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Gift of nature



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CONTACT US

Editorial
(858) 270-3103 x130
jeff@sdnews.com

Advertising
(858) 270-3103 x118
hfine@sdnews.com

www.sdnews.com
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Lighting up the season with cheer

Marilynn Reed tops the tree at the Waring Road triangle with a decorative star, with Shain Haug (left) and Sam Sprague and Sophia Frost (right). (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

By JEFF CLEMETSON

On Sunday, Dec. 5, community members from Allied Gardens set to work on a now 20-year

tradition to bring a little festive spirit to the neighborhood by decorating the flyover bridge on Adobe Falls Road and a tree at the Waring Road triangle.

Although in years past the work of hanging the 735 feet of 2,250 individual lights over the bridge

SEE **AG LIGHTS**, Page 15

College Area residents pushback on city's ADU ordinance

By JEFF CLEMETSON

Eric Rosenzweig has been a resident of College Area for 23 years. In 2005, he remodeled his home at 5167 59th St. that included an add-on room.

"I have no problem with people building on their own property. I think everybody has a right to do that. When I built on mine, it was relatively easy to do," he said. "But the difference was, I talked to my neighbors on both sides and behind. I said, 'Hey, this is what I'm doing. Is this gonna work for you? What can we do to make accommodations? When Joe, our neighbor over there, did the same thing, he talked to us. I've had no communication from

anybody here about what's going on."

What Rosenzweig knows about what is going on at the property directly behind his house is that there is a plan in the permitting phase to build several two-story ADU units, and another plan to build more on a property across the street diagonal from him. Both properties are not owned by accessible neighbors like Joe, but by an LLC looking to take advantage of city and state ordinances allowing development in previously single-home neighborhoods.

"Behind us, this will be three two-story buildings or six ADUs, plus a seventh ADU off of the main



Eric Rosenzweig addressing College Area neighbors about new ADUs going into his neighborhood (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

SEE **ADU ORDINANCE**, Page 4

NEWS BRIEFS

FLYER OFFERS FREE OLD TOWN-SAN SHUTTLE SERVICE

The San Diego County Regional Airport Authority is celebrating the launch of the San Diego Flyer, a free electric shuttle bus service between San Diego International Airport (SAN) and Old Town Transit Center. The electric shuttle buses operate seven days a week, with an average arrival every 20 to 30 minutes. Pick up and drop-offs are timed to meet the first and last Trolley, Coasters, Amtrack trains, and MTS busses with the first pick up at 4:45 a.m. and the last pick up/drop off at 12:30 a.m.

The San Diego Flyer shuttle buses are recognizable through a branded light orange wrap adorned with plane icons, the word "Flyer" across the side of the buses, and the SAN logo. Currently, the buses stop at Old Town Transit Center, Terminal 1, and Terminal 2. Passengers at SAN will be picked up and dropped off at transportation islands at each terminal. The stops and intervals of service will be assessed and shuttle service will be adjusted to meet increased demand if needed.

"The San Diego Flyer will provide a seamless connection between the airport and the Old Town Transit Center, ensuring passengers have an efficient way to get to the airport," said Kimberly Becker, Airport Authority president and CEO. "This is one of the many ways the Airport Authority is working to improve passenger access to SAN and we hope passengers coming or going from the airport will take advantage of this complimentary service."

The service is provided on six 2019 Endera E-450 Electric Vehicle (EV) Cutaway Shuttles, which will be powered by 100 percent sustainable energy through charging stations

SEE **NEWS BRIEFS**, Page 4

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NBA star, Whispering Winds co-founder Don Kojis dies at 82

By KEN DENBOW

Former Dell Cerro resident and San Diego Rockets Star, Don Kojis, died at 4 a.m. the morning of Nov. 19 after a courageous fight with cancer.

Don Kojis was born July 15, 1939, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to George and Agnes Kojis. He attended Notre Dame High School in Milwaukee and developed into a 6-foot, 5-inch basketball stand-out. From 1957 to 1961 he attended Marquette University where he blossomed into the basketball player who would be a major factor in the NBA 1963 to 1974.

While at Marquette, Don was a two time All-American, setting multiple school rebounding records that are unbroken. He was the 13th overall pick by the Chicago Packers in the 1961 NBA draft, but Don elected to play for the Phillips Petroleum Phillips 66er's in the National Industrial Basketball League, while working in the marketing department.

While with the 66er's, he partnered with teammate Charlie Bowerman to popularize the "alley-oop" play, then called "The Kangaroo Kram." He captained the United States team that won the Gold Medal at the 1963 Pan Am games and the World Games.

He decided to forego the 1964 Olympic Games and joined the Baltimore Bullets. He played for five other teams, including the San Diego Rockets, where he made two All Star teams, averaging 22.5 points per game in the 1968-1969 season. Throughout his career, Don was noted for his smooth jumper, hustle, sharp elbows(!), and leaping ability. Wilt Chamberlain described him as "the jumpingest white boy I've ever seen".

In 1968, while flying between games, Don met Maureen McNeill, a tall, vivacious, flight attendant who was undaunted by the wise cracking athletes on her flight, giving as good as she received. One year later, Don married Mo twice (once in her Methodist church, once in Don's Catholic faith, giving rise to his claim of twice as many anniversaries as years of marriage) in a loving union that ended only with his death. The couple had three sons, Dan, Matt and Mike.

In 1976, Don attended a Protestant Family Camp with a group of Catholic families. It was a deeply spiritual experience, but even more, it was fun! Several of the children on the trip asked their parents, "Why doesn't our church have something like that?"

The incident would lead to Don's calling in life. A calling that has had a positive effect on hundreds of thousands of people since then and is the defining legacy of his life.

At the Del Cerro home of his good friend, Dr Jerry Tisi, the two discussed the children's question, then asked the obvious follow-on: "Who will build such a camp?"

The two men searched the local area, finally finding the perfect spot in Cuyamaca Mountains near Julian. The problem was the \$3.5 million price tag. The seller of the property, Charles Woods, a World War II veteran who had suffered third degree burns over his entire body while flying gasoline to re-supply Chinese forces fighting the Japanese, reduced the price of the property by nearly half when he learned the purpose. "I can't make money off God," he said. The total down payment the two partners had between them? — \$25 dollars!

Don and Jerry met with the Bishop of San Diego to pitch the camp, and while the diocese would be supportive of the camp's mission, the bishop said the needed to be funded and directed by the laity.

Woods carried the balance as a loan, and the payment was \$9,000 per month, more than the income of the two purchasers. The sight of 6-foot 5-inch Don with the 5-foot 6-inch Tisi became a familiar sight, pitching their dream of a fun, healthy, spiritual camp. Don took over the fund raising on his own following Jerry Tisi's death in 1988. Donors always had a sense of anticipation as to what Don would wear for his pitch. It varied from a business suit, a tuxedo, or even the habit of a cloistered nun (his Sister Mary Larry costume!).

The result is the current Whispering Winds Catholic Conference Center near Julian where more than 10,000 people each year – youth, individuals, couples, families and groups – get away from the stress and distractions of daily life and hear God's voice in the beauty of nature. Over the years, Whispering Winds has developed unique ministries



Dan Kojis (Courtesy photo)

tailored for families with special needs children, military families, and siblings separated from each other by placement in foster homes.

Don found another source of fulfillment — grandchildren. His tall form was a familiar sight at volleyball and other competitions, McDonald's playgrounds, and as the mobile diving platform in his backyard swimming pool.

Don was preceded in death by his parents and his brothers, George and Tom. He is survived by his wife, Maureen (Mo), three sons, Dan (Nikki and Samantha), Matt (Brianne, Ainsley, Sela, Augustine, Colette), Mike (Ana, Jimena, Milani), sister Barbara Pfeil (Larry) and several nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life Mass will be held Santa Sophia Parish on Dec. 18 at 10 a.m. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Whispering Winds Catholic Conference Center at whisperingwinds.org.

—Ken Denbow is a San Diego-based freelance writer.



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News briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

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For more information about the San Diego Flyer, visit san.org/to-from/Public-Transportation#1178347-old-town-shuttle.

PROJECT CLEAN WATER WINS GOLD MARCOM AWARD

Project Clean Water, San Diego County's initiative dedicated to protecting water quality won a gold award at the MarCom Awards, an international creative competition that recognizes outstanding achievement by marketing and communication. The award is for the "52 Ways to Love Your Water" video that was created as part of the 5-year countywide public education and outreach initiative around stormwater pollution and water quality. View video: vimeo.com/602148580/510966d708

The video was created and produced by MIG San Diego, a full-service, national award-winning marketing, advertising and public relations agency who is leading the campaign. The multi-year educational campaign was created in response to regional surveys reflecting a decline in public awareness that storm water entering our storm drains is not treated before reaching our rivers, lagoons, and the ocean. The video was created as part of the launch, which happened on March

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ADU ordinance

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

house. Across the street ... will be another three two-story building, or six ADUs. ... Essentially, they're building apartment buildings that are not ADUs," Rosenzweig told a group of a few dozen neighbors who gathered at his home on Dec. 4. The gathering was organized with the help of Neighbors For a Better San Diego, a grassroots group of homeowners organizing to oppose commodification of residential areas in the city by commercial interests and developers.

"When we started fighting back against this, it spread from neighborhood to neighborhood, development to development," said Geoffrey Hueter with Neighbors For a Better San Diego. "And one of the things that [residents] find in this process is there's lots of money and lots of access for people who donate, who have interest in projects. If I'm an investor, if I do transit business, I'm in the GIS mapping business. If I have business with the city and I have something to get out of it, I can afford to have somebody down at City Hall every day presenting my interest. And what there isn't, is somebody down at City

Hall every day representing us." That lack of representation is an issue raised by several neighbors at the gathering. Rosenzweig pointed out that District 9 City Council representative and newly elected as Council president Sean Elo-Rivera, although invited, did not send anyone to attend the event. Rosenzweig said he called Elo-Rivera a few days before to discuss the issues with the planned ADU projects in his neighborhood and described the councilmember as "responsive, but certainly not wanting to commit to anything."

Elo-Rivera has proposed a modification to the city ordinance that "does a few things but certainly doesn't go far enough," Rosenzweig said, and added that the Mayor Gloria's office also sent a response but only offered to include returning the four feet of setback from neighboring property lines to the ordinance.

Another modification to the city's ADU ordinance meant to appease neighboring residents — that if there are three units built in a yard, the developer is required to plant one tree — Hueter described as a "peon."

"So that's how we're going to preserve our urban canopy and resolve our differences and everything else?" he asked.



Residents signing petitions of protest to San Diego's ADU ordinance (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

Although the focus of Neighbors For a Better San Diego is to revise the San Diego ADU ordinance to be at least as restrictive as the state rules that were created when the legislature passed SB 9, Hueter and other residents at the gathering raised issues with that law as well.

SB 9 requires that lots split up for multiple units to be built up for at least three years, but Hueter said there was no mechanism created to enforce the rule and no penalties outlined for developers who break it. So a statewide database will need to be created to make sure that people who sign affidavits that they will live at a property are who they say they are and

to make sure they are also not the signed resident at another property.

Hueter explained that SB 9, the state bill that authorizes ADU construction in all state neighborhoods, was a way to meet climate action goals by promoting infill development to avoid building housing developments into areas that are fire prone and required long auto commutes for residents to reach urban job markets.

"And there's some logic to that," he said, but added that the "logic breaks down" when the city is full of lots closer to transportation and in the urban core of San Diego — like empty lots on El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue — that could be developed, but those take more planning and time.

"It's hard work. It's not something that somebody can get reelected on a two-year cycle. It takes years and years and years to put these kinds of plans together, but they have the interaction of the community and the buy in of the community," he said. "Because it takes all that time, the planning department doesn't like it, the city doesn't like it and so what they're trying to do is take our voices out of the process."

Giving a voice to residents, Hueter said, is why Neighbors For a Better San Diego organizes residents with events like the one on Dec. 4. The fruits of the organizing efforts will be tested at upcoming city meetings addressing the ADU ordinance.

Modifications to the ADU ordinance will be presented to the Community Planners Committee, a group representing all of San Diego's different planning groups, then it will go to review by the Planning Commission, then to the Land Use Accounting Committee, then finally to City Council. Hueter and Neighbors For a Better San Diego are relying on large turnouts of residents who oppose the ADU ordinance to show up and put pressure on elected officials.

"It is unacceptable that San Diego residents won't have a say in what the future of the city will look like," Hueter said. "And we rightfully have the ability to push back against that and demand we do smarter planning in San Diego."

Information about Neighbors For a Better San Diego, including links to text of San Diego's ADU ordinance as well as SB 9, can be found at neighborsforabettersandiego.org.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdnews.com.



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Guest editorial

California deserves school choice

By SARAH NAGLE

The California public school system is currently sinking like the Titanic. A couple of decades ago California public schools were some of the best in the country. But those days are long gone. The last two years have been a wake up call for parents, and a disaster for children. In Sacramento when politicians talk about school choice, they are usually talking about money. But when parents talk about school choice, they are talking about something far more personal and far more important than tax dollars. Inherently, citizens understand that school choice is about giving kids and parents a choice, a voice and a future. The landmark Educational Freedom Act would bring true school choice to all K-12 students in the state who choose to opt in to the proposed program.

By any metric, our public education system is failing too many kids. Back in 2019, the National Assessment of Educational Progress showed that only 32% of California’s public school fourth graders were “proficient” readers. Overall, according to the California Reading Coalition, currently more than half the children enrolled in schools in over 300 public school districts can’t read at grade level. Parents have a legitimate fear that their children aren’t being adequately educated by the public K-12 system. Wealthy families are sending their kids to private schools in record numbers. Parents of every ethnicity, educational and economic background are exploring homeschooling. However, too many families simply don’t have the financial means to escape a system that is systemically failing their children.

The Educational Freedom Act is designed to give parents and kids the freedom to choose without costing Californians more money. Currently the state is spending an average of \$21,152 per year for every child enrolled in the public K-12 school system. Considering that, according to “Private School Review,” the average cost of a private elementary school in the state of California is only about \$14,411 per year, we are spending a

shocking amount of money on a public system that can’t even guarantee most of the kids can read at grade level.

Sadly, most of the students currently enrolled in public schools in California have very few choices regarding where they can attend school. As a result, kids get trapped in failing schools and the parents end up footing the bill.

The Educational Freedom Act is designed to permit a portion of the Prop. 98 funding to follow the child to any accredited school in the state of California. Currently California public schools are funded through a combination of bonds, parcel taxes, donations, Federal Funds and Prop. 98 funding. As a result of Prop. 98, most public schools in California get most of their money based on student enrollment.

The Act treats all K-12 California students equally. An Educational Savings Account (“ESA”) will be established for each K-12 child in California on request. Each ESA will receive \$14,000.00 per year. ESA funds can be used to pay for tuition at any accredited public, private or parochial school. Any unspent funds will accrue in a low-risk portfolio. Parents would never have direct access to the money. However, homeschool students can also enroll in an ESA and use ESA funds to pay for qualified educational expenses if they enroll in an accredited private school independent study program. Because funds can accrue, families would be able to save the extra money in their accounts for students to use at an accredited college or vocational school up until the student turns 30.

The Educational Freedom Act has the potential to offer practical, workable educational options to millions of California kids. Our current system just isn’t working. We need to offer the 6.6 million school aged kids in California more options. We need to offer families of the future a choice and a voice.

The California Attorney General’s Office has issued the official title and summary for the Educational Freedom Act Initiative. Signature gathering has already begun. Volunteers represent a cross section of Californians. Yesterday I met a math teacher who is

enthusiastically volunteering to gather signatures for the initiative because he thinks layers of administrative bloat have distracted schools from the core mission of teaching kids. He thinks educational choice will re-focus schools on teaching. Parents are volunteering to gather signatures because they want schools that listen to the needs of families.

Grandparents are gathering signatures because they want their grandchildren to grow up in a world where we don’t accept failure as the new normal.

I’m volunteering to gather signatures for school choice because I was the beneficiary of school choice. I was a homeschool kid when homeschool kids were considered kind of kooky. The public perception of homeschool kids was that we were all the children of religious conservatives, or Angora goat raising hippies. The reality is that most of us were the children of parents desperate to give their kids the best education they could. And that is what every parent wants. That is what every volunteer wants. What every teacher, and grandparent and concerned citizen wants. We all want the kids to get the best education we can provide.

In order for the Educational Freedom Act to become a reality we need to gather 997,139 valid signatures to qualify for the November 2022 ballot. This means that in reality we need to gather 1.2 million signatures. We need your signature and eventually your vote. We’d love it if you would like to help volunteer. We have some money, we’ve had a few generous donations, but inherently this is a grassroots effort. We’re in this for the kids. We believe California kids and families deserve school choice.

For more information, we have a website californiaschoolchoice.org. There is a calendar of events on the website where you can find out how to sign the initiative. If you would like to help gather signatures or sign up to volunteer you can e-mail us at info@californiaschoolchoice.org. Please help us make a difference.

—Sarah Nagle is senior advisor of Californians for School Choice.

Biden better than Trump for U.S. economy



By SEAN QUINTAL

Will Rogers once observed: “You can’t fool all the people all time. But it isn’t necessary.” This seems to be the GOP’s approach to messaging about the U.S. economy: keep lying about how things are, and hope that enough people don’t bother to pay attention.

Republicans keep blaming the Biden administration for a bad economy, even though by many metrics, the U.S. economy is performing demonstrably better under Biden than under Trump. More importantly, Biden has just successfully made into law an enormous investment in American workers and the American economy. But the GOP can’t admit they typically ruin the economy when they’re in control, so they mass-market propaganda about Biden and the Democrats.

Today, Republicans performatively hyperventilate about inflation. Prices, of course, are mainly a reflection of supply and demand. Because of the COVID pandemic’s layered effects on all sectors of the global economy, supply is simply not keeping up with demand. Worker shortage and supply-chain disruptions have collided with consumers who want to spend money.

Capitalism demands that a healthy economy grow. Trump recognized this, since he appointed the current chair of the Federal Reserve Board, and repeatedly demanded of the Fed to keep interest rates low.

Trump and the GOP didn’t care about inflation when they clamored for higher stock prices. Neither did they care about inflation when they sent out several rounds of stimulus payments to Americans. Nor was inflation a concern for them when they passed massive tax cuts that disproportionately favored the wealthy over the middle classes. They weren’t worried about rising prices, because they know the flip side of inflation is an economy that’s growing rapidly, and unemployment that’s falling fast.

And on growth and jobs, the evidence shows that it’s the Biden administration that is the better steward of the economy.

Trump relentlessly touted his economic success by claiming he improved two things: jobs and stock prices. So how do Biden and Trump compare on those counts? Trump rarely shut up about how the stock market performed so fantastically with him as president. Interesting then, that in Biden’s first 10 months, the S&P 500 has grown 37%, compared to 21% increase under Trump. Biden’s increase exceeded that of even FDR. Trump also loved to boast his economy was “the greatest” because of the number of all-time high prices on the S&P 500. Well, under Biden, the S&P has hit all-time highs 63 times, compared to 52 under his predecessor.

What about jobs? Since Biden took office, the number of folks working in the U.S. has increased by approximately 6 million. That’s a much larger jump than in Trump’s first year in office. In fact, Biden has added more U.S. jobs in just 10 months, than Trump did through 31 months. The truth is, due partly to Trump’s wretched mismanagement of the

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1621 Grand Ave. Suite C
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(858) 270-3103
Fax (858) 713-0095
MissionTimesCourier.com
Twitter: @MssnTimesCourier

EDITOR

Jeff Clemetson x130
jeff@sdnews.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Kendra Sitton x136
Tom Melville x131
Dave Schwab x132

CONTRIBUTORS

Karen Austin (CTC only)
Ellen Bevier (CTC only)
Renee Cabeto (MTC only)
Raul Campillo (MTC only)
Laura Crivelo
Robin Dohrm-Simpson
Sean Elo-Rivera (CTC only)
Shain Haug (MTC only)
Michelle Irwin
Samual Litvin
Patty Mooney (MTC only)
Jennifer Morrissey
Sean Quintal
Austin Smith (CTC only)
Sarah Ward (CTC only)
Jay Wilson

WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA

Jeff Clemetson
jeff@sdnews.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Chris Baker x107
chris@sdnews.com

ADVERTISING CONSULTANT

Heather Fine x118
hfine@sdnews.com

ACCOUNTING

Heather Humble x120
accounting@sdnews.com

BUSINESS CONSULTANT

David Mannis

PUBLISHER

Julie Main
(858) 270-3103 x106
julie@sdnews.com



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PENINSULA BEACON



A look ahead and another look back



By LAURA CRIVELLO

The next Republican Women of California–Navajo Canyon luncheon will be held at The Brigantine in La Mesa on Jan. 11. Space will be limited, please RSVP as soon as possible. Our speaker will be Justin Hart, KUSI data expert. He will speak to COVID-19, re-opening schools and data in politics.

As always, our speakers are interesting and informative. Our club's vice president of publicity Grace Meyers has done a great job this year of booking the best speakers that our city and state has to offer. We look forward to more great speakers in the coming year.

With the ushering in of a new year, comes time for reflection. Let us reflect on how far our country has fallen in one short year.

The borders have been opened, allowing tens of thousands into our country illegally with no testing for COVID-19. At the same time, Biden scolds us and admonishes us for not getting an experimental vaccine, even causing citizens to be fired from their jobs with his ridiculous mandates. Hypocrisy.

We are no longer energy efficient. Biden shut down the

Keystone Pipeline costing thousands of jobs.

Of course we should have gotten out of Afghanistan, but not in the completely incompetent manner in which Biden and his administration orchestrated the withdrawal. He essentially surrendered to the Taliban.

Let's touch on the economy. We feel the out of control inflation everyday at the gas pump, grocery stores and retail stores. Biden does nothing while Americans suffer to survive.

Crime is up all over the country as a result of policies that want to defund the police, as well as the left's support of terrorist groups such as BLM and Antifa.

If you disagree with the left's Socialist agenda, you are labeled a "racist." They will do anything in their power to destroy you. You will be cancelled. Equality has been erased by equity.

You may ask yourself why? It's quite simple, folks. Hate. Hatred for President Trump and the good things he was doing to make us a prosperous country. Despicable.

We better get busy. This is a call to action. No more, let's work hard to take out the trash, including the RINOS in 2022. Bring back common sense.

—Laura Crivello writes on behalf of the Republican Women of California–Navajo Canyon.

LMFDC

CONTINUED FROM Page 6

COVID pandemic, he oversaw a net loss of approximately 2.9 million jobs over the term of his presidency.

Now, the economy and working Americans stand to benefit even further from passage of the President's Build Back Better (BBB) infrastructure bill. Biden and the Democrats can claim a massive achievement with the BBB. It provides \$1.2 trillion in funding for roads, bridges, rail service, mass transit, and resources to improve our nation's water infrastructure, and its electrical power grid. It is the largest federal investment (not expenditure) in America's infrastructure in decades.

Biden and the Democrats have passed legislation that will keep safer both the roads and bridges we drive on, as well as the water we drink. It will modernize our shipping ports, our airports, and our rail lines. It will deliver reliable internet service to farmers and rural areas, and it will build out and secure our electrical grid, to keep us safer from both internal failures and malicious attacks. It will invest in clean energy projects, to include mass transit, and to commence construction of a nationwide network of vehicle charging stations.

Democrats achieved this in the face of near-unanimous GOP opposition. During the Trump administration, "infrastructure week" became a running joke about Trump's ineffectiveness as President. On six different occasions, from 2017 to 2019, Trump declared, "It's infrastructure week!" Despite having both the House and the Senate controlled by his own party, Trump failed to get a damn thing done to improve the infrastructure that Americans rely on every single day. By contrast, Joe Biden got it done in his first 10 months, with a 50/50 split in the Senate and a slim majority in the House.

Biden has already demonstrated he is a more effective steward of the American economy, and that he is more effective at governing in a way that helps all Americans. The GOP is a failure as a governing party, so all they have to offer is lies about those who get things done. In 2022, let's make it harder for them to fool any of the people.

And this December, to everyone — Democrat, Republican or something else, whatever holidays you celebrate — a very happy, hopeful, and peaceful season.

—Sean Quintal writes on behalf of the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

ALLIED GARDENS/GRANTVILLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Even in the face of the COVID-19 restrictions the Allied Gardens/Grantville Community Council, with the support of the community we hope to serve, continued its operations during 2021. We conducted our regular monthly meetings and six successful town hall meetings using the Zoom platform.

We much wanted to get back to in person meetings, but the pandemic had other plans for us. Maybe this year we can return to Benjamin Library. (Of course, the first draft of this article preceded the news about the

Omicron variant arriving in San Francisco.)

One major AGGCC accomplishment is the work that is being done in Navajo Canyon. Under the leadership of our own Kim Morris and Kindra Hixon of San Diego Canyonlands the Friends of Navajo Canyon have removed thousands of pounds of trash and non-native plants from the canyon. The team begins work each third Saturday of the month at 9 a.m. at the trailhead on Adobe Falls Road.

The rehabilitation of the canyon to its natural state is a long-term project that will be completed with the support of

our surrounding communities. Find more about this important work and sign up to join us on Saturday, Dec. 18 at aggccouncil.org/friendsofnavajocanyon.html.

Our next town hall meeting will be on Tuesday, Jan. 25 at 6:30 p.m. Gina Jacobs of the SDSU River Park Advisory Board will describe the 88 acres of river park, open areas, and athletic fields that will be devoted to public use under the terms of the ballot proposition that gave the California State University the right to the property. This parkland will be within walking

SEE COMMUNITY BRIEFS, Page 12

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Vaccination Van service open to Henry students



Patrick Henry High School News

By MICHELLE IRWIN

We, the Patrick Henry High School faculty and staff, hope our students, their families and the community at large had a restful and safe Thanksgiving with family and friends.

As we continue to battle the pandemic, the UCSD Mobile

Vaccination Van is open to community, staff, families and students. Anyone over age 18 can walk in for vaccination. Students younger than 18 will need to have a parent or guardian present. Please go to this link for more information about the mobile vaccination van: bit.ly/3ryqM7d.

For a list of vaccine centers near you, please go to myturn.ca.gov. If you cannot find a vaccine center near you, please contact your primary care provider or health office. As a community, we hope to reach peak immunity by January 2022.

We are nearing the end of the first semester. In order to support all students, we offer Academic

Labs (tutoring sessions) for students Mondays–Thursdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in the library. Any student can access these Academic Labs to get support from our teachers and students from our Link Crew.

PATRIOT FOOTBALL WINS FIRST CIF CHAMPIONSHIP IN SCHOOL HISTORY

The Henry football team won their first CIF Championship in School History on Friday, Nov. 26. Henry football advances to the Southern California Regionals on Saturday, Dec. 5. We are very proud of our football team as our student athletes have been dedicated and committed to playing hard and winning with integrity. Our players are truly a team and work seamlessly together. Check out the winning story here: bit.ly/3xTdG5F.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM

Our Cross Country girls finished 13th out of 20 teams and our cross-country boys finished fifth out of 20 teams. Senior Preston Bowlds won the Division 1 boys' race and senior James Brumley finished fifth! Both student athletes qualified for the State Meet in Fresno!

RICE AND BEANS FOOD DRIVE

Our Henry ASB organized a food drive and our Henry

students collected close to 1,400 pounds of rice and beans for any family who may be extra help. We are incredibly grateful for our school community's generosity.

REMARKABLE TEENS

Congratulations to junior Samira Hassan who was named one of the 25 most remarkable teens in San Diego. The program is led by San Diego County Public Defender Randy Mize's office. The Public Defender Youth Council, a group of civically engaged high school students, chose the winners.

We are so proud of Samira and her leadership skills!

Congratulations to junior Yeika Piedrabuena who was selected as a student representative for the 2021-22 school year on the SDUSD Visual and Performing Arts Advisory Council.

Please remember to visit the Patrick Henry website for up to date information about our school and district: patrickhenryhs.net.

On behalf of the Patrick Henry High School Faculty, we want to thank you for being our partner in education so we can ensure all students graduate with integrity, purpose, and options.

—Michelle Irwin is principal of Patrick Henry High School.

More robotics teams for Henry Cluster schools

The Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation continues its efforts to promote robotics and establish more robotics teams in the Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation area. Board member Jay Wilson contacted Ellen Immergut, a parent of twin boys at Benchley Weinberger Elementary in San Carlos, about starting a robotics program at her son's school. As usual, Ellen tackled the challenge and provides the following update:

Thanks to the efforts of a parent volunteer and an amazing new media teacher, the students at Benchley Weinberger (BW) Elementary now have an afterschool robotics and coding program!

Brett Yokom, father of a BW kindergarten and a software developer with a passion for math and sciences, and Devereaux Watson, BW media teacher and a favorite new addition to the BW team, came together in September to get the program up and running. Mr. Yokom was even able to secure a \$2,500 grant from his employer, Ansys, through their Ansys Cares program.

The program was initially opened for students in third

SEE HC STEMM, Page 9

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HC STEMM

CONTINUED FROM Page 8

through fifth grades, and they currently have 40 participants. They started the program with the resources they had (two Dash bots and one Dot bot), which allowed everyone to access the programming interface (Blockly app) via their school-issued Chromebooks, so everyone could be hands-on.

The ultimate goal is to open the program to all grades at Benchley, and once they acquire additional funding, they will add additional products like LEGO.

So far in the program, they have worked on a project in which Dash measures the distance to an object directly in front of it. On the robotics side of the program, the kids code Dash to move in 10-centimeter increments and use Dash's sensors to know when to stop (with an obstacle placed in front). Dash would then use stored recorded sounds (numbers, i.e. 1, 2, 3, etc.) and say the distance in centimeters. And on the coding front, many of the kids have already

done some level of block coding, but this project introduced the kids to some advanced core concepts of coding like variables and functions.

Next week, the participants will again utilize Dash's sensors and have Dash navigate a maze autonomously.

They are hoping to develop some competition level teams to compete in events like FIRST LEGO and/or Makewonder (the creators of Dash and Dot).

If there are other teams in the cluster willing to share/loan resources, that is very much welcome!

Also, if there are opportunities to collaborate in some with the teams at Hearst or Dailard, we'd love to explore that as well. Maybe some brain-picking sessions, or even some friendly challenges between the two once we get more set up.

Brett also told me that he'd be interested in helping to develop a general lesson plan/development plan that other schools around the district could follow when initially setting up a robotics program at the elementary level.

'Tis the season to plan a summer internship

By KAREN AUSTIN

In addition to celebrating holidays, December is the perfect time for students on their winter break to explore summer internships or job prospects. Alvarado Estates is home to students attending local colleges and universities, as well as institutions in other parts of California and across the country. No matter where they reside during the school year, most of them will be in the neighborhood for the summer months. As well as having fun with friends and sleeping in, most students will make time for personal and professional development, too.

Peter Valverde and his siblings grew up in Alvarado Estates. He is now a sophomore at the University of California, Berkeley. He plans to search for an internship when classes end next week.

"I will be coming home for the summer vacation, but hopefully it won't be too much of a vacation," he said, adding he wants to look into data science internships, which would compliment his academic interests and career goals. "I found that my data science tutoring job has helped me connect with people in the community and has motivated me toward finding and pursuing data science opportunities."

Peter's older sister, Danielle Valverde, has already secured an internship. She is finishing a degree in Communication Studies at the University of San Diego. A family friend alerted her to an opportunity that sounded like a great match with her undergraduate degree and the Master's Degree she wants to earn in Human Resources and Leadership. After

submitting a resume of her previous job experiences and educational accomplishments, she had a phone interview that resulted in an internship with the Office of Development and Foundation's Executive Director and the Development Coordinator at Southwestern College.

Most colleges and universities have a program in place to assist students who want to bolster their academic studies with experiential learning. Schools know that an internship can help a student bridge their studies and the real world by gaining the skills to launch into a meaningful career.

Andre Frater helps students find out about opportunities on and off campus right here at San Diego State University Career Services. The program's website offers enrolled SDSU students the chance to set up an in-person or virtual one-on-one career advising appointment to "define, develop and realize their career potential." Students learn tips to produce a resume, write cover letters and prepare for an interview. "How to Make a Good First Impression on a Virtual Interview," is one of many videos produced by recruiting sites and available as direct links from the SDSU Career Services website.

Andre encourages students to use online platforms like Handshake to find internships. Handshake is a relatively new online recruiting site for higher education students and recent alumni. The app helps to streamline the process by connecting students with open positions, such as internships and entry-level jobs all over the country.

The Handshake website states that there are, "more than nine million active



Peter Valverde — pictured at his Cal Berkeley dorm — hopes to find a summer internship in San Diego when he returns home this summer. (Courtesy photo)

student users, more than 1,400 college and university partners, and more than 600k active employers, including 100% of the Fortune 500 companies. You can learn more about the app by going to joinhandshake.com. The website instructions seem simple: Download the Handshake app and sign-up with your college and student account, create a personal profile and get personalized job recommendations, connect with employers to learn about company culture and open roles, and apply and get the job!

In addition to Handshake, try Indeed.com, LinkedIn, Facebook or networking with friends and neighbors to secure that invaluable summer experience.

If you have the ability to provide an internship opportunity for students, sign up as an employer on Handshake or reach out to Andre Frater and the Career Resources Team at SDSU by calling 619-594-6509.

—Karen Austin writes on behalf of the Alvarado Estates Association.

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River Conservancy funds Navajo projects

District 7 Dispatch

By RAUL A. CAMPILLO



I would like to begin by wishing all of our neighbors in the Navajo community a happy and safe holiday season.

As an elected official in our region, I sit on a number of regional boards in addition to my Council seat and committee assignments. One of those outside appointments is as a member of the San Diego River Conservancy Board. The San Diego River is one of the most crucial natural resources in and around our district, and this board takes up very important projects, many of which affect Navajo residents directly.

There was one item at a recent board meeting that is particularly relevant to Del Cerro residents and the safety of their families. Fire season is now year round, and the Eastern portion of our district is constantly faced with the threat of wildfires. As your

representative, I am keenly aware of this constant threat. That is why the board approved \$500,000 of funding for fire fuel reduction on nine acres of public land between I-8 and SDSU's campus. This proactive step will reduce the risk and intensity of potential fires in and around the Del Cerro community for years to come.

The board is also looking into a number of other potential actions to improve safety and quality of life for Navajo area residents. First, we approved an item regarding the revegetation of Alvarado Creek. The proposed action will allocate \$467,691 to revegetate about three acres of land in which invasive non-native species were removed and now are requiring the area to be replanted with native flora and fauna. This will benefit the Grantville community and the Navajo community at large because it will provide erosion support to the area and promote biodiversity, which is why I supported this item.

Lastly, the board approved \$600,000 of funding for the Navajo Canyon Invasive Non-Native Plant Removal, Habitat and Trails Restoration Project. This is of particular relevance to Allied Gardens and Del Cerro residents because the proposed plan would remove invasive non-native vegetation and restore native habitat, as well as improving trails in Navajo Canyon for all residents and their families to enjoy. This plan will greatly increase the natural habitat and trail access in Navajo Canyon.

In total, we allocated \$1,567,691 to the three aforementioned projects.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out if there is anything my office can assist you with. You can always reach us by phone at 619-236-6677 or by email at RaulCampillo@SanDiego.gov.

—Raul Campillo represents District 7 on the San Diego City Council.

Registration open for Crusaders spring grassroots programs

Crusaders Soccer Club's very successful grassroots (recreational) 2021 fall program ends on Dec. 11. Registration for the 2022 grassroots spring program opens on Dec. 15 for all girls and boys born between 2008 and 2018. There will be an early registration discount through Dec. 31. Check the Crusaders website for more information and to register a player for our 2022 spring grassroots program.

A season highlight for our fall grassroots program was our Boys 2008/2009 teams which participated in the Fall 2021 San Diego County I-15 Corridor Recreational League. The league included teams from Crusaders, Rancho Bernardo, Scripps Ranch, Poway, Penasquitos and Escondido. The Crusaders Red Strikers team won the league season and were the tournament champions. Congratulations to The Crusaders Red Strikers.

On Dec. 5 evaluations were held at the Pershing fields for Crusaders' grassroots all-star teams for players born between 2008 and 2014. The all-star teams will be competing in a tournament in January 2022.



2008-2009 boys Season & Tournament Champions

The Crusaders Soccer Club will be holding separate three-day camps for both grassroots and competitive players the week before and after Christmas. More information is on the Crusaders website.

Tryouts for the Crusaders competitive 2022 teams will begin soon. Check the Crusaders Soccer website for more information. Competitive players are coached by licensed and certified coaches.

If you would like to volunteer to coach a 2022 spring grassroots team or referee games, email info@crusaderssoccer.org.

For more information about the Crusaders Soccer Club and all our upcoming programs, go to crusaderssoccer.org.

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Community briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 7

distance from the Grantville area and will be of great value to that neighborhood.

Use the “Contact Us” page at aggccouncil.org to get on our email contact list. We will send you information about community activities and the agendas for the Community Council and the Navajo Community Planners, Inc. Our next Board meeting will be on Monday, Jan. 8, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. by Zoom.

—By Shain Haug, AGGCC president

FRIENDS OF DEL CERRO

Jackie O'Connor, president of the Friends of Del Cerro (FODC) announced some very good news for the foundation. Through an anonymous donation, we have been able to hire an executive director for FODC. Her name is Veronica “Roni” Kleinen. She will begin her duties in January. Roni has years of experience in the area of nonprofits. This will be a tremendous benefit as we move forward with our work.

The FODC has ordered two new backboards for the basketball court at the Princess del Cerro Park. Kelly Wood, the city's Park and Recreation Department's Area Manager for the Navajo community informed us the resurfacing of the basketball court and repainting the backboard poles for is scheduled for Dec. 22–23. Happy Holidays to all our basketball players.

In January, members of the FODC joined professors Dr. Eric Frost and John Love, staff from SDSU Planning Department and Rachel Gregg, the Government and Community Relations Manager for SDSU for an informational tour of Adobe Falls to learn firsthand the opportunities the 38 acres owned by SDSU presents to the university. Rob Hutsel, the Executive Director of the San Diego River Park Foundation and Jared Miller-Sclar from Councilmember Raul Campillo also joined the tour.

The land was donated to SDSU by the Waring Family in 1939 for the purpose of research. In relation to this, Jackie O'Connor announced FODC has received a follow-up Capstone project award from SDSU to again work with graduate students to gather data regarding water flow and pollution, native and evasive plants and how the land can be used for environmental and agricultural studies.

A friendly reminder from John Steffen, our Police Community Relations Officer for our area: Make certain you put packages in your trunk and not in the interior of your car following a holiday shopping trip. Do not give criminals the tempting opportunity to view all your purchases. Also, keep your front curtains so lots of presents are not easily visible to everyone

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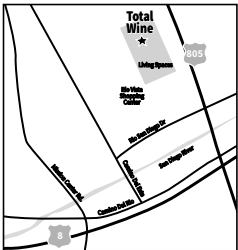


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Tofu House opens third location in College Area

By RENEE CABATO

Tofu House SDSU celebrated its Grand Opening on Thursday, Nov. 18 with a ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by the College Area Business District. Located just minutes from San Diego State University's campus, the restaurant is Tofu Houses' first franchise and aims to bring healthy Korean food to the College Area.

At the grand opening, a representative from the office of Supervisor Joel Anderson presented the owners with a Certificate of Recognition acknowledging their investment in the local business community and their addition of Asian food to the area.

Anderson stated, "I am happy to congratulate Tofu House on their new location and am excited to see how they contribute to our College Area community."

Anh (Tony) Nguyen, a U.S. Navy veteran, is the CEO of the SDSU location and is joined by his business partners, Hien Nguyen and Hieu Nguyen.

When asked why the group chose College Area, Tony Nguyen explained that he noticed there were not many Korean restaurants in the area, and he wanted to bring "authentic Korean food" to the neighborhood. He chose to open Tofu House SDSU to offer healthy options with less meat and more vegetables.

A unique feature to Tofu House SDSU is its inclusion of a robot



Ribbon Cutting.jpg: Tofu House SDSU celebrates grand opening with ribbon cutting ceremony. (Courtesy of Visual Candy)

server, which reduces contact and minimizes safety risks for staff.

The opening of the franchised location is the first step to making Nguyen's grand vision a reality: establishing a Convoy-like area near SDSU. The Convoy District in San Diego is known for its wide variety of Pan-Asian restaurants, shops, and services.

"When college students talk about [Korean] food, they're normally talking about the Convoy area," Nguyen said. "I will try to bring everything there to the College Area. My next project is going to be some dessert franchise. Pretty much whatever Convoy has, I would like to do here... so San Diego college students have another choice, another location to come and enjoy close by to school."

College Area Business District Executive Director Jim Schneider

expressed the community's appreciation for the new restaurant.

"We enjoy welcoming new businesses to the College Area Business District and introducing them to the neighborhood," he said. "We certainly appreciate their choice to invest in the College Area and a grand opening is our way of saying thank you."

Nguyen was delighted to receive recognition for his efforts through the Grand Opening and certificate presentation. "I am putting myself out there to invest in the community," he said. "It makes me happy that... somebody recognizes that."

Tofu House SDSU is located at 6061 El Cajon Blvd in Suite 4 in the College Area.

—Renee Cabato is a legislative intern for Supervisor Joel Anderson.

A casual restaurant for locals and students

By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON



Eureka! Is a fun spot for drinks and food. (Courtesy photo)

"Eureka!" is the California state motto — and the name and motto of a restaurant along College Avenue. "Eureka" as an expression means "We have found it!"

For diners in the College Area, it means they have found a fun, casual restaurant with unique burgers, salads, and chicken plates; found a comfortable and inviting patio for dining; found a comfortable open-air bar with craft brews for relaxing or game watching.

Eureka! Restaurant is in the new building right outside of SDSU that houses Trader Joe's. It's not just for students. It's for regular townspeople also. Parking is validated and very convenient.

Discover for yourself a comfortable setting, both indoor and outdoor, a bank of televisions to watch a variety of sports games, an indoor/outdoor bar that is welcoming. The menu is moderately simple burgers with a twist. An example of a menu item is the Eureka! American — a standard burger with American Swiss cheese, grilled onions, and butter lettuce. Or you can go crazy with a Fresno Fig burger with fig marmalade, goat cheese, bacon, tomatoes, onions, arugula, and spice porter mustard.

They say their chicken is "Cluckin' Tasty." The Napa

Chicken Sandwich with grilled chicken breast, roasted Roma tomato, pesto aioli, Havarti cheese, bacon and arugula will dazzle your tastebuds.

If you're in the mood for a salad, they have a Cobb salad, a Seared Furikake Ahi Salad with a peanut sesame ginger sauce or a Blackened Salmon Kale Caesar Salad.

Two unique take-out menus are: Date night for Two, which include Crispy Glazed Brussels Sprouts, two burgers of your choice. A choice of a Boozy Beverage: Wild Child, Industry Margarita, or Old Fashioned (serves four) or a Hoppy Beer & Light Beer. The Family Bundle feeds four and includes Crispy Glazed Brussels Sprouts, Mac N' Cheese Balls, two American cheeseburgers, a Cobb salad, a Spicy Chicken Sandwich, two dessert Bourbon Barrel Cakes and a Bottle of red or white wine.

Grab an Adirondack chair and sit around the fire pit. Visit with friends or catch up on the latest news or sporting event.

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



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AG lights

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

and decorating the tree at the triangle culminated in a holiday festival involving young students, this year as well as last year the event was cancelled due to pandemic precautions.

District 7 City Council representative Raul Campillo joined the lighting crew and praised the work of the Allied Gardens Grantville Community Council (AGGCC) for doing “so much for the community, from community cleanups to repainting the playgrounds next the rec center.”

“[Today] they’re trying to give a little cheer to folks who are driving on through, and also bringing a little attention to Allied Gardens,” he continued. “A lot of folks drive past here on the [I-8 freeway] or down Waring Road and don’t know too much about this community. But anyone who drives through it knows, there’s a lot of great families, great schools and stop in by Brothers Restaurant for a good breakfast, too.”

AGGCC member Marilyn Reed shared the history of the bridge and tree lighting. Twenty years ago, former District 7 City Council member Jim Madaffer invited AGGCC members to weigh in on the design when the Adobe Falls bridge was being considered, she said. Reed, who was AGGCC president at the time, attended a number of meetings.

“Then ... at one of the meetings they asked, ‘Is there anything else we can do?’ and I said, ‘Yeah, what about making it such we can put lights,’”

she said, adding that she was inspired by seeing lights on a bridge in North Park “that were great.”

So electrical outlets were added to the lamps along the bridge and crews like the one assembled on Dec. 5 have lit up the bridge with festive lights ever since. Funding for the lights come from personal donations, local businesses and AGGCC funds.

“It’s been a fun thing and I think a lot of people on the [AGGCC] over the years have enjoyed doing this,” Reed said.

Another tradition that people have enjoyed over the years are the lights and tree at the triangle, which usually coincides with the Holiday Festival. Reed said the festival was started by Betty Torre a former AGGCC member.

“That was her dream, to have the children of Allied Gardens involved in a musical festival,” Reed said.

Torre got with the music director of Lewis Middle School at the time and they organized a performance of the Lewis band and students from Foster and Marvin elementary schools sing songs.

“Betty decided to bring the children in a little more so we had a special tree lighting ceremony where we got children from Marvin and Foster — one boy and one girl we switch around each year — and the teachers pick one on the best students with good citizenship,” Reed said. “They come up and we have a special little device that looks like a present, but it’s hooked up to where both of them can touch a switch and the tree lights up.”



(l to r) Allied Gardens Grantville Community Council bridge lighting crew: John Kunkel, Julie Stollenwerk, Chris Galuppo, Sam Sprague, Sophia Frost, Councilmember Raul Camillo, Marilyn Reed and Shain Haug (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

For a couple years, organizers tried to expand the event and invite the Marvin and Foster students and families, but it was too big to do safely at the busy intersection where the triangle is located.

“So we decided to keep it small,” Reed said. “We just have small group — the families of the children, members of our council come and [Lewis Middle musical director] Josh Prout will have some of his students come and play instruments and then we sing a few carols. We give gift certificates to the children who do the tree lighting as well as a certificate telling them how proud we are of them participating in our tree lighting.”

Reed, who is a teacher, said because COVID safety protocols are still in effect for young students, she felt it was best to not bring back the event until next year “when things are a lot better.”

—Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdnews.com.

Community briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 12

waking by your home. Some of those people may not be your neighbors and they may be window shopping for another purpose. Our Fire Rescue Department cautions us to make certain we are not overloading circuits to power lots of decorations and not to run power cords under carpets.

FDOC is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit foundation. We invite you to learn more about our organization, the many community projects that we are involved in to better our community, and to become involved — either by joining the Friends of Del Cerro as a supporting member or becoming a partner through sponsorship or donation. Visit us at friendsofdelcerro.org.

—By Jay Wilson, FODC member

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SAN CARLOS AREA COUNCIL

We’re very excited to announce that the San

Carlos Area Council (SCAC) is planning its first in-person gathering in two years. We’re hosting a Holiday Potluck party at the San Carlos library, 7265 Jackson Drive, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 15. You are welcome to bring your favorite dish or beverage to share.

Both Mayor Todd Gloria and Councilmember Raul Campillo are planning to attend, as well as other special guests and your neighbors. Join us, won’t you?

Follow the SCAC on Facebook where videos of past SCAC meetings are available online — facebook.com/sancarlosarea-council. If you have a San Carlos story to share, or would like to get involved in your town council, please contact San Carlos Area Council vice president Patricia Mooney at patty@crystalpyramid.com.

—By Patty Mooney, SCAC vice president



The awesome osprey of Lake Murray

By PHILIP HWANG

It’s a plane! Spend any time in San Diego and the familiar thump-thump-thump or view of the Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey high in the sky can be seen and heard. These aircraft are famous for having a vertical takeoff and landing, known as VTOL. It can alternate between helicopter and plane modes to take off vertically and then fly horizontally. Sound familiar?

The osprey bird uses this same technique when hunting — it dives deep into the water, closing its nostrils (like a nose plug) and closing clear eyelids (like goggles) to catch a fish. The osprey can fully submerge itself while fishing. After catching the fish, it must fight the fish, which is trying to swim down, and create enough lift to not get dragged back under water.

The osprey has an oily substance covering its feathers and body that is hydrophobic, making the entire bird essentially water resistant. This allows a submerged osprey to generate enough lift with water repellant wings and a freshly caught fish to fly straight up out of the water.



If you are lucky to witness a catch, also notice that when flying, the osprey will move the fish around in its talons to reposition the fish for optimal wind resistance and carry the fish with the fish facing forward.

Come to Lake Murray and witness the awesome osprey. If lucky, you can hear the calls and see the fishing. If luckier, you’ll see the V-22 Osprey aircraft flying overhead. And if you visit over and over again, you can watch the breeding pair raise chicks to juveniles into adulthood. And they eventually move out and can feed themselves. Nature truly is magical.

—Philip Hwang is a trail guide at Mission Trails Regional Park.

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Give to the park that gives back

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation
By JENNIFER MORRISSEY

The holiday season is here, and we're excited that we can safely visit loved ones and breathe a collective sigh of relief that the most difficult days of the pandemic may be behind us.

We're also optimistic because November 2021 marked the return of many of Mission Trails' programs. Our volunteer Trail Guides are again leading regular walks, enriching park users' experience by sharing knowledge about Mission Trails' native plants, geology, wildlife, and, of course, its cultural history. We hope that you will take advantage of the Trail Guides' free nature walks, which are drop in and take place at 9:30 a.m. from the Visitor Center on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and at 8:30 a.m. from Kumeyaay Lake Campground every second and fourth Saturday of the month.

The last 20 months have been tumultuous, but a bright spot through it all has been the rambling peaks and valleys of Mission Trails Regional Park. It has been a source of support to neighbors and area residents, offering respite and connection, and a safe place to meet with family and friends to experience nature.

During this time, the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation has continued to provide crucial support to the park and offer educational programs. Working in partnership with the City of San Diego, the MTRP Foundation has helped to protect and expand habitat for wildlife, and increase the population of endangered native plants at Mission Trails. While in-person events were on hold, the Foundation created "On Topic" an incredibly popular online lecture series that has been enjoyed by the community and utilized for distance learning. We recently held our first event at the Visitor Center, an outdoors program enjoyed by young explorers and their families.

For the MTRP Foundation to continue to advocate for the park and raise funds to preserve, protect, and enhance Mission Trails, as well as offer enriching programming, we need your generous support.

And, there are special incentives for giving:

- All donations will be matched, \$1 for \$1, up to \$30,000 if made before Dec. 31, 2021.
- The first 200 donors who make a gift of \$100+, or a recurring monthly gift of \$10 or more, will receive a FREE Mission Trails Regional Park calendar as



A hiker explores Mission Trails Regional Park (Photo by @exploring_the_void)

a reminder of the impact you're making every month.

- The CARES Act offers special tax incentives; contact your tax advisor to learn how the CARES Act can benefit you and MTRP.

Whether you've been a park user for decades, discovered Mission Trails more recently, or simply love the fact that you live near a nature preserve, you understand that this historic site and gem of the San Diego region needs to be supported and protected. Please show your commitment to Mission Trails by making an online donation at mtrp.org. You can also print a form out from our website and send it in to the Visitor Center, or come down to the Visitor Center between 9am-5pm daily to make your gift in person.

—Jennifer Morrissey is executive director of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation.

Observation: Leafcutter bees

By PATRICIA SIMPSON



In a world where the European Honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) gets all the publicity and glory for pollination, I'd like to introduce to you the leafcutter bee (genus *Megachile*) which can be seen in this observation —inaturalist.org/observations/64114013 — posted by carrotpeople on iNaturalist. Leafcutter bees are fairly common. Their size, depending on the species, ranges from about the same to slightly smaller than a honeybee. And that's about all these two have in common.

Unlike the honeybees, *Megachile* (pronounced mega-kyle-y) bees are solitary. That means that every female can and will lay eggs.

A leafcutter bee emerges from March through September here in San Diego, thanks to our mild weather and flower abundance. The adult bee has a relatively short life span of just a few weeks when mating, feeding and reproducing for the following season are priorities.

Depending on the species, the female will cut circular pieces out of broad leaves or flower petals to line a cavity. At the end of the cavity, she will lay an egg and deposit a ration of pollen and nectar for the larva to feed on after hatching. She then builds a wall out of food, mud, or leaf (or a combination) and lays another egg into the next section or cell. She repeats the process until she gets to the end of the cavity or tube and seals it. Her work in producing the next generation is done!

While many females can nest in very close proximity, they do not share burrows or nesting "tubes." They only collect enough pollen and nectar to eat and to place in nesting cells, where they have laid their own eggs.

The larvae will hatch, feed, and pupate through the cold months to emerge as adults in the springtime or later. There's no honey production involved at all. In fact, contrary to popular belief, the production of honey by bees is very rare. Only a few species (about eight out of 20,000 worldwide) produce honey.

Why would you want leafcutter bees in your backyard? They are native, very productive pollinators, and rather tame.

Unlike honeybees, which gather pollen loads on their hind legs (secured there with honey and nectar), *Megachile* bees gather pollen on their underbelly. The pollen loosely attaches to special hairs called pollen brushes. This means that when visiting other flowers, leafcutter bees

SEE LEAFCUTTER BEE, Page 17

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Leafcutter bees

CONTINUED FROM Page 16

will disperse pollen at a greater rate than honeybees and hence pollinate more efficiently.

Honeybees, despite being an essential domestic pollinator for large monocultures, are non-native to the Americas and highly invasive, especially in non-agricultural settings. According to a study by Cane and Tepedino, a single honeybee colony may remove as much pollen as would otherwise support 33,000 native pollinators every month.

In San Diego, the last of the *Megachile* bees are usually seen in November. After this, it is the

perfect time for you to investigate how to attract them to your yard the following season.

Fortunately, the internet is filled with useful information about how to keep leafcutter bees. You may decide to build your own “housing” (fun project with the kids!) or purchase a pre-made “facility” from the many companies who offer them (present for a loved one?). If you decide to purchase leafcutter bees, as opposed to simply letting them come to your yard naturally from neighboring areas, make sure the species you are purchasing does occur in San Diego County.

—Patricia Simpson is a trail guide at Mission Trails Regional Park.

News briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 4

22, World Water Day, and is an effort to increase awareness that storm water is not treated and encourage everyday actions people can take to reduce runoff and storm water pollution. Gill Sotu, a local spoken word artist, wrote and performed the poem.

The MarCom Awards acknowledge work that exceeds a high standard of excellence. There were over 6,000 entries from 41 countries in the MarCom Awards 2021 competition. MarCom’s Gold Award is presented to those entries judged to exceed the high standards of the industry norm.

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Courier parent company joins new news network

SoCal Media Network (socialmedianetwork.com), a newly formed alliance of independent community media news organizations, launched this week offering advertisers an opportunity to reach more than 1.7 million engaged readers of community newspapers, websites and social media channels. The network is comprised of five different independent publishers with 19 stand-alone publications, websites and social media platforms located in coastal South Orange County, North San Diego County, wine country Temecula/Fallbrook, and the greater San Diego area.

The independent publishing groups in the SoCal Media Network are: Firebrand Media, Picket Fence Media, Reeder Media, Coast News Group and Mission Times Courier parent company San Diego Community News Group. Individual papers by area include:

Orange County: Newport Beach Independent, Laguna Beach Independent, Coastal Real Estate, San Clemente Times, Dana Point Times, The Capistrano Dispatch

North San Diego County: The Coast News, The Inland Edition

Riverside County: Valley News (Temecula)

San Diego County: Village News (Fallbrook), La Jolla Village News, Beach & Bay Press, The Peninsula Beacon, Uptown News, Downtown News, Mission Times Courier, Mission Valley News, La Mesa Courier, College Times Courier

"As established, trusted, independent hyper-local media business operators, we know that audience engagement driven by original, unbiased news reporting coupled with scale across multiple platforms yields results for advertisers," said SoCal Media Network's Norb Garrett, who is the CEO and Publisher of Picket Fence Media based in Capistrano Beach. "By creating this new network, we can offer local, regional and national advertisers a simple,

one-stop, cost-effective way to reach these highly desirable audiences through our award-winning media brands across print, digital, social and video."

Advertisers can place advertising network wide directly through any of the five member organization's sales staffs — which can be reached through the website, socialmedianetwork.com.

Additionally, the group announced the launch of "Explore SoCal," a staycation guide (print and online) to Southern California featuring original content and distributed through all of the network's 19 platforms including 350,000 print copies direct to current readers, newsracks and an expanded bonus distribution to key hotel operators in the markets.

"I'm thrilled to align my brands with the other award-winning media brands in this new network," said Julie Main, owner and publisher of San Diego Community News Group, which operates nine brands in the greater San Diego area including La Jolla, Mission Bay, Downtown San Diego and La Mesa. "Many of my advertisers have sought effective ways to reach other key marketing areas in Southern California, and our new network now provides the very best media platforms through which to reach key audiences."

For more information, contact any of the following:

- Norb Garrett, Picket Fence Media: ngarrett@picketfencemediacom. 949-702-3142
- Julie Main, San Diego Community News Group: julie@sdnews.com. 858-270-3103
- Steve Zepezauer, Firebrand Media: steve@firebrandmediainc.com. 323-314-4738
- Julie Reeder, Reeder Media: reeder@reedermedia.com. 760-723-7319
- Chris Kydd, Coast News: ckydd@coastnewsgr.com. 760-500-0072

Forecasting future real estate prices

By SARAH WARD

Home prices are leveling currently after an incredible multi-year run up. But the question now becomes whether this is a temporary slowdown to be followed by additional home price appreciation in 2022 or if this could be the top with a potential drop in prices next year.

I read many real estate blogs, articles, and analysis. For example, CoreLogic is a widely read quantitative forecast of residential real estate trends. First I can say that there is a slight drop-off in active buyers currently. Some buyers, after submitting many offers all year, are taking a break from the home search. At the local Realtor meeting, other agents are remarking that instead of the usual 20 to 30 offers on a property, agents are receiving maybe four to 10 offers now.

Home prices were rising over the summer of 2021 faster than they had for many years for an assortment of factors: low inventory of homes available, historically low mortgage rates, and the infusion of millennials and tech workers into the housing market. An additional factor is of course that the pandemic resulted in many renters to seek more square footage by leaving an apartment and moving into a purchased home, especially in the College Area, Del Cerro and all of East County.

Many real estate economists forecast that price increases will be less next year. There is an affordability ceiling that many are hitting and further price increases will drop many buyers out of the market. Another issue is that with the strong inflation occurring currently, interest rates are expected to increase which will obviously increase mortgage payments and further reduce affordability and reduce demand at

these prices. Many buyers just don't have the income to afford higher mortgage payments and property taxes from here on out.

So, being an active reader of real estate pricing trends, I predict a flattening of real estate prices in 2022. While interest rates are still low, there is no denying there is an inflation effect underway and a rise in interest rates is sure to follow. A one or two percent increase in mortgage rates will likely throw some cold water on the euphoria because of the significant rise in mortgage payments and reduction in affordability.

I predict the strong seller's market to continue next year but with only modest price increases or even possibly a slight downtick in prices. Forecasting is difficult but that is what the data is telling me. Stay tuned to my articles.

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92115 College Area: The median November home price dropped 7% from October to \$814,125 and the number of pending sales increased by 9%.

92119 San Carlos: The median November sales price dropped 5% from October to an adjusted amount of \$880,000 and the closed sales increased 50% to 24 closings.

92120 Allied Gardens, Del Cerro: The median home price for November plunged 17% from October to \$935,000 and the number of closed sales was up 20% to 12 closings.

—Sarah Ward is a realtor with Fine & Coastal Real Estate.

Culture Hair Collective finds home in College Area



By AUSTIN SMITH

Taking on a new venture is always risky. The unknowns and the complications that are almost sure to arise along the journey can be enough to keep anyone from forging forward but sometimes a pathway can be found in unexpected places.

Jessi Frieberg and Kristina Taylor faced that uncertainty during the tumultuous era of COVID and came out on the other side whole — and then some. They did it together, and they credit their success to their hard work, an awesome landlord, and the support of a community about which they knew very little.

Frieberg and Taylor's College Area salon, Culture Hair Collective, celebrated its one-year anniversary this past fall. The celebration was also billed as their grand opening due to not being able to have a proper one when they officially started doing business at the beginning of the pandemic.

"It's been better than expected," Frieberg reflects. "I didn't know too much about [the area] but I feel like it has been amazing. Clients that come to us are so excited that there is this new salon that is cute and trendy and the people are so nice. Everyone is so chill, even the college students that we get are so chill. The neighborhood has been great."

The event was co-hosted by the College Area Business District and was cheerfully attended by friends, family, and neighbors. After having



Jessi Frieberg and Kristina Taylor in front of their new business (Courtesy photo)

to "wing it" in their first few months of operating to build up bookings, the two entrepreneurs soaked in the scene of smiling supporters while also remembering that they almost entirely missed out on leasing their gorgeous space. That's when luck and fortune collided with their determination and hard work.

Their landlord, Pat Geary of CEG Advisors, is one of the heroes in Frieberg and Taylor's entrepreneurial journey. Geary had already shown them one of the company's other properties in the College Area with which they'd fall in love but a quicker bid from another salon owner had kept them from being able to move in. That blow would have been more than discouraging if not for Geary convincing them to take a chance on their current space at 6663 El Cajon Blvd.

"He warned us before we came [to see the space] it was a total fixer-upper". Although it is even further away from the highly coveted North Park neighborhood in which Frieberg

and Taylor had originally been looking, they kept an open mind by looking past the work that needed to be done and took Geary up on his offer to help them fix up and maintain the property after signing the lease.

That chance they took on their landlord and the College Area was not an easy one to make considering the inevitable obstacles new business owners are expected to encounter as part of the process. "There's so much that you don't know until you kind of get into it," Frieberg says. "You have to buy all the new equipment and stuff but then there's your taxes, all the product, electricity... it all adds up."

The journey of building a successful small business is certainly an uncertain one but with a bit of faith and a little luck, each step can be made that much easier. Fortunately for the owners of Culture Hair Collective, the College Area provided it all.

—Austin Smith writes on behalf of the College Area Business District.

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