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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**NEWS**

**Robotics competition**



Local kids taking robotics to new level.  
Page 3

**FOOD & DRINK**

**New Jewish eatery**



Enjoy variety of dishes in College Area.  
Page 11

**MISSION TRAILS**

**Enjoying all nature has to offer**



**Native Plant Sale**  
January 22-23

Plants abound in new year. **Page 14**

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## Helping the homeless in Navajo neighborhoods

By JEFF CLEMETSON



The PATH outreach team working in the San Diego River area. (Courtesy photo PATH)

Homelessness is a problem throughout San Diego, but its severity and visibility varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. In Downtown or certain beach communities, unsheltered people are easily found on streets or in large encampments. For a variety of reasons, bedroom communities like the Navajo neighborhoods don't experience the large numbers of homeless camps – but the issue still exists.

"It's only recently that our teams have been going to calls out there," said Brian Gruters, associate director of outreach for PATH, one of San Diego's homeless outreach groups contracted through the city's housing commission. "We really started to go out there when we started going work with the GetIt Done app and that's how neighbors have been letting us know to go out there."

Answering calls about homeless used to be the job of SDPD's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) until the housing commission empowered groups like PATH to respond to reports of unsheltered people in San Diego.

"What we want is to find everyone who is experiencing homelessness and offer them services," Gruters said. "It doesn't matter to

SEE **NAVAJO HOMELESS**, Page 6

## Schools take safe approach to returning to more normalcy in 2022

By DAVE THOMAS

It may be safe to say that many people have had their fill of COVID news and for some, the virus itself over the last two-plus years.

That said, hopes 2022 would start off differently than its predecessor do not appear to be materializing.

Several universities in San Diego announced recently that they would return to virtual classes to begin the 2022 spring semester.

In a release, San Diego State University stated that instruction

would be mostly virtual from Jan. 19 through Feb. 4 with a few small exceptions.

As of now, normal in-person course work will return for both San Diego and Imperial Valley school districts on Feb. 7 if all goes according to plan. While most instruction will be online from Jan. 19 – Feb. 4, the campuses will be open.

For those students enrolled this past semester and staff who taught, the virtual classes are nothing new.

SEE **SCHOOLS COVID**, Page 15



Patrick Henry High School. (Courtesy photo)

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# Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation

The Mission Trails Robotics Community, an arm of the Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation, is pleased so many of its teams found ways to compete during another COVID season.

## FIRST TECH CHALLENGE (FTC)

The Wizalos (#14129) and the Dapper RoboNoodles (#18365) — two community FTC teams of PHHS, Lewis, and Pershing students—are very excited to co-host the (outdoor) San Diego FTC "Turing League" robotics meet at Patrick Henry High School on Saturday, Feb. 5. This is the first time that an SDFTC meet has been held in our neighborhood! COVID protocols currently limit event attendance to participants and volunteers only, but it will be live-streamed for spectators. Check the Henry Cluster STEMM Foundation website (hcstemm.org) for updated information and a link to the livestream. If attendance limitations are lifted, we will announce it there so you can see!

## FIRST LEGO LEAGUE (FLL)

There were several FLL Regional Qualifying Tournaments held around San Diego in November. After researching, building, programming, and working hard to prepare for several months, teams were judged in Robot Design, Robot Game matches, an Innovation Project, and overall Core Values. Here's what went down at the Mission Bay High School Qualifying Tournament, at which several of our local teams competed:



The community robotics team "Garage Engineers advances to the Western Edge Invitational in May to compete against 80 global teams in a virtual event. (Photo Credit – Sandi Crumpacker)

- The three Dailard School teams, Mechanical Dolphins: Krazy Lego Bots, Rad Robots, and Robot Wreckers, all had a great time, and the "Krazy LEGO Bots" (#34264) even won the Rising All Star award! Way to go, 4th and 5th graders!

- Community team "Mechanical Meatloaf (with a side of pickles!)" (#50899) earned the 1st place honor for their Innovation Project "Bonsai in Space", and advanced to the next level! Moreover, the team was invited to compete at the Global Innovation Championship to share their outside of the box idea. Meatloaf "slices" are all 5th and 6th graders from Hearst Elementary, Lewis Middle, and Pershing Middle schools.

- Community team "Garage Engineers" (#50739) won the Champion's Award for overall strength across all categories, and also advanced to the next level: Western Edge Invitational tournament in May, where

they'll compete alongside 80 global teams in a virtual event! This home team is composed of 7th and 8th graders who attend both Lewis and Pershing middle schools.

- The Mechanical Meatloaf and Garage Engineers even had an unexpected mini-reunion with their former Dailard Mentor, Coach Bob!

All of these FIRST teams would like to thank their friends, family, mentors, community volunteers, and the MTRC for their support. They also send a big thanks to their sponsors Qualcomm, Booz-Allen Hamilton, NAVWAR, Robotics Inspiring Science & Engineering (RISE), William A. Steen and Associates, O'Connor Construction and Legacy Realty Network.

If you are interested in establishing a school, community robotics team, contact the Mission Trails Robotic Community at [info@hcstemm.org](mailto:info@hcstemm.org).

# Project Veritas chief investigative reporter appears at Feb. 8 luncheon



By WENDY HAUFFEN

We are honored to invite guest speaker Christian Hartsock to the next Republican Women of California-Navajo Canyon luncheon on Feb. 8.

Hartsock is a Chief Investigative Reporter for Project Veritas, whose work includes undercover infiltration of both Hilary Clinton's campaign and CNN to uncover their dirty tactics. His work has resulted in front-page coverage in The New York Times twice on opening week, primetime coverage on CNN, MSNBC and FOX News, and much more. RSVP quickly,

because our January meeting sold out in less than one day and this one will fill quickly! Register today at [www.rwcnavajocanyon.org](http://www.rwcnavajocanyon.org).

We ushered in the new year with an exciting January meeting featuring Justin Hart, a data expert from KUSI who discussed COVID, reopening schools, and

SEE PROJECT VERITAS, Page 7

## Why Homeowners Leave Thousands Behind When Selling Their Homes

San Diego – 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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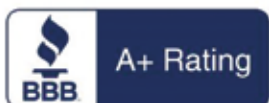


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## A fond farewell

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.

## Republicans now prefer political violence to democracy



By SEAN QUINTAL

In 1814, during the War of 1812, British troops set fire to both the nation’s Capitol building and to the White House. For 207 years, until one year ago this month, the US Capitol had not again been attacked. But on Jan. 6, 2021, hundreds of supporters of Donald Trump, incited by his false claims of a stolen election, stormed the Capitol in a deadly attempt to overturn the election of a United States president.

This month, to commemorate that wretched moment in American history, Democratic lawmakers gathered in the Capitol. Many spoke of the danger such violence continues to pose to the country. At these ceremonies, exactly two Republicans attended: Rep. Lynne Cheney and her father, former VP Dick Cheney. Where were the other 261 GOP lawmakers?

Apparently too busy to mark the day where a violent mob attempted to seize the government’s seat of power, in an attempted coup, with cries to lynch the Vice President and others. Observed Ms. Cheney of her fellow Republicans’ cowardice, “I think it’s a reflection of where our party is...it’s very concerning.” The Republican representative concluded, “I think that the future of the country is at stake and...we all have to come together to defend the Constitution.”

Sadly, the Cheneyes are lonely voices of patriotism in the current iteration of the Republican Party. More representative of today’s GOP are the oleaginous Matt Gaetz and the cretinous Marjorie Taylor Greene. Those two held a rally on the insurrection’s anniversary, calling Jan. 6 a “fedsurrection,” echoing Fox News’ resident white nationalist Tucker Carlson, they bizarrely allege that the

insurrection was actually an elaborate conspiracy setup by the federal government to do... well, to do something.

To acknowledge the horror of Jan. 6, Republicans would also need to acknowledge the constant lies and falsehoods Trump belches daily about his humiliating defeat at the hands of America’s voters. Therefore, most GOP lawmakers scurry like roaches from the light when asked to condemn the Jan. 6 atrocity. Because they’re afraid. Even though most represent gerrymandered districts that are safely Republican, they fear a primary challenge from some conspiracy-spouting loon who will try to out-crazy people like Gaetz and Greene. And their fear is justified. Consider a recent investigation of election results and some recent public polling of GOP voters.

The Associated Press conducted an exhaustive and comprehensive canvas of more than 300 local election offices, in every state disputed by Trump. In Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, President Biden’s margin of victory over Trump was a combined 311,257 votes, out of 25.5 million votes cast. The total number of potentially fraudulent cases in all the states? 475. Out of more than 300,000. And essentially each one of those represented an individual acting alone, and not in collusion. Further, 93 US Senators, Trump’s own Vice President, Trump’s own Attorney General and officials in every one of those states have said that Trump lost.

And yet, in a national poll conducted last month by the University of Massachusetts, only 21% of Republicans nationwide believe that President Biden’s victory was legitimate. This contrasts with an ABC/Ipsos poll this month that shows 65% of all Americans believe that Biden’s victory was neither rigged nor stolen. Further, 72% of all Americans agree that the attack on the Capitol threatened

democracy. Somewhat stunningly, over half (52%) of Republicans polled think those that attacked the Capitol were protecting democracy. Further in a survey last year by political scientist Nathan Kalmoe, among Republicans who believe Trump’s lie that he actually won the election, more than a third (34%) believe that violence against the other political party is justified.

Given these facts, perhaps it’s not appropriate after all to commemorate Jan. 6, 2021.

Because in reality, the insurrection has never stopped. Trump has only solidified his chokehold on the GOP. The more radical among the Republican cohort are calling those charged in the attack on our government “patriots” and “political prisoners.” In multiple states, laws are being passed not to protect voting opportunities, but to deny them. Across the country, GOP state lawmakers are working to put in place measures where partisan hacks can subvert the will of the people. A majority of GOP voters now embrace the most outrageous lies about the 2020 election. And, if they cannot win elections fairly, those same voters seem to be growing increasingly comfortable with the use of violence and subversion to get their way.

In this light, January 2022 feels more ominous than January 2021. On this month’s anniversary, President Biden said, “You can’t love your country only when you win. You can’t obey the law only when it’s convenient. You can’t be patriotic when you embrace and enable lies.”

2022 is a year when all patriotic Americans need to stand together to protect our threatened democracy. And unlike 207 years past, those threatening to light our democratic institutions on fire aren’t some foreign enemy. They’re already here.

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

## Navajo Homeless

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

us if they are in a big tent in a middle of a park that everybody sees or they’re sleeping under the radar somewhere. We still want to find them and make them aware what services are available. And especially in the last year with COVID-19, we want to make sure they are in the loop on health and safety issues that might affect them.”

PATH’s resources are distributed throughout the city based upon the annual point in

time count, where volunteers throughout the city go and document as many homeless people as they can. Areas that have high numbers of unsheltered people are designated an outreach specialist to stay in contact with the homeless population and work to find them supportive housing and other needed resources. Only along the San Diego River area in Grantville was found to have enough of a population to warrant an outreach specialist.

“In Navajo and that part of town, we just didn’t have it on our radar that there was a huge

presence of folks living unsheltered from the point in time count,” Gruters said, but added that although neighborhoods like Allied Gardens, Del Cerro and San Carlos or Clairemont (where he lives) tend to not see giant encampments like there are Downtown or at the beaches, there still are homeless there with a “high level of need” because they have mental health issues.

“A lot of those folks are from those neighborhoods have never been in the homeless

SEE NAVAJO HOMELESS, Page 7

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Project Veritas

CONTINUED FROM Page 3

politics. It was a riveting presentation with a full house. Last month, to celebrate the Christmas spirit of giving, we collected donations at our festive Christmas party of toys, clothing, and household goods in honor of Military Outreach Ministry. This worthy charity supports junior enlisted military families with

food, support, and community. We are proud to say that RWC Navajo Canyon is one of their largest supporters. Everyone is more than ready to say goodbye to 2021. It's time to gear up for some big changes in 2022, because there are some important elections happening this year, and we'll be seeing lots of red! —Wendy Hauffen writes on behalf of the Republican Women of California - Navajo Canyon.

Navajo Homeless

CONTINUED FROM Page 6

management information system ... and so in bedroom communities, it's really important to know that a lot of the folks who live in those communities, grew up in those communities, remain in those communities and for that reason are not trying to go Downtown to seek services in a lot of cases," he added. "And for that reason, if you don't provide outreach services in those communities you may never come into contact with them." For Navajo residents interested in helping with the work to end homelessness, Gruters has several suggestions. First, is to volunteer for the annual point in time count. The count is better if local residents volunteer because they often know where the homeless are living and are familiar with the problems in the neighborhood. "And then you can get a good reflection of what the population size is," he said, but added that no matter how thorough the volunteers are, the count is always lower than the actual number of homeless. This year, the point in time count will take place on Jan. 27. Interested people learn more and sign up at the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness website: rtfhsd.org/about-coc/weallcount-pitc.

Besides volunteering, residents can help is by supporting the "gold standard for addressing homelessness" – supportive housing projects. Supportive housing projects – such as the Zepher project in Grantville – are subsidized apartment units and provide important services like social workers, medication monitoring, financial services and addiction counseling. "Retention rates for people in supportive housing are in the 90 percent range," Gruters said, emphasizing the need to support and not fight construction of these projects. "Where we get into a bottleneck is in the number of units available. So if we have more units available, we'll get more people off the streets and ultimately create a homelessness service system hat is better able to address this problem as it arises." Gruters also suggested a way that all people can help their homeless neighbors: "Just in general, try not to make their day worse than it already is. Try to be empathetic, smile at people. And if you are comfortable with approaching homeless folks, share things like socks or water. A little bit of kindness goes a long way." —Jeff Clemetson is the now former editor of Mission Times Courier.

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## Allied Gardens/ Grantville Community Council

By SHAIN HAUG

San Diego Canyonlands and the Friends of Navajo Canyon will continue their work in Navajo Canyon on Saturday, Jan. 15, 2022 (the third Saturday of the month) beginning at 9 a.m. This month the team will begin at the north end of the trail at Easton Court. Join the working group and join the Friends of Navajo Canyon at our website, [aggccouncil.org](http://aggccouncil.org), by clicking on "Community Projects" and then on "Friends of Navajo Canyon."

Much is being accomplished in our canyon. But there never seems to be an end to the accumulation of trash and it will take a lot of effort to replace 70 years of invasive plant growth with native flora. The time has come for the residents of Allied Gardens to step up to ownership of this invaluable resource. Kim Morris is leading us in this matter. She and the canyon need you. In addition to being there yourself, you may have contacts with youth organizations such as the Scouts, the Kiwanis Key Club, school science clubs, and members of other groups who could use the experience to gain real world experience in ecology management. The canyon needs them as well as.

Our Jan. 25 Town Hall Meeting will be directed to the San Diego State University parklands development of the old stadium property. The land that is set aside for recreational areas is controlled by terms of the ballot proposition that led to the sale to the State University System. Presentations such as our Town Hall Meeting are the most effective way to look over the shoulder of the developer to ensure we are getting what was promised. Zoom access instructions will be issued by email to members of our contact list.

Looking ahead to the March 22 Town Hall Meeting you will have the opportunity to hear from Erik Frost regarding the Alvarado Creek watershed. We look forward to hearing from you – what are the topics that you think we should address during 2022?

The Community Council has an ambitious agenda for 2022, even as we have to work around the continuing imposition of pandemic surges. Along with the work in Navajo Canyon we continue to work with the city and San Diego Gas & Electric to get the 500 trees for Allied Gardens on track, to maintain the trees we put in on Zion Avenue, and to continue painting SDG&E boxes, and to give the Navajo Community Planners, Inc. (NCPI) information about the



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AGGCC

CONTINUED FROM Page 8

needs of our community. In that last regard, three of our AGGCC Board members also represent Allied Gardens on the NCPI Board. We take to NCPI the concerns that you bring to us during our Board meetings and Town Hall Meetings.

There are only 10 of us on the Board. We are at the limit of what the Board can take on as new projects and we are even having difficulty in maintaining our current community endeavors. There is so much more that needs to be done. Join our Board and bring your neighbors the benefit of your ideas and energy.

Join our mailing list by using the "Contact Us" page on at [www.aggccouncil.org](http://www.aggccouncil.org) to give us your email address, to bring us your ideas for Community Council tasks, and to nominate yourself to join the Board to work on those matters. There is so very much we can do together.

[aggccouncil.org](http://aggccouncil.org)

—Shain Haug, President  
AGGCC

Crusaders Soccer Club

The Crusaders Soccer Club conducted its annual Winter Camps in December 2021. The camps were open to all players in the Grassroots (Recreational) and Competitive programs. The camps were held at the Pershing Middle School fields and conducted by Victor Melendez, the Crusaders Soccer Assistant Director of Coaching.

Tryouts for the 2022 competitive team program were conducted at the Pershing Fields the weekend of Jan 8-9. If you would like to try out for a Competitive team, go to the Crusaders Soccer homepage at [crusaderssoccer.org](http://crusaderssoccer.org). Click on STAFF and scroll down to the coach for your gender and age and contact the coach directly.

Registration is now open for the 2022, spring Grassroots (Recreational) program which begins on March 6 and ends on May 1. Games will be played on Sundays at the Pershing Middle School and Gage Elementary fields. Registration closes at midnight on Jan. 31. For more information go to [crusaderssoccer.org](http://crusaderssoccer.org) and click on the GRASSROOTS (RECREATIONAL) graphic. If you are interested in volunteering to coach a team, send an email to [info@crusaderssoccer.org](mailto:info@crusaderssoccer.org). If you would like to referee any of our Grassroots games, also send an email to [infor@crsaderssoccer.org](mailto:infor@crsaderssoccer.org).

The Crusaders Soccer Club entered a record 11 Grassroots All-Star teams to participate in the New Year Kickoff recreational tournament sponsored by



The Girls 2014 team coached by Enko Telahun and Miguel Villodas won their division, while the Boys 2014 team under coach Jason Lithopoulos did likewise. (Courtesy photos)



Boys Crusaders 2014 All-Stars with coach Jason Lithopoulos

'Tiger Team' goes electric



(Photo courtesy United Healthcare)

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of California donated funding to Family Health Centers of San Diego, the largest safety-net health care provider in San Diego County, to purchase two electric mobile units that will be used by the "Tiger Teams" to provide basic primary care, vaccinations and other mobile-capable services in underserved communities targeting populations unable to leave their home to access care.

The investment in Family Health Centers is part of a \$1.5 million donation to support 17 San Diego Community Based Organizations to promote access to physical, behavioral and social health care resources across the county.



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# Can Ben and Esther’s Ruben in fact save the world?

By SAM LITVIN

Like a rainbow and a pot of gold, the College Area eruv terminates at the new Ben and Esther’s veg-an Jewish Deli at El Cajon and Montezuma Blvd.

An eruv is an area demar-cated with wires on top of light poles within which an observant Jewish person can walk around on Sabbath. The fact that Justin King chose a location near Del Cerro, the original neighborhood of the San Diego Jews, with syn-agogues as well as many Middle Eastern eateries was more coin-cidence than planning for this East European Jewish food. Then again, there are people who think there are no coincidences.

King lives in Portland where he built up and sold a chain of bar-ber shops. After selling the chain in 2019, he began investing and felt like having a coffee and bagel place in his office.

The bagel and coffee expanded to a Jewish deli, selling the food that his grandmother and grandfather (Ben and Esther) used to make in New York and Miami where King grew up. There was one problem though: King is a vegan.

King is not the type of vegan to make anyone feel guilty for not being vegan. He says "I don't have a problem with meat, I have a problem with what's behind it." He loves fish. He loves eggs. But at some point, he realized that while he loves to eat these things, it doesn't mean he should. "I love a burger, I don't like killing for it."

The beef industry is a mas-sive pollutant. It causes mass

deforestation and takes up ma-jority of our fresh water for pro-duction (500 gallons per pound of meat). Poultry is responsible for some of the world's worst pande-mics. Dairy industry creates massive nitrogen runoff contributing to cli-mate change. Fishing is collapsing fisheries around the world while cows, pigs chicken and even fish have been shown to suffer as they live in terrible conditions. For these ethical reasons, King couldn't eat any of the food at his deli.

To fix his dilemma, King began experimenting by replacing the meat with vegan substitute while making sure the taste was un-changed. To his surprise, business took off! Within a year he moved to a new location and after a trip to San Diego, an old friend from the barber industry, Marc Bennett convinced him to open up a shop in San Diego. Bennett's barber-shops were suffering during the pandemic and so they figured San Diego would be a good beachhead for their future expansion to "nor-malize vegan food".

The goal was to open in 2021 but the San Diego beachhead turned out to be less Hawaii and more Normandy. What took one month for permits and construc-tion in Portland, took six months in San Diego due to the infamously convoluted, costly and lengthy permitting process in San Diego. But in spite of the pitfalls, and to the joy of many San Diegans, they were finally open on New Year's Day.

That day a line formed outside the door. I came to try out B&E on Jan. 6 and it was just as busy.

The people who came looked less Crown Heights and more Queens. I saw Jews and Israelis, Asians, Hispanics and African Americans. Men and women, young and old.

Arlene Samaniego isn't Jewish but will drive hours for a good vegan place; she came for the steak and egg sandwich. Karen Pearlman who is Jewish and has been vegan since 1982 brought her friend, a New Yorker Joson Feathers for Reubens and knish-es because they love vegan and Jewish food and they love to support both with their patron-age. Zoe Meyers stopped by for a veggie bagel on her lunch break. She isn't Jewish but is happy to try anything that's vegan. And Louis Ashkenazi, a vegan Jew, was overjoyed to bring his daughter for a bagel cream cheese schmear, matzo ball soup, benny's brisket, hamentaschen and kugel.

Why was such a diverse crowd eager to try Jewish vegan food?

Well, San Diego is becoming a center for vegan food, especially near Del Cerro area where there is a vegan donut shop, Thai, vegan market and even vegan Mexican food in La Mesa. So a new vegan deli is just the thing to provide a vegan alternative to the local DZ Akins. It is actually surprising that there are not more vegan Jewish delis considering that the modern day vegan movement originated in Dimona Israel by the African Hebrew Israelites from America in the seventies.

So how does Ben and Esther's compare to the old classics? Anyone who has been to New

York's Katz's de-li knows that at a Jewish deli the prices and por-tions can both be enormous.

The prices at Ben and Esther's start at \$8 for bagel sand-wiches like Lox and Schmear, and range \$9-\$14 for sand-wiches like the

New Yorker or Ruben which were normal human size. Of course, if you need something that will re-mind you of Katz's, you will pay like Katz's for the "Grand Puba"; a \$25 corn beef sandwich which might even stop Guy Fieri in his tracks. They also have many oth-er crowd favorites including salt bagels, rugelahs and the massive kosher dills that the rapper Kosha Dillz would approve of.

The prices were a little high, but not due to inflation, but because of the heavy subsidies we pay to the meat industry. This is why even though vegan food should be cheaper and more abundant than meat and dairy, especially given the fight against climate change, it is still more expensive. King said that he "doesn't fault people for eating meat, it's expensive to be vegan."

Something he hopes politicians will soon realize and correct. For now he says that we can all help with our dollars by making it cheaper as more of us to try it. In his words "I want my money to dictate where the future goes."



Karen Pearlman (L) and Joson Feathers enjoy the food at Ben & Esther's. (Photo by Sam Litvin)

But how does this food actually taste? Well, the sandwiches were delicious, I personally liked the New Yorker. Dolmas were great but the Mediterranean (Israeli) salad could have been chopped finer and fresher for my Israeli taste. The babka was not bad for a vegan bread. It was even better on the second day with tea and ice-cream.

And what is the dish that would make people switch? Ironically it is the Egg, Cheese and Bacon breakfast bagel that is the crowd favorite. It's like the Jews have been waiting 3,000 years for veg-an bacon to finally be available.

So whether you are a fan of vegan o Jewish food, or just want to save the world with a meat-less Reuben sandwich, I suggest you stop by Ben and Esther's. Because in the words of an ec-centric Jewish New Yorker Joson Feathers: "This is the best knish, oh my god." And that's an opinion we can all trust.

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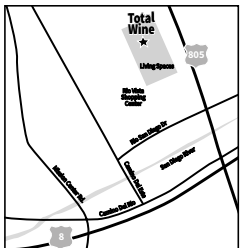
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New Year Brings Native Plant Sale and Art Exhibition to Visitor Center

By JENNIFER MORRISSEY



First, we at the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation are pleased to announce that community members like you helped us to reach our \$30,000 matching campaign goal. In the last two months, more than 400 generous individuals and families gave to the MTRP Foundation, which will allow us to help preserve and protect the park and support the many projects on the horizon. Thank you!

We're optimistic about this year, and we are starting it with a bang, presenting our first art exhibition at the Visitor Center in nearly two years, and staging at two-day native plant sale outdoors at the Visitor Center with the California Native Plant Society San Diego (CNPSSD).

Everyone is invited to shop, browse, and learn at a free California Native Plant Sale on Saturday, Jan. 22 and Sunday, Jan. 23 from 9 a.m. -3 p.m. on the terrace of the MTRP Visitor Center. Veteran gardeners and newcomers can select from 140 species of California native plants, CNPS' local and state-sourced seeds and bulbs, as well as books and posters, botanical items, and other merchandise. In addition, native plant experts will be on hand to help with plant selection, and carts will be available for easy shopping. We anticipate that parking will be impacted in the Visitor Center lot, so we will offer free, open-air trolley service to near the Jackson Drive parking lot. Should you have more plants than you can carry to your car, we will have a plant holding area, and students from Patrick Henry High School's Garden and AP Environmental Science clubs can help you load the plants into your vehicle. Plant stock will be replenished throughout the sale, and afternoon shopping is encouraged. Proceeds from the sale will benefit both nonprofit organizations' missions to educate, restore, and appreciate the native habitats of our region. This family-friendly event has been sponsored by San Diego City Councilmember Raul Campillo (D-7); more information is available on the MTRP website: [www.mtrp.org](http://www.mtrp.org)

With the full reopening of the Visitor Center and Gift Shop came the return of on-site programs and events. On Jan. 2, the MTRP Foundation hosted an opening reception for its first art exhibition in nearly two years, *Nature's Abundance*. The exhibition features five award-winning artists including Ray Khalife, Wendy Kwasny, Ken Roberts, Tara Sood, and Amy Schindler, an MTRP volunteer and Del Cerro resident. These artists' media range from oil and acrylic painting to mixed media and ceramics with stone. *Nature's Abundance* will be on view through Feb. 11, 2022, from 9 a.m. -5 p.m. daily. The artworks will be available for sale with a percentage of the purchase benefiting the park through the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation.

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



# New 2022 real estate laws

By SARAH WARD

In last month's column I talked about my home price forecast for 2022. I mentioned that if interest rates started creeping up, mortgage payments would become more expensive which would start filtering out potential buyers. For example, if rates went from 3% on an \$800,000 home to 4%, a 20% down, 30-year mortgage payment would increase from \$2698 to \$3055.

Then you add property taxes, insurance, and HOA fees and suddenly some buyers are not qualifying. This, in my opinion, would be the greatest factor in slowing down home appreciation. Well last week, rates started moving up a bit. We will see if that is a long-term trend up or just a blip. Either way, my prediction for 2022 home prices is that they will increase but more moderately than the last couple of years. Stay tuned.

I wanted to mention a few new real-estate laws that went into effect in California on Jan. 1, 2022.

Please be advised that what follows is just a summary not to be relied on; if interested further, conduct your own research on these new laws and ramifications. AB491 requires new mixed-income residential properties to maintain common areas and entrances for all residents. In the past, a downtown builder would be required to build some low-income units in order to get a building permit. But what would happen is that the builder would typically build a separate structure on the back of the lot with its own

entrance and common areas for the low income folks and then would sell the front units as expensive luxury units. This is no longer allowed. All property owners on the lot must have access to the same entrances and common areas.

I discussed SB10 a few months ago and it has now gone into effect. This law requires local governments to approve up to 10 units on ANY lot in a transit-rich zone (near a trolley stop, busy bus route, etc.). There are some limits based on the size of the lot, but developers can shoe-horn as many units as they are allowed on these smaller lots, up to 10 units. Sacramento has been trying to increase housing density for some time. So over the coming years watch for larger units to be constructed near trolley stops. It is already happening all over San Diego and the trend is expected to increase.

AB345 requires local governments to allow an ADU unit (a second occupancy structure) to be split off and sold separately at the option of the property owner. SB9 also went into effect and streamlines the procedures for homeowners to subdivide an existing single-family R1 residential lot to create a duplex and/or allow for new infill construction. Look for MANY second units to now be built everywhere as there are virtually no limits statewide when there is enough room on a lot for the structure to fit and expect for many of these units to be split-off and sold. Additionally, AB1585 now forces HOA's to also allow second units to be built on R1 lots within those

neighborhoods. Some are saying that is a violation of individual and collective property rights but for now this law is in effect.

Finally SB60 raises the maximum fines for violating short-term rental ordinances from \$100, \$200, and \$500 for first, second, and third violations to \$1,500, \$3,000 and \$5,000. What was happening is that some high-end coastal properties (and elsewhere) were being rented for thousands of dollars per week in violation of the short-term rental ordinance and the owners would just easily pay the fine when caught, still pocketing a tidy net profit on the weekly rental. The fines have now been raised 10-fold which changes the calculus for the short-term rental industry.

## SINGLE FAMILY MARKET REPORT

**92115-College Area** the December median home price was up 8% from November to \$883,000. Home prices surrounding SDSU remain elevated and many second units are being built on one lot.

**92119-San Carlos:** The median home price increased 5% from November but the number of units sold was down slightly to 19 units.

**92120-Allied Gardens, Del Cerro,** the median home price jumped 12% from November to \$1,051,000 as 92120 remains a very sought after area for buyers.

Give me a call to discuss buying or selling real estate in San Diego. 858-431-6043.

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

# Schools covid

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

The thinking by school officials is that delaying the start of in-person classes until early February serves two purposes.

One, it ensures more time to help those individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 over the Christmas and New Year's holidays to quarantine and recover if they fell ill.

Moving to virtual classes the first two weeks of the semester also makes it so that individuals who recently got a COVID-19 booster have an added two week window for the shot to be more effective in providing its full effect.

Speaking of booster shots, SDSU reminds its students, faculty and staff (this includes those deemed auxiliary workers) able to get the booster that such shots must be on file with the school by Jan. 18. This is so the individuals will be labeled 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 on Jan. 3.

School officials said the plan if all goes accordingly will lead to in-person classes once again beginning Jan. 31. The school said it would be looking at COVID-19 case numbers this month to see if the expected surge of infections would in fact occur from early to mid-January.

At the high school level, precautions are also the name of the game.

Patrick Henry High School Principal Michelle Irwin noted that the school is doing all it can to keep students and staff safe.

"We have seen an increase in absences with both students and staff at Henry due to the spike in COVID cases," Irwin commented. "As our Patriots are taking care of themselves and resting, we have asked teachers and other staff members to support uncovered classes during their prep time. At Henry, we are a close-knit community and have

an 'all hands-on deck' motto to support our students and learning community."

Irwin went on to note, "Due to the recent spike, San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) has directed us to pause on all 'off-season' sports training and practices. While this isn't a popular decision, we know that this is to ensure the safety of our student athletes and coaching staff."

Irwin pointed out that the school has a variety of safety protocols in place. Among them is being a vaccination and testing site.

"We require masking for all students and staff indoors and outdoors and our custodial crew cleans each room with COVID sanitizing protocols," Irwin stated. "We are working with district staff to adapt our safety standards and remain responsive to the changing conditions of the pandemic."

As of last weekend, more than 836,000 COVID deaths had been reported in the United States, according to the New York Times.

California leads the way in deaths with more than 77,000 to date.

According to the County of San Diego Communications Office, there were record numbers of new COVID-19 cases, even when factoring in that more than a third of the results from the previous three days are due to reporting delays from last week.

The record cases include 12,563 new incidents reported for Sunday (Jan. 9), 17,507 for Saturday (Jan. 8) and 19,009 for Friday (Jan. 7). The previous daily high in cases was 8,313 reported for Jan. 2, 2022.

The surge in new COVID infections comes as San Diego area hospitals are reportedly struggling with staffing amid hundreds of their employees contracting the virus and being unable to handle their shifts.

Schools returning to virtual classes through January is part of the effort to protect students and staff from this surge of the virus.

—Reach editor Dave Thomas at Dave@sdnews.com.

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