
By SUMMER STEPHAN

As California continues to set records for the number of people testing positive for the omicron variant of the coronavirus, you may find yourself becoming desperate to find an at-home test to avoid long lines at testing sites.

By now, we know unscrupulous scammers are always waiting for their next opportunity and the shortage of COVID-19 tests is no different. Bad actors may quickly use the omicron crisis to dupe the public into buying counterfeit tests. So, before you click the add-to-cart button on that website claiming to sell self-testing kits, know how to spot red flags so you don't become a different kind of COVID-19 statistic.

Here's a list of tips from the Federal Trade Commission on how to vet at-home tests:

- Only buy tests authorized by the FDA.
- Check the FDA's lists of antigen diagnostic tests and molecular diagnostic tests before buying, to find the tests authorized for home use. (EUA is "emergency use authorization.")
- Do a background check on a seller before you buy, especially if you're buying from a site you don't know.
- Search online for the website, company, or seller's name plus

words like "scam," "complaint," or "review."

- Compare online reviews from a wide variety of websites. You can get a good idea about a company, product, or service from reading user reviews on various retail or shopping comparison sites.
- Think about the source of the review. Consider whether the review is coming from an expert organization or an individual customer.
- When buying online, pay by credit card. If you're charged for an order you never got, or for a product that is not as advertised, you can dispute the charge with your credit card company.
- If you have been scammed, report it directly the FTC or contact the DA's consumer protection team at consumer@sdcda.org.

If you are looking for an in-person test site:

- Beware of pop-up COVID test sites as they are currently unregulated, and some may not be legitimate.
- Red flags related to pop-up COVID testing sites include:
 - Sites that do not have logos or information identifying who is providing the service.
 - Sites that will not provide information about the lab that is providing the results.
 - Sites that collect non-relevant personal identifying information such as social security numbers.

- San Diego County provides a list of authorized free test sites on its website sandiegocounty.gov.

Finally, Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order this month proclaiming a state of emergency through March 31, aimed at preventing price gouging on COVID-19 at-home test kits. The order prohibits sellers from increasing prices on test kits by more than 10% if they had been selling them as of December 1, 2021, unless they can prove their costs have increased. Anyone who began selling tests after December 1, 2021 may not charge 50% greater than what they paid for the kit themselves.

As your District Attorney, I'm committed to increasing communication and accessibility between the DA's Office and the public. I hope these consumer and public safety tips have been helpful. The Consumer Protection Unit is comprised of Deputy District Attorneys, Investigators and Paralegals dedicated to protecting consumers and law-abiding businesses from fraudulent or unfair business practices. To report a consumer complaint, you can call (619) 531-3507 or email consumer@sdcda.org.

—District Attorney Summer Stephan has dedicated more than 29 years to serving justice and victims of crime as prosecutor. Visit <https://www.sdcda.org/office/contact/> to contact her.

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CONTINUED FROM Page 4

to join friends and unwind after a busy day. This Grand Opening happens when the bar opens at 6:00 a.m. and continues all day. The “official” ribbon cutting will happen at 4:00 p.m. Deano’s Pub will be offering special happy hour pricing throughout the entire day and evening.

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Waterford Terrace, part of Sunshine Retirement Living, is running a pet memorial in honor of resident corgie Luke who died of aggressive cancer mid-January. Luke was well-loved by everyone at Waterford Terrace and the surrounding neighborhood. His owner Lydia is conducting a drive in his honor. To participate, please drop off pet supplies at

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 12

Lyle Rennick pursues passion for painting late in life



Lyle grew up and attended high school in Laguna Beach in the 1950s. Most of his art was for projects at school. He made drawings for the yearbook and school paper, posters, and stage artwork. On graduation, he was awarded the Bank Of America Art Achievement Award, but instead of art school, he decided to study engineering at UC Berkeley.

Lyle received a degree in electrical engineering in 1962. He spent most of his engineering career in the Silicon Valley area, where his wife Leslie and he raised four children while he worked at several startup electronic companies.

During the 1990s, he took a number of painting workshops with artists who he admired. He studied with Gregg Kreutz, Scott Burdick, Ray Roberts, Scott Christensen,



“Lisa in the Garden” by Lyle Rennick (Photos courtesy Foothills Art Association)

Carolyn Anderson, Kang Cho, John Budicin, and others.

When he retired from engineering in 2004, he and his wife moved back to Orange County.



“Surf Wader” by Lyle Rennick

He joined the Laguna Plein Air Painters Association (LPAPA), which allowed him to paint live models in their studio, and to paint in outdoor plein air

sessions. He painted there up to three times a week for a period of about five years. LPAPA occasionally had art shows, where on three occasions he was awarded prizes.

Lyle found that he didn’t enjoy promoting his work, but he did exhibit some paintings in two galleries in Laguna and one in Capistrano.

In 2016 he and his wife moved to La Mesa to be near their children and grandchildren.

Lyle says he enjoys being a member of the Foothills Art Association.

—Bonnie Owen is editor of Footnotes, the monthly newsletter of the Foothills Art Association.



“Main Beach Boardwalk” by Lyle Rennick



“Lihue Bay” by Lyle Rennick



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Grossmont band marches again after hiatus



Foothiller Footsteps

By CONNIE AND LYNN BAER

The past two years of COVID have presented seemingly insurmountable obstacles for activity classes such as high school marching bands. Grossmont High School instrumental music director James Villegas found ways to overcome those obstacles.

2021 MOTHER GOOSE PARADE

Looking back to the fall semester, James shares, “The famous Mother Goose Parade had to go virtual in 2021 for the second year in a row and that was a disappointment because the Royal Blue Regiment was looking forward to the parade being our inaugural march as a community parade band. However, the band’s disappointment was short-lived after Mother Goose Parade Director Deborah Chandler reached out to us to participate as a headliner along with alumnus Joe Musgrove, Class of 2011 in a Mother Goose Virtual Parade.

It was a whirlwind of activity to be ready in time, but the students “pulled it off”. Our “parade” went from the Humanities Building on the east side of campus, past the GHS Museum, ending in the courtyard of the new theater complex. A drone recorded the parade, which aired on November 21st, 2021. Led by Senior Drum Major Joseph Steinbock, the Royal Blue Regiment did an “excellent job.”

2021 HOLIDAY BOWL PARADE

A vastly different parade experience occurred in December. Villegas said, “It was an honor to be a part of Grand Marshall Joe Musgrove’s entourage for the 2021 Holiday Bowl Parade, which was ‘a big step forward’ for the Royal Blue Regiment as we reestablish the parade tradition here at Grossmont High School.”

Joey Arthur, a senior, said, “It was a whole new experience! I’ve watched parades all my life and now it was exciting to be a part of a large parade. Seeing other bands, the floats, the crowds and performing live is something I’ll never forget. Our band was proud to be there, and even though it was in the middle of the winter break, most of our members were able to be there.”

Villegas adds, “Parents, alumni and, of course, the band members all came together to make the parade a huge success for us. As the director, I was overwhelmed with pride in the band. It was my first outing after an eight-week medical absence. I wasn’t able to keep up with the marchers and that’s just as well; the emotion of the event may have brought a tear of joy

to my eye. A director tearing up? Never! I couldn’t risk losing discipline in those near perfect ranks!

“The Royal Blue Regiment was the only local high school band performing in this year’s Holiday Bowl Parade, but we did get to mix it up with some bands from across the country including from Iowa and the North Carolina State Wolfpack band. Led by the Grossmont NJROTC Honor Guard, we played Sousa’s ‘The Washington Post’ loud and proud. Even our famous Foothiller mascot Gus marched along with us and entertained the crowds.

“We are looking forward to reestablishing the parade tradition at Grossmont. If we can raise the funds, I’d like to restore the Grossmont Shields and tall flags to our lineup, add the cheer squad



Class of 2011 alum and Padres player Joe Musgrove was the 2021 Holiday Bowl Parade Grand Marshal. (Photo by Chris Stone of Times of San Diego)

to our drill team for some exciting color, and bring in some alumni to carry the school banner. (If you would like to make a financial donation to support these efforts, please contact James at jvillegas@guhsd.net.). Parading is one of the best ways for our

school to support and bond with the community.”

Junior Hayden Evey said, “It was our first parade since I’ve been in high school and I look forward to doing more! At first, I was nervous, but it was very exciting! You’re focused on marching and performing, but the lead up is really exciting when you see and hear other bands. The other bands and, especially the crowds, cheering us on was amazing, and I can’t wait to do more!”

Villegas reflects, “Parading means being a part of the

community, showing our school pride, performing for thousands, and bringing out the best in our students. They work hard to accomplish the goal and end the day feeling proud, tired, and maybe a little footsore.”

ANNUAL GROSSMONT NJROTC INSPECTION

On campus, the instrumental music program increases the school’s pride. Director Villegas

SEE MARCHING BAND, Page 17



The Royal Blue Regiment participating in their first parade since the program restarted. They were the only high school group featured. (Photo courtesy Grossmont High School Museum)

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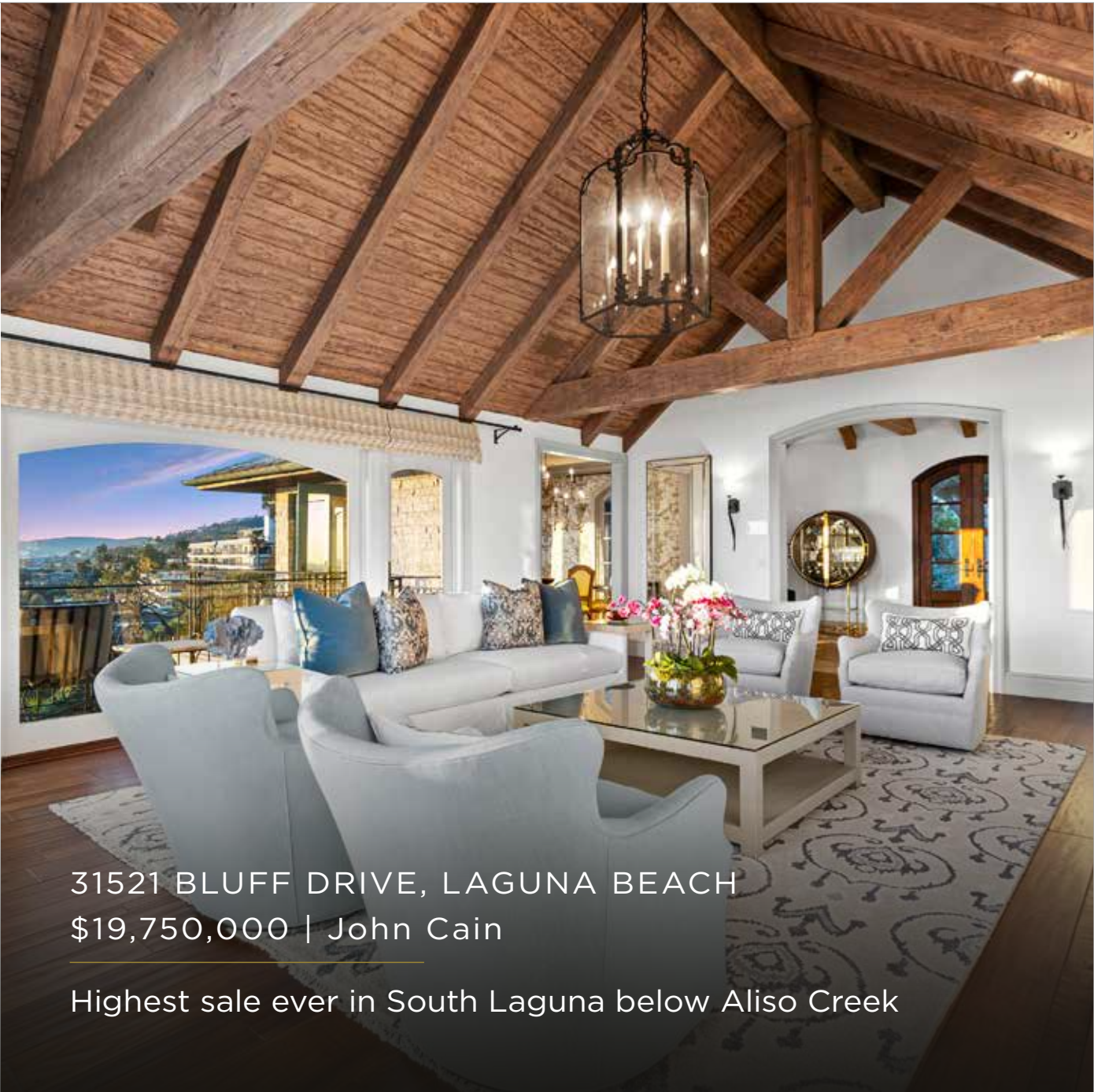
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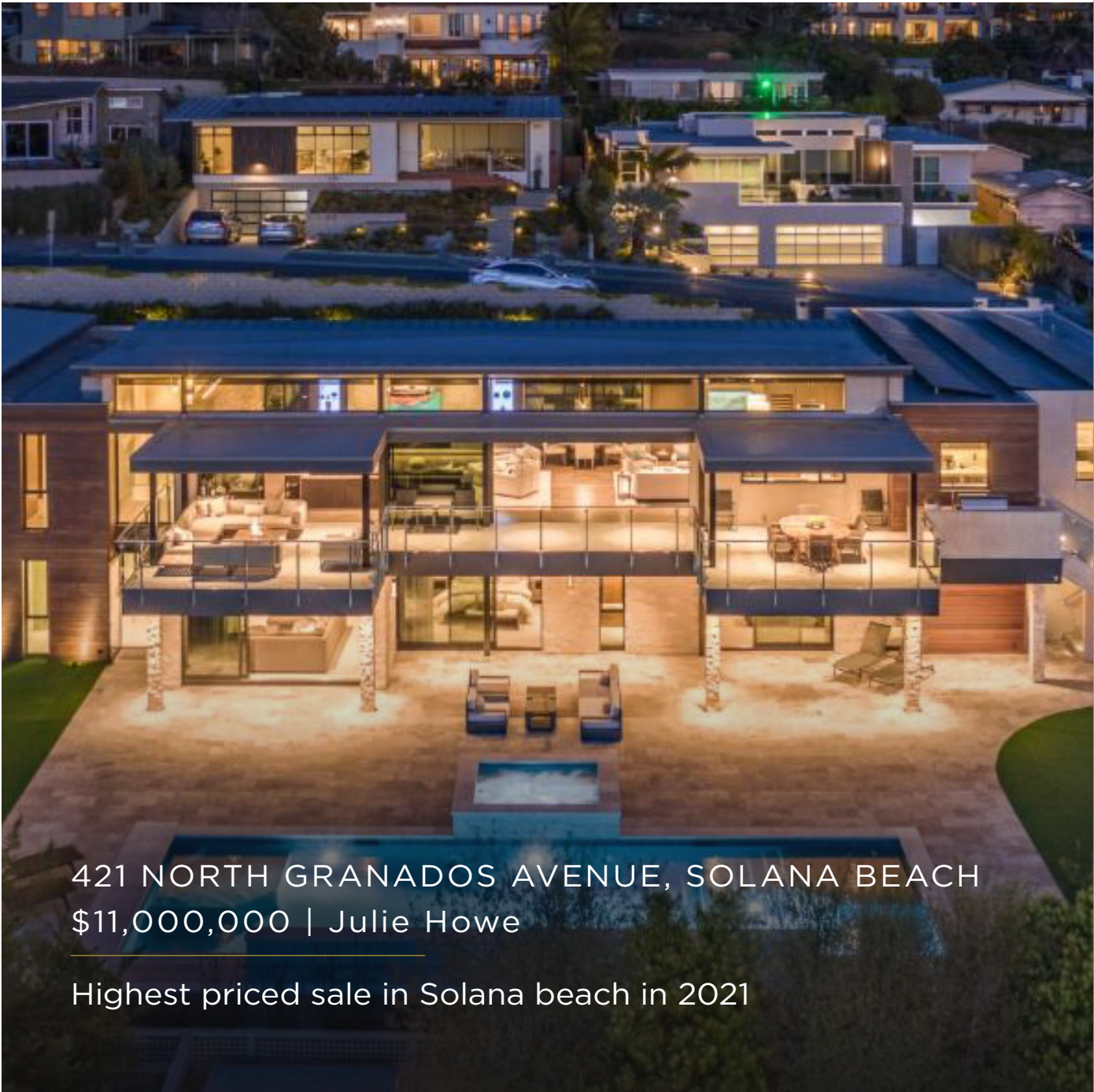
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News briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 8

Waterford Terrace at 5580 Aztec Drive and they will be donated to foster organizations.

GUHSD SUPERINTENDENT TO RETIRE

Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD) Superintendent Theresa Kemper announced that she will retire at the end of the 2021-2022 school year after 33 years of service to GUHSD.

In an announcement message shared with GUHSD staff, Mrs. Kemper honored

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 14

Longtime La Mesa resident celebrates 104 years

By Jack Jaeger

Alma Jaeger, a resident of La Mesa for more than 50 years, celebrated her birthday on Jan. 14, 2022. She did this for the 104th time!

Jaeger celebrated this with her trademark adaptability as the COVID-19 surge prevented gathering at a restaurant. Instead, the family joined together in her driveway with cake, balloons that spelled out the big 1-0-4 and a raucous

rendition of "Happy Birthday."

A native of Chicago, Ill., Jaeger moved with her husband, Edward, and 10 children, to San Diego CA, in 1957. That summer, adaptability became a key in how the family came to know their new home.

For example, the train carrying their home's furniture was misrouted. To adapt, Jaeger settled her children by using blankets for beds. She cooked meals on a two-burner portable stove.

Jaeger's faith is central to her approach to raising her family. Together, she and Edward Jaeger raised their children in the Christian faith. Simple guidelines, like "Be polite" went a long way. Her legacy is love.

Jaeger loves a good laugh. Each day, she works three crossword puzzles, does a bike exercise, and her devotional.

—Jack Jaeger is Alma Jaeger's son.



Alma Jaeger at 103 (Photo courtesy Jaeger family)

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Business leaders discuss border region's economy at annual roundtable

By DAVE SCHWAB

Economists, industry experts and business leaders weighed-in on the outlook for San Diego and the border region's economy in 2022, and what working remotely means, at the 38th annual Economic Roundtable held recently.

The roundtable is the region's longest-running, free local annual economic forecasting event. Jeff Light, editor-in-chief of the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, which co-hosts the roundtable, recapped how last year's roundtable prognostications by experts went.

"Twelve of the 14 overshot what they thought unemployment would be," Light said. "Twelve of 14 undershot the median-home price and all 14 undershot the Dow Jones industrial average. Turns out 2021 was sort of a better year than we expected. I can only hope 2022 also works out that way."

Alan Gin, associate professor of economics at University of San Diego, discussed a recently released report on the Cali-Baja regional economy.

"The binational region straddles the 150-mile border between California and Baja California," said Gin. "This is a dynamic economy with 7 million people. We have a regional economy that's over \$250 billion approaching \$300 billion, and then we have \$70 billion in cross-border trade."

In his slideshow presentation, Gin stressed STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning is vital to the evolving regional economy.

"Improved infrastructure is needed to create jobs and promote investment for both countries," Gin said. "Investment in education and research aids industries on both sides of the border by enhancing productivity and innovation. Because STEM is going to be so important in the future, due to

automation and increased technology, we need to ensure that we get high-quality STEM education at all levels."

Jose Maria Barrero, assistant professor of finance, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) Business School, talked about the outlook for remote employment in 2022 and beyond using results from an ongoing monthly U.S. survey.

"We are trying to figure out how the pandemic has shifted working arrangements, to figure out whether at-home working will stick and in what form," Barrero said. "Before the pandemic, 5%, one out of every 20 working days in the United States was a full day worked at home. The pandemic struck in March 2020 and by May 2020, 60% of full working days were provided from home. Since then this has trickled down in the second half of 2021 to between 40% and 45%. We estimate that about 25% of



The annual economic roundtable usually occurs in person (Courtesy photo)

working days will be from home after the pandemic."

But Barrero pointed out there are some pitfalls inherent in letting a large portion of a company's workforce decide if and when they'll work from home.

"The two most important (survey) options were I never want to work from home or I want to work from home full-time," said Barrero. "But we have three concerns. If you let everybody choose

which days to come into the office or not, you can very easily end up sitting in a conference room where half the people are there, and half are on Zoom. In practice, that doesn't always work out right because people on Zoom can feel left out."

And then, added Barrero, there is the fact that, when you let workers choose which days to be in/out

SEE ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE, Page 19

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CONTINUED FROM Page 12

the unifying spirit that has kept GUHSD's "inextinguishable light of hope burning for 101 years."

"From library tech to locksmith, buyer to bus driver, technology specialist to teacher, everyone who makes our schools work cares deeply about kids and believes in public education's central role in the betterment of humankind," said Kemper.

Kemper began her career with GUHSD in 1989 as an English teacher at El Cajon Valley High School. She then served as a District English Curriculum Specialist, Assistant Principal at Granite Hills High School, Principal of Grossmont High School and Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services – responsible for all educational programs districtwide – before being named Superintendent in the summer of 2020.

At the time of her selection, the COVID-19 pandemic had yet to show any signs of relenting. In choosing Mrs. Kemper to lead GUHSD's family of 17 schools and programs, over 3,000 caring staff members, and over 17,000 students, Governing Board President Rob Shield said, "Theresa Kemper (was) the obvious choice to see our District through its most challenging period."

The GUHSD Governing Board will conduct a nationwide search for the next Superintendent and will seek input from the GUHSD community. The Governing Board hopes to name the next Superintendent in May 2022. Mrs.

Kemper's last day is expected to be June 30, 2022.

SPEECH SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

The La Mesa-El Cajon Branch of the American Association of University Women is holding their annual Speech Trek, speech contest, open to all high school students in grades 9-12. The virtual contest is open to all high schools including public, charter, and private.

Each year a critical topic is selected and students, along with a branch/teacher coach, create, prepare, and present an original, 5- to 6-minute speech. This year's topic is, "Has the United States lived up to its pledge of 'liberty and justice for all?'" Would requiring the study of diversity, equity and inclusion in a high school setting help ensure liberty and justice for all?"

This year's contest will be held via Zoom on February 8, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. All speeches will be videotaped for the State-level competition.

The winning participant's video will then be sent to the AAUW State competition. Winners at the local level in the La Mesa-El Cajon branch will receive \$500 for first place and \$250 for the runner-up. The winner at the State level will win \$1500, second place will receive \$1000, and third place will take home \$500.

The state winners will be announced on April 30, 2022, at the annual meeting and their speeches will be available for viewing on the AAUW-CA website aauw-ca.org following that meeting.

For more information, email ssutton1950@gmail.com.

A taste of Thailand in La Mesa

By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON

It began, as it so often does in cooking, with grandma.

In this case, the Yay (Thai for grandmother) was a first-generation immigrant who started her American life in Ohio before finding her way to San Diego. Fortunately for all concerned, she brought with her a wealth of recipes and cooking traditions from her home in Bangkok, Thailand. Her family followed and the traditions continue to this day. The entire family loves to cook and eat Thai food. Third-generation sisters currently run and cook for the family's Bamboo Fresh Thai Cuisine Restaurant.

Bamboo Fresh Thai Cuisine in La Mesa is a neighborhood restaurant that is clean, comfortable and welcoming. They serve tasty and healthy food. Many of grandma's recipes are still on the menu: Massaman



The sign for Bamboo Fresh Thai (Photos by Robin Dohrn-Simpson)

Curry, Penang Curry, Stuffed Chicken Wings (a well-loved yet difficult recipe to cook), and Curry Puffs.



The zesty and sweet red Panang Curry served at Bamboo Fresh Thai with a choice of protein.

are Panang Crispy Duck, roasted duck with bell pepper, and topped with Panang Sauce. Pla Lard Ginger, a deep-fried fish topped with stir-fried sliced ginger and vegetables. Kapow Kai Krob is a crispy chicken stir-fried with bell peppers, onions and topped with crispy basil. If you are a steak lover try the Tiger Cry Steak, a grilled steak served with Thai Spicy Sauce. One of grandma's recipes is Khao-Soi Noodle Curry, with Creamy Curry

Soup, served with either beef or chicken, seasoned with cilantro and scallions, and topped with crispy egg noodles and coconut cream.

Currently, they are doing a busy take-out business; however, the restaurant is open for indoor seating. For a complete menu go to bamboothaicuisine.com.

Located at 7953 University Boulevard, they are open for lunch and dinner six days a week (closed Sunday).

—Robin Dohrn-Simpson is a local food and travel writer. Reach her at robindohrnsimpson.com.



Enjoy a plate of Kapow Kai Krob topped with stir-fried basil among the various choices at Bamboo Fresh Thai Cuisine Restaurant.



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By Julie White

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- 1/2 cup chopped Crystallized ginger (found in the baking section of most stores)
- 1 cup white chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream together butter and sugar.

Add remaining ingredients and chill a few hours if possible.

Shape dough into one-inch balls and roll in granulated sugar.

Place on a cookie sheet two inches apart.

Bake for 10 minutes.

Cool and enjoy!



Ginger cookies (Photo courtesy Pixabay)

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Zoos, aquariums and gardens are also a part of the event.
(Photo courtesy Japanese Friendship Garden)



The Maritime Museum at the San Diego Port allows people to explore and learn more about ships. (Photo courtesy Maritime Museum of San Diego)

Museum Month returns to in-person program

By KENDRA SITTON

With San Diego museums fully operating once again, residents have the chance to visit these attractions for half-off admission throughout February.

The Museum Month program was growing in popularity before the pandemic. In February 2019, more than 29,000 people visited a museum at a discounted price. The following year, that number increased to 37,000.

Since museums were closed in February 2021, the San Diego Museum Council took the month to highlight the virtual events museums put on to keep members connected. Much of the virtual programming is still occurring, but with the return to in-person visits to museums, event organizers are overjoyed to welcome people back.

"Everyone has to come back into the museums and that's

the most exciting part," said Bob Lehman, executive director for the San Diego Museum Council.

The program has existed for more than 30 years and is unique in the cooperation between museums that the event requires. Kerri Fox, who was the spokesperson for the Museum Council for several years, said other cities sent representatives to attend the program so they could start a similar effort in their cities.

Macy's is a longtime sponsor of the program and people can purchase the half-off admissions at its stores. In addition, the company is donating 400 fully-paid admissions. A few years ago, the Museum Council wanted to improve accessibility for all communities so they formed a partnership with the library systems in the county. Now, more than 80 libraries also sell the passes.

"Something I know that is important to the Museum Council

is making sure people from all communities are aware of the program and can visit because price sometimes is a barrier to access in visiting museums," said Rebecca Handlesman, communications director for the Natural History Museum (The Nat).

Advertising for the event may also help locals learn about museums that are accessible at lower price points year-round. Free and pay-what-you-can museums are a part of the program. Some San Diego museums are part of "Museums for All," a national effort to offer free or discounted museum admission to people using government assistance.

For instance, at the New Children's Museum, visitors can show their EBT cards and enter the museum for \$2 per person. At The Nat, an EBT card grants

SEE MUSEUM MONTH, Page 17



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Museum Month

CONTINUED FROM Page 16

free entry for up to four people in a family. The New Children's Museum also closes Island Avenue to vehicular traffic on the weekends so children can play with the toy cars and activities they place on the street for free. It operates as an extension of the public park across the street. Since it is outside, this area also lets families concerned about coronavirus have a museum experience without going inside.

"If people are more comfortable being outside on the weekends, they can be playing in our street," said Fox, a deputy director at the New Children's Museum.

To stay safe, museums require masks and some reduced hours to give frontline workers time off as well as to thoroughly clean the building.

For those who do not qualify for a WIC or EBT card, Museum Month allows them to try out new museums at a more affordable price point. February sees a jump in admissions for participating museums, some of them from first-time visitors.

"Museum Month is always a time where we know we're going to see some new visitors and a lot

of them end up becoming members because they love what they see," Fox said.

Participating museums are not limited to geographic areas like Balboa Park or Downtown San Diego. Instead, they are throughout the county – such as the Barona Cultural Center and Museum to the east, the Oceanside Museum of Art to the north, and the Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center to the south.

Handlesman said she uses the month to visit museums she would not normally visit.

"Museum Month is an opportunity to either museum hop and visit a variety of museums or try something new for a lower entry point as far as pricing is concerned. It's a great opportunity to be able to experiment and check



The San Diego Model Railroad Museum's new exhibit features never-before-seen artifacts from the museum's vaults. (Photo courtesy San Diego Model Railroad Museum)



The Teatro Piñata exhibit at The New Children's Museum brings kids backstage and center stage to a traveling caravan theater. (Photo courtesy The New Children's Museum)

out a new museum that you might not have otherwise visited," she said.

Handlesman is excited to visit the San Diego Model Railroad's new exhibit "Out of the Vault," which includes unique and rare items from the museum's collection, some of which have never

been viewed by the public before. Lehman said even as an adult he loves visiting the New Children's Museum and is especially excited about its new exhibit Teatro Piñata, an immersive theater installation. The recently re-opened Mingei Museum is expected to draw visitors as well.

"I really just want to walk around Balboa Park," Fox said.

With so many museums participating, there is something for everyone, and at every price point, during museum month.

—Reach Kendra Sitton at kendra@sdnews.com.

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Marching band

CONTINUED FROM Page 9

shares, "The Royal Blue Regiment made history on December 8, 2021, when for the first time in recent memory, the band performed for the Annual Grossmont NJROTC Inspection. In past years, recorded music has been used for this important event, but as I said, 'Not on my watch!'"

Sophomore Kyle Sterling and Drum Major Joseph Steinbock worked closely with CWO Vasquez to provide musical entertainment to arriving guests followed by the Adjutant's Call and Sousa's "The Washington Post" for the pass and review portion of the inspection.

"We were very honored to be a part of this fine tradition and look forward to participating in the years to come," they said.

The GHS Instrumental Music Program continues to be a source of Foothiller pride, a pride that began in 1920 and that is celebrated in a book documenting the program's first 95 years, available for purchase on our GHS Museum Store page at foothillermuseum.com.

For more information about the program itself, please contact James at jvillegas@guhsd.net. To learn more in person, visit the GHS Museum on Wednesdays by appointment or on Saturday, February 19th from 10 a.m.-1p.m. Masks for all are required inside the museum. For more information, contact us at ghsmuseum@guhsd.net or (619)668-6148.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum.

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Schools with COVID

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

ensure more time to help those individuals who were exposed to or infected by COVID-19 over the Christmas and New Year's holidays to quarantine while not missing out on class. Second, people who recently received a booster shot have added time for the shot to become more effective.

San Diego and Imperial Valley school districts are currently holding virtual classes but plan to return to in-person instruction on Feb. 7. Still, the campuses are open in the meantime.

In a release, San Diego State University stated that instruction would be virtual through Feb. 4 with a few small exceptions. SDSU reminded its students, faculty and staff (this includes those deemed auxiliary workers) able to get the booster that such shots had to be on file with the school by Jan. 18 in order to be labeled as fully vaccinated.

SDSU is not the only San Diego area university to be pausing in-person classes.

UC San Diego in La Jolla went to virtual classes in early January. School officials said if all goes accordingly, in-person classes will resume Jan. 31.

At the high school level, precautions are also being taken seriously as the new year unfolds.

Jennifer Osborn, a community relations spokesperson at La Mesa's

Helix Charter High School, noted the school's return to classes following the winter holiday break was slated for Jan. 5. At that time, COVID cases due to the Omicron variant were skyrocketing and the ability to test for it was quite limited.

"In response to this situation, the Helix administration asked the Charter Board to consider available options, which included returning to school in person with precautions in place; delaying the return to school altogether for five days (including a weekend); or returning to school in a sort of 'soft open' approach for the first three days back, where classes would take place following the regular daily schedule, but students would attend via Zoom," Osborn commented. "After much discussion and weighing out pros and cons, the Board voted unanimously to return with a virtual schedule for three days and postpone returning to school in person until Jan. 10."

As of Jan. 10, the school is holding classes on campus with stringent safety measures in place.

Osborn added that the school provided COVID-19 testing on campus for four days in the first week of January so any students and staff who had been possibly exposed during holiday festivities could protect others if they contracted the virus.

Meantime, sports also returned though some games were postponed or canceled if either team had been impacted by the virus, either via illness/positive tests or being quarantined.

"There is no vaccination requirement at this time for any Helix students, but they are highly encouraged to be vaccinated and boosted when eligible," Osborn commented. "Some athletes, depending on the sport, are required to participate in weekly COVID-19 testing. In order to meet this requirement, Helix provides three testing opportunities on campus each week."

Other extracurricular events have been taking place with safety measures in place.

For those not aware, Helix has the Helix Virtual Academy (HVA) for students who were not able to come back to school or had concerns related to returning for in-person classes. The HVA has been operating since the start of the school year.

According to Osborn, there are myriad of precautions in place at the school to best protect students and staff.

"Early in the pandemic, Helix's Safety Team was tasked with the ongoing review and analysis of the constantly-evolving guidance from state and local authorities," Osborn noted. "That remains in place and they continue to monitor best practices. They are ready to recommend and implement changes as necessary."

Among some of the more notable mitigation measures implemented at Helix:

- Significant modifications were made to the HVAC system to provide the best possible filtration and ventilation.

- Teachers have been provided with sanitation equipment and supplies to use between classes.
- Classrooms are equipped with disposable masks and hand sanitizer.

- Students and staff are required to complete an online screening prior to coming on campus each day.

- Everyone is required to wear a mask when indoors, and it is highly recommended that masks be worn outdoors when not eating or drinking.

- COVID-19 (PCR) testing is provided 3 days a week on campus to any students and staff.

- Most recently, students were provided with at-home testing kits to use prior to returning after the MLK holiday.

- Additional staff have been hired to form a COVID-19 response team to complete all contact tracing and to implement and communicate the COVID-19 isolation and quarantine guidelines provided by the County Public Health officials.

As of last week, more than 852,000 COVID deaths had been reported in the United

States, according to the New York Times.

California leads the way in deaths with more than 78,000 to date. Since the beginning of the pandemic, there have been some 605,000 cases reported in San Diego County and more than 4,500 deaths.

—Reach Dave Thomas at dave@sdnews.com.

Economic roundtable

CONTINUED FROM Page 13


of the office, they tend to stay at home Mondays and Fridays while coming in Tuesdays through Thursdays.


"What this means is, if you're an employer, you're not going to be using your space efficiently, having an empty office on Mondays and Fridays," said Barrero. "And letting people choose when to come in can be a diversity time bomb because who wants to work from home is not random. Turns out, women and racial and ethnic workers – Blacks, Latinos and Asian Americans – want to work from home significantly more than non-Hispanic whites."

Why is this discrepancy between those wanting to work from home an issue? "When workers work from home they tend to get promoted less often because they possibly get less face-time with management," answered Barrero. "So if women with children and racial and ethnic groups are the ones who end up working from home and do not get promoted as often: That is a diversity time bomb for many organizations."

—Reach reporter Dave Schwab at reporter@sdnews.com.

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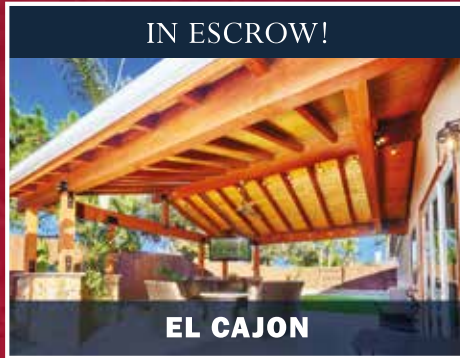
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