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**DOWNTOWN NEWS**

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**The Dunham building P. 4**

**FASHION P. 3**



SD's Project Runway contestant

**NEWS P. 7**



SD Loyals supports kids

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Vote for local businesses

**FEATURE P. 10**



Gregg Neuman's storied career



A view from inside the currently vacant lot of the City Heights Transit Plaza. (Photo by Kendra Sitton)

# 190 units of affordable housing coming to El Cajon Blvd.

By Kendra Sitton

A \$2 million investment into affordable housing means a 190-unit development at the

City Heights Transit Center on the border of City Heights and Normal Heights is one step closer to breaking ground. Mission Driving Finance, the

San Diego Foundation and Alliance Healthcare provided a collective \$2 million initial

SEE **ECB DEVELOPMENT**, Page 13

# E Street to be more pedestrian friendly

## E Street Greenway Masterplan Provides Guidelines for Cohesive Pedestrian Improvement Recommendations

### Art on the Land

By DELLE WILLETT



The newly created Masterplan for the E Street Greenway in the Gaslamp Quarter and East Village will provide a framework for cohesive improvement recommendations on form, amenities, materials and landscape.

The masterplan was a team effort led by Ross Duenas, civil engineer, and Patrick Toth, engineer in training of CR



Rendering of a pedestrian walkway on E Street. (Renderings courtesy Schmidt Design Group)

SEE **E STREET PLANS**, Page 15

# Elephant enclosure intruder's hearing set

By Neal Putnam

A Sept. 23 preliminary hearing has been set for a man who trespassed into an elephant enclosure at the San Diego Zoo with his 2-year-old daughter in order to take a photo.

Jose Manuel Navarrete, 25, pleaded not guilty to felony child endangerment and trespassing in a March 19 incident in which he went through two barriers in order to take a photograph of himself and his little girl.

Navarrete, of Fullerton, Ca., posted \$100,000 bond and charges were not filed until late July in San Diego Superior Court.

Judge Joseph Brannigan ordered Navarrete not to return to the zoo as a condition of bond, according to court records. A public defender who represents him could not be reached for comment.

Zoo visitors took video of the incident which showed Navarrete and his daughter posing for a camera, with his back to an elephant, which then became agitated.

People yelled for Navarrete to leave and he dropped his daughter just as the elephant drew closer.

"It stuck its head up in the air, its tusks, and it started a fast trot towards him," said Matthew Passiglia, a witness who was interviewed by NBC News.

"I was standing 20 yards away from it. I yelled 'Dude, What are you doing? Get out of there. Get the baby out,'" said another man, who was interviewed on ABC News.

"It was about maybe a foot from making contact with the gentleman and his baby," said a woman at the scene.

SEE **ELEPHANT**, Page 12

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TOP AGENTS in 92101

Total Sales by Real Estate Agent in 2020  
(Incl. buyer sales and listings sold, January 1 - December 31, 2020)

1. Gregg Neuman	109	14. Gerry Burchard	8	27. Elcim Gulec	5
2. Chad Dannecker	43	15. Michael Lange	7	28. David Spiewak	5
3. Denny Oh	37	16. Franchesca Meram	7	29. Nicole Hazelton	5
4. Michael Chious	13	17. Ryan Ponce	7	30. Danijela Ripley	5
5. Francine Finn	12	18. Mark Mills	7	31. Brian Ruhl	5
6. Jeffery Nix	11	19. Jeff Grant	7	32. Kayoko Yoshioka	5
7. John Husar	10	20. Jeffrey O’Neal	6	33. Katie Gilbert	5
8. David Stone	10	21. Michael Ciampa	6	34. Michael Brunnhoelz	5
9. Mike Althof	9	22. Todd DeBoer	6	35. Jeannine Savory	5
10. Claudette Cooper	9	23. Donna Egan	6	36. David Rudd	5
11. Alan Hamrick	9	24. John Reeves	6	37. Monica Stone	5
12. Jorge Castellon	8	25. Richard Combs	6	38. Sabrina Ortega	5
13. Melissa Goldstein Tucci	8	26. Sarah Scott	5	39. 11 tied with 4	

REAL Marketing, Inc. Congratulates the Top  
Downtown San Diego Real Estate Agents in 2019!

REAL Marketing Inc. has helped real estate agents build their market share and client retention for more than 29 years across North America, specializing in increasing market share and improving customer retention. We are pleased to announce our team has helped Gregg Neuman and the Neuman & Neuman Team extend their lead in Downtown sales for the ELEVENTH consecutive year.

Results for 2020

Total sales for the 92101 zip code decreased to 785 units last year, which is a 0.51% decrease from 2019. The average sales price increased 1.2% to \$674,200, while the average days on market have decreased by 19.6% to 37 days.

Gregg Neuman of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties tops the list for an eleventh consecutive year with 109 total 92101 sales. While his sales represent 63% of Berkshire Hathaway Home Services California Properties’ sales in Downtown, he continues to outsell entire brokerages, including Pacific Sotheby’s Intl Realty, Big

Block Realty, Coldwell Banker Residential, Redfin Corporation, Hunter & Maddox Intl. Inc, Keller Williams SD Metro, and Douglas Elliman of California.

With a total of 168 sales according to data available from Trendgraphix, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties finished another strong year and also sustains their lead over all other Downtown brokerages.

Congratulations to all Top Real Estate agents in Downtown San Diego for another outstanding year.

TOP 10 in 92101

Total Sales by Company

1. Compass	241
2. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices	168
3. Pacific Sotheby’s Intl Realty	89
4. Big Block Realty	66
5. Coldwell Banker West	54
6. Redfin Corporation	52
7. Hunter & Maddox Intl. Inc	30
8. Keller Williams SD Metro	29
9. Coldwell Banker Residential	29
10. Douglas Elliman of California	26



# Divina collection highlights international talent of San Diego designer

**Fashion Files**  
By **DIANA CAVAGNARO**

Kenneth Barlis presented his new collection Divina on September 7 in Rancho Santa Fe with live music and models to present the whimsical designs. The Divina collection seemed right out of a fairy tale. FOX 5 anchor/reporter Phil Blauer emceed for the evening.

The fashion show was held at the estate of Allan and Megan Camaisa. The audience was seated on the grass and the fashion models came down the stairs from the house onto a long runway. The Divina collection seemed right out of a fairy tale. Noble Queen of the Universe 2020, Megan Camaisa, modeled alongside her court. The alluring voice of Aira Luna provided entertainment. She made you want to jump up and dance. Following Luna was the smooth sounds of violinist Amarah Mauricio.

Some of you may recognize the name Kenneth Barlis as the first fashion designer to win Fashion Week San Diego. As an



Kenneth Barlis picture for Project Runway's 19th Season (Photo courtesy Bravo)



Singer Aira Luna

international designer who was born and raised in Zamboanga, Philippines, he now has his home base here in San Diego.

Barlis said, "I can chase my dreams without leaving town."

He has designed for A-List of celebrities such as Carrie Underwood, Khelani, and Offset. Recently he designed a full collection for the K-Pop group Alamat. Barlis dressed the eight-member group for their recent music video.



Kenneth Barlis' designs



Violinist Amarah Mauricio

From here, Barlis is going to Paris Fashion Week on October 4. He will show his womenswear collection called the Secret Garden: Where Dreams Come True. Next, he will show the majority of his menswear collection at LA Fashion Week later in October. In May 2022, he plans to put together a big show to celebrate 10 years in the fashion industry. His goal is to design 100 couture outfits for his clients



Finale: Megan Camaisa, Kenneth Barlis and Aira Luna (Photos by Diana Cavagnaro)



Megan Camaisa, Noble Queen of the Universe 2020

—Diana Cavagnaro is an internationally renowned Couture Milliner based in San Diego. Learn more about our Hat Designer, Teacher & Blogger at [DianaCavagnaro.com](http://DianaCavagnaro.com).



Kenneth Barlis' menswear

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sunday, September 12**  
Fall Bridal Bazaar with fashion shows presented by Gretchen Productions at the San Diego Convention Center. Two shows presented at noon and 2:30 p.m. For more info: 760-334-5500

**Thursday, September 16**  
Art of Fashion. The Country Friends partners with South Coast Plaza on the Annual Runway show and Luncheon at The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. For tickets visit [events@thecountryfriends.org](mailto:events@thecountryfriends.org).

**Saturday, September 25**  
The Show Must Go On... So Strut! Vista Hill and A New PATH Fashion Show at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina. Boutique shopping, luncheon and theatrical fashion show presented by Gretchen Productions. For more Info: 619-670-1184.

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# Housing who's who in San Diego

## Gaslamp Landmarks

By SANDEE WILHOIT



Although the Dunham Building, a very utilitarian edifice, has a somewhat uninspiring facade, it is associated with many of San Diego's early "movers and shakers" in business and real estate.

First, on November 9, 1869, Alonzo Horton, our founding father, sold to Mrs. Augusta B. Dunham, a widow and longtime San Diego resident, the present site of the building for \$2,000. This was a large sum for the property. She promptly sub-divided the property, and in 1882, leased the south half of the property. It supported a wooden structure known as the "Free Reading Room," which began in 1873. This, too, was associated with Alonzo Horton, as he had planned to sell his personal and very valuable library to the Reading Room Association. George Mars-ton, another early San Diego pioneer,

philanthropist and merchant, was a board member of the association. Horton offered to sell the book collection to the association for half of their worth (\$1,000), but the association balked, so Horton kept his books. Horton and the association finally made their peace and he donated the book collection. However, the association had no librarian, only a caretaker with no organizational skills, so many of the books were stolen and the Free Reading Room closed by 1882.

On May 30, 1887, George E. Dunham, the son of Augusta Dunham, sold half of the Dunham site to David Reed, a pioneer real estate developer, lawyer and insurance agent. Reed became Harbor Commissioner and was eventually elected Mayor of San Diego in 1897.

By 1887, a wooden structure had been erected at the 750 address. It had a shingle roof and a brick chimney. Lewis and Stocking Real Estate was located at the site. One of the owners, H.F. Stocking, became Superintendent of San Diego Parks. Adjoining the real estate office was J. M. Van Zandt's shoe and boot store, which was easily seen from either end of the street by the "Big Boot" sign outside its door. Mr. Van Zandt served as the deputy sheriff for the city during the 1880s.

In 1888, the present building located at 750-52 Fifth



The Dunham Building (Photos by Tim Trevaskis)



was constructed and became known as the Dunham Building. Designed by prominent architect William S. Hebbard, the building was a two-story brick structure with a large skylight on the second floor. It featured iron chimneys and iron shutters on the windows. The interior doors were mahogany, and the rooms featured 14' ceilings and hardwood floors. The second floor was intended for offices and meeting rooms; a frame partition separated the meeting rooms from the offices. The first floor was designed to house commercial enterprises.

The original tenant was F. F. Wright and Company, who

advertised themselves as "a model shoe house." They claimed to have the best facilities, the largest assortment, lower prices and the latest styles! Other tenants included celebrated architect Irving Gill and his nephew Louis Gill. Louis Gill went on to found the San Diego chapter of AIA and was appointed to the State Board of Architectural Examiners. He designed Scripps Memorial Hospital, the Bishop's School and several animal grottos for the San Diego Zoo. His uncle, Irving, designed the Holly Sefton Memorial Hospital, the George W. Marston house, the H. H. Timken house, the La Jolla Women's Club, the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and numerous other buildings, not only in California but also on the East Coast.

Another tenant was A. E. Banks, a noted physician, who practiced in San Diego until 1940 and was a San Diego health officer. He had been partially blind and later invented the portable Braille writer known as the Banks

Pocket Braille Writer. This ingenious machine was produced by IBM and distributed by the Lions Clubs of America.

Consequent tenants at the site were a pawnbroker, a jeweler, hotels, taverns, restaurants and billiard halls. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Bachelor Club and the Hercules Club, both social clubs for men, occupied the premises as well.

A series of ethnic restaurants were housed at the site throughout the years, with Little Joe's Pizza House remaining a staple throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Currently, Urban India, featuring Indian cuisine, burgers and cocktail bars makes its home in the Dunham building. Judging by the amazing aromas emanating from their kitchen, this is a most agreeable fusion!

—Sandee Wilhoit is the Historian at the Gaslamp Quarter Historical Foundation. She can be reached at [swilhoit@gaslampfoundation.org](mailto:swilhoit@gaslampfoundation.org).

### The Dunham Building

(1888)

750-752 Fifth Avenue

Architect - William S. Hebbard

Architectural Style - Victorian Commercial

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# A summer of disasters comes to its end

## Notes from Toni

By TONI G. ATKINS



Summer sure is coming to a tough close this year. Parts of California are once again on fire and many of our neighbors in the state have had to flee with only what they can load into their cars as smoke and flames endanger their homes and communities. Sadly, we have lost American military members and Afghan allies, including Marines from our own Camp Pendleton to new violence in a 20-year-old war and refugees from that war now face an uncertain future—a future that depends on whether the rest of us are willing to tap into our faith and our humanity to help. And this is all on top of a rise in COVID cases across the nation, despite best efforts to convince the holdouts who still refuse vaccines and masks.

At times like this, it is easy to get frustrated and feel helpless in the face of powerful challenges. And, at times like these, I remember that I am blessed to be in a position where I go to work every day to help find and deliver solutions.

One of the things that has always made getting through wildfires and other disasters a little more bearable is looking around and seeing all the people who are helping: neighbors

donating food and clothing to each other and showing support for weary firefighters and businesses; non-profits opening their doors to people who have lost everything; local, state and federal offices working together to cut red tape and get assistance out the door as fast as possible.

This September, I can't help thinking about another late summer morning, when thousands of people fled flames and smoke, and thousands more were killed. As we approach the 20th Anniversary of September 11, I know there is still so much grief for those lost and the survivors who loved them. I also hope there is increasing resolve that terrorism and violence can never be allowed to change the course of our nation and its institutions. And, as always, I am filled with great respect and admiration for all the first responders who run toward trouble on behalf of all the rest of us.

I remain enormously proud of San Diego and the members of our military. And I am proud that, once again, our communities are stepping up and providing welcoming and caring arms to the refugees seeking safety as the war ends in Afghanistan.

Seeing people have to flee their homes — for fire or disaster or war — really puts into perspective how trivial some of our day-to-day problems may seem.

But there are so many real concerns, too.

In the legislature, we have to keep an eye on every level of the problem. What can we do immediately to mitigate or end an acute crisis? How to do we enact strategies to make continued progress on chronic problems, over both the short- and long-haul? And how do we plant the seeds and fund the progress that delivers the light we need to see at the end of the tunnel?

We have been seeing a lot of that multi-tiered approach on some of the key challenges we've faced this year with COVID-19, with housing and homelessness, with police reform, and with climate change. So, once again, I think I want to focus on the positive—on all the people helping.

Thank you to Governor Newsom for leading California to one of the best vaccination rates in the nation. Thank you to the California Assembly for advancing SB 9 and SB 10 and other parts of the Senate's vital Housing Package. Thank you to the families, community groups, and law enforcement for banding together to improve accountability and outcomes in public safety. Thank you to the California businesses who understand the urgency of climate change and recognize the benefits that behavioral changes can bring to their bottom line.



Sen. Toni Atkins (Courtesy photo)

Just like the smoke eventually lifted from the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the field outside of Shanksville, Pennsylvania, the smoke will clear from the wildfires. Time will heal wounds and grief. This virus will recede. And every Californian will have the opportunity to have a safe home and a good job. But there's a lot of work that has to be done to get us there. I think we're up for it—and when I report back next month after we wrap up the 2021 legislative session—I hope to have some good progress to share on top of an already historic year.

And maybe it's something in the air, but I also think that this particular September, I'm going to take some extra time to hold all my loved ones close.

—Toni G. Atkins is President pro Tempore of the California Senate. Visit [sd39.senate.ca.gov/contact](http://sd39.senate.ca.gov/contact) to contact her.

## Keeping children safe online

### District Attorney News

By SUMMER STEPHAN



Given the young age at which kids are accessing the Internet and the huge role technology is bound to play in their lives going forward, speaking with them about online safety early is the best strategy to keep them safe from online predators and scammers.

Not a day goes by that we don't see a news story involving a company getting hacked, personal data being leaked or a threat of infrastructure failing due to malicious actors. The same is true for predators hacking into children's lives.

Strangers approach children online daily through social media or games, for example. It's important to be aware of ways predators can access your children, to set limits on what your child can access online and to set time limits.

Here are some tips to help you keep kids protected.

- Do not allow smart phones to charge in your child's bedroom overnight.

- Place your computer in a common area of the house.
- Encourage children to report bullying or tell you if they have posted something they now regret.
- Make reasonable rules and set time and use limits. Also enforce them.
- Do not allow children to go into private chat rooms, especially when you are not present.
- Talk to children about how the internet is not private, ever.
- Never allow your children to arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met online without your permission.
- Do not let your child give out any personal information of any kind on the internet.
- Be sensitive to changes in your child's behaviors that may indicate they are being victimized.
- Be alert to a teenager or adult who is paying an unusual amount of attention to your children or giving them gifts.
- Utilize your Internet service provider's parental controls and commercial blocking and filtering software tools.

SEE CHILD SAFETY, Page 13

## Republicans hate this one weird trick

By Brian Schrader

Vote. It's really that easy. Even better, specifically vote no on whether to recall Gavin Newsom. Democracy depends on it and here's why.

Elections are one of the hallmarks of our democracy. They give the People say in their government and they work to ensure that corrupt behavior by politicians is punished at the ballot box in regular intervals.

However, elections are not incorruptible; their power rests on the assumption that elections are free, fair and highly participatory. A high-turnout election ensures that the will of the People is expressed and their preferences are noted. A low-turnout election is a recipe for rule by an unscrupulous and illegitimate minority of voters.

What does this have to do with Gavin Newsom? Well, in the 2018 Gubernatorial Election, in which Newsom was elected, over 64% of registered voters cast a ballot—the highest percentage since 1982. And in that election, Newsom received nearly 62% of the vote—an overwhelming victory. By all accounts, the 2018

Gubernatorial Election was one of the most representative elections in recent California history and Newsom won with an almost unheard-of level of support from Californians. When he was elected, Newsom was only a few points less popular than baseball, America's favorite pastime.

Fast forward to 2020 and a small minority of California voters, comprising about 13.5% of the 2018 electorate managed to force a recall of a popular governor. This hyper-polarized group, which had been trying to recall Newsom since 2019, is now attempting to subvert democracy and elect a candidate with extremely narrow appeal.

To make matters worse, the rules of the recall election mean that if the governor is recalled, his replacement will be the candidate with the most votes regardless of whether they earn a majority of support from voters. There is no runoff. With over 40 candidates in the race, it's likely that a replacement governor could be elected with less than 20% of the vote. Add on to that the simple fact that recall elections historically

SEE NEWSOM RECALL, Page 12

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# New all-purpose sport field at Logan Heights Boys & Girls Club

Over the last 18 months, many kids have been isolated due to COVID, spending more time playing video games than playing outside with friends. Now, after being closed as a result of the pandemic, The Boys & Girls Club of Greater San Diego - William J. Oakes Branch in Logan Heights reopened to its members on Aug. 30.

As part of its activities this month to celebrate that reopening, the Club administration joined donors, UnitedHealthcare and W2W Sport, to officially dedicate the brand new multi-use sports field, made possible by a \$20,000 gift from UnitedHealthcare and built by W2W. Some lucky members had their first opportunity to try out the field in person with team defenders Elijah Martin, Josh Yaro and Grant Stoneman from the San Diego Loyal Soccer Team.



Michelle Malin, Senior Vice President of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego - William J Oakes Branch cutting the ribbon on the new sports court. Left to Right: Scott Bohrer, W2W Sport; Raul Herrera, UnitedHealthcare; Elijah Miller, SD Loyal Soccer Team; Malin; Grant Stoneman, San Diego Loyal; Josh Yaro, San Diego Loyal; and Monique Knight, UnitedHealthcare.

"The sports court will help kids develop a passion for sports and build healthy habits as children that will hopefully remain with

them as adults," said Michelle Malin, Senior Vice President Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego. "Making memories, playing on this field — that's going to go a long way toward encouraging kids to enjoy our club's offerings. We appreciate all UnitedHealthcare and W2W have done to make this a reality."

The reopening is a milestone for the club. When the pandemic began, the club had to quickly adapt, and it did so by gearing up to help children and families impacted by the health crisis. More children and families needed social service support as well as a place where children could use computers for remote learning. These needs drove much of the Club's effort to seek private support.

"The facility will provide a safe and modern space for boys and girls to be physically active," adds Raul Herrera, UnitedHealthcare of California. "Investing in our communities, helping kids develop a love of sport and exercise, and supporting activities that help people live healthier lives is all part of UnitedHealthcare's efforts to be a valued community partner."



The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego - William J. Oakes Branch dedicated a new multi-sports field made possible by a \$20,000 donation from UnitedHealthcare and installed by W2W Sport. Kids from the Club got a chance to try out the new court with members of the San Diego Loyal Soccer team including defenders Elijah Martin, Josh Yaro and Grant Stoneman. (Photos courtesy of Sandy Huffaker/UHC)

## Alleged killer of teacher faces life sentence

By Neal Putnam

A special circumstance charge of lying in wait has been filed against a man suspected of killing a teacher in North Park who had been dating the man's ex-girlfriend.

This means prosecutors may either seek the death penalty or a life term in prison without parole against Jesse Milton Alvarez if he is convicted of first-degree murder of Mario Fierro, who taught at Cathedral Catholic High School.

Alvarez, 31, is suspected of waiting an hour outside the home of Fierro, 37, who was shot six times on Feb. 1. Fierro was found at 7:10 a.m. on the sidewalk of Kansas Street near Monroe Ave.

Fierro and another teacher who previously dated Alvarez

were engaged. Fierro was also a football coach and school officials canceled classes for three days after learning of his slaying.

Alvarez allegedly used his brother's car to travel to North Park to kill Fierro. Police arrested Alvarez at his Serra Mesa home about 13 hours later and seized a handgun that is suspected of being the murder weapon, according to prosecution documents filed in San Diego Superior Court.

Alvarez's ex-girlfriend ended their relationship in Sept., 2019. She filed a temporary restraining order after he repeatedly called her and went to her home. A judge declined to issue an order against Alvarez, so she changed her phone number, moved and deleted her social media

accounts, according to prosecution documents.

Alvarez has pleaded not guilty to all charges and a preliminary hearing has been set for Oct. 18.

The District Attorney's office filed court documents asking a judge not to set any bail because it is a capital case and for public safety. A judge agreed not to set any bail and Alvarez remains in the George Bailey Detention Facility.

Attorney Kerry Armstrong, who represents Alvarez, said Tuesday he and another attorney are "still going through a ton" of police reports and other information about the case and could not comment.

—Neal Putnam is a local court reporter. Reach him at [nealputnam@gmail.com](mailto:nealputnam@gmail.com).

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## Fun with the Little Italy Urban Challenge

### Little Italy News

By **CHRISTOPHER GOMEZ**



This year, in conjunction with the Little Italy Food Hall, the Little Italy Association is welcoming the Little Italy Urban Challenge, a fun-filled community scavenger hunt around our beautiful neighborhood.

Taking place on Sunday, September 26 at the Piazza della Famiglia, the scavenger hunt kicks off at 1 p.m. with live music from 1-3 p.m., perfect for you to have an activity just after finishing Sunday brunch. Once the answers are revealed at 3 p.m., we invite you to stick around the Piazza to enjoy some live music until 5:30 p.m. alongside drinks and delicious bites from our local restaurants to really end your weekend on a high note!

For the scavenger hunt, teams of two will receive clues and search around the neighborhood for answers hidden among the streets and local businesses. The scavenger hunt will be between Ash to Hawthorne, and Kettner to Columbia. Teams will have two hours to search around Little Italy for the answers and take a

selfie with the answer. Teams are allowed to use their phones to assist them but the participants in each team must stick together. The first three teams to answer the most correctly in the shortest time are the winners. Some clues are easy, some are hard. It will be a true test to see how well you know Little Italy!

Tickets include a branded shirt for each participant. First prize team receives a \$200 Food Hall gift card, second place receives a \$100 gift card, third place receives a \$50 gift card, plus additional prizes from local businesses including the Crack Shack, Theory Hair Studio, Urban Boutique Hotel and much more! Tickets can be purchased for \$40.

Make sure to stop by and show just how much you know Little Italy! We can't wait to see you!

For the latest updates on Little Italy, please visit us at [LittleItalySD.com](http://LittleItalySD.com) or follow us on Instagram @LittleItalySD, Twitter @LittleItalySD and Facebook @LittleItalySD.

—Christopher Gomez has been Little Italy's District Manager since 2000. Reach him at [chris@littleitalysd.com](mailto:chris@littleitalysd.com).



The Little Italy fountain (Photo courtesy Little Italy BIA)

## Fall into the charm of Amici House this month

### Little Italy Culture & Heritage

By **TOM CESARINI**



With things finally opening up in our communities, we are happy to see people out and about (taking prop-er precautions, of course). At Amici House, we are excited to reopen and bring back our diverse programs. This month provides a variety of events and initiatives for you to engage with your community and give back to our causes that benefit the neighborhood. Stop by when you are in the neighborhood to say hello, and get a cup of fresh coffee or tea from our caffè. We look forward to seeing you!

### ALL THE HAPPENINGS IN SEPTEMBER

#### September 16 | Musicaramba! International Music Series

Our monthly music series features a variety of talented local performers spanning multiple music genres. This month we are proud to feature opera singers Rosario Monetti and Victoria Robertson.

Get your tickets at [convivio.yap-sody.com](http://convivio.yap-sody.com).

#### September 18 | il Club Chiacchiere (Chat Club)

Our newest program offers a winning combination of conversation (in Italian, of course), vino, and appetizers. Join us for lively talk among old friends or make some new ones while you're at it and indulge in the beauty of the Italian language. Register at [conviviosociety.org](http://conviviosociety.org).



Renowned opera performers Rosario Monetti and Victoria Robertson appear at Amici House this month. (Photo courtesy of Convivio)

#### September 21 | Our Take on Taco Tuesday

Get out and mingle under the stars in our idyllic park setting while enjoying some great beverages and even bet-ter street tacos, which provide a nice international flair to our mix of cultural programming. Live Latin jazz rounds out a great evening with friends old and new. Registration information will be posted soon on our site.

#### Join the Caritàzza Coffee Club

Amici House is also home to Caffè Caritàzza, our nonprofit espresso bar that helps to raise funds for our pro-grams. We also partner with Washington Elementary School in Little Italy to help raise funds for the school's

unsheltered and at-risk youth. Now we have a way you can get a great cup of coffee while supporting our com-munity efforts: The Caritàzza Coffee Club. For one low, monthly subscription, you can get your fill of our fine espresso or tea drinks. Join at [caffecaritàzza.org](http://caffecaritàzza.org).

#### Join the Little Italy Social Club

Want to enjoy our programs and events as a member and get amazing benefits? How about complimentary and discounted drinks? Discounts on admission? VIP seating? Learn more at [conviviosociety.org](http://conviviosociety.org) and get in on all the fun goings-on as a member of our club.

—Tom Cesarini is the chief leadership officer and founder of Convivio and also serves as the Italian Honorary Consul in San Diego. Convivio provides advocates, donors, and volunteers the organizational capacity to ad-vance Italian cultural identity, preserve Italian cultural-heritage assets, cultivate community and fellowship, and foster multicultural awareness through the humanities. Visit: [conviviosociety.org](http://conviviosociety.org) | Follow: @conviviosociety.



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# Gregg Neuman celebrates \$3 billion in deals, 40 years in real estate

By Kendra Sitton

Longtime real estate agent Gregg Neuman recently celebrated two milestones in his storied career: being an agent for 40 years and passing \$3 billion total in home sales. He has been in the business so long that he has helped three generations in the same family buy or sell homes. Editor Kendra Sitton spoke with Neuman about how he got started and where he is going.

### How did you initially get into real estate?

Well in 1981 I was tending bar and I don't have a great deal of education, [only a] high school education, but I knew that the most

amount of money to be made is in sales. And I didn't want to sell a whole lot of shoes, and it was hard to sell airplanes. I decided I would try real estate.

And so in 1981, which was an interesting time to start because like two weeks after I got my license the FHA standard interest rates went to 18% after the VA went to 16.58% — the highest it's ever been — and I didn't know you couldn't sell in that market and all the other agents were tearing their hair out. I was fortunate that I went forward and did it and had a great time. And then I bought a real estate office a month later, I should've known, should have been warned the woman sold me the office with no money down. But she let me use

her broker's license, and so I had to learn how to sell quickly.

I was selling more than all those [more experienced] agents combined — there were 17 agents in the office. I was outselling all of them. In my first eight months, I closed 10 transactions and it didn't even add up to a million dollars, which was pretty amazing because you could buy a house in San Diego for \$70,500.

And so from that point on I was tending bar at night, and working real estate during the day because I was getting accustomed to having food with my meals. And what happened was eventually I just got too busy to go on tending bar and then it was only tending bar two nights. People would come in to the bar, I'd put a napkin down say 'hi, want to buy a house?' and they say 'no, it's a cocktail.'

I did my first business with people who are underserved, still are underserved — bartenders, waitresses, hairdressers — because people rely a lot of their income on tips or it's a little harder to get them qualified and documented.

And so then eventually I sold that office. I actually merged with Red Carpet Realty. People thought I sold rugs. But then eventually I merged my office with a Century 21 office. And that also didn't have a lot of people in it.

Eventually I figured out the smartest thing to do was just to be an agent on my own. And then in 2000 I decided it was time to locate and move Downtown because there were no offices downtown, especially in the Gaslamp district. I opened my office in the Gaslamp District. Two weeks later 9/11 happened. Business was a little slow, but then I've been here ever since.

And then the Gaslamp district got concerned about there being too many real estate offices in the Gaslamp district because immediately eight or nine more followed me into the Gaslamp area and they would lose their charm of restaurants, retail and things like that so they passed the rule that real estate offices could be grandfathered in, but nobody could open anything else now that wasn't a restaurant or commercial on the ground floor. When the market turned badly in 2008, all the rest of the offices shut down and I'm it — the only office permitted in the Gaslamp district on the ground, which ironically is the most visited spot in all of San Diego. That's kind of how I ended up here after starting 40 years ago. Time management is why I'm really down here because it's much easier to work because there's over 15,000 people but they're straight up in the air and like a mile and a half versus how many homes,



Gregg Neuman (Photos courtesy Neuman and Neuman)

you'd have to go visit to get 15,000 homes in Rancho Bernardo, in outlying areas.

**One thing that stood out to me is you initially served this underserved populations in real estate and now you have a lot of these really large deals. What would a typical client be today?**

One of the things when you start in real estate, your only real clients, unless you're fortunate, are buyers because you're too new in the market. Nobody really wants to trust you with their listing. So you work buyers. The challenge with working buyers of course is that buyers, you can only sell to them while they're sitting next to you. Especially when I started out, because we didn't have all these things that they have today.

But my clients now are mainly sellers, because I specialize in working the seller population. I do

SEE NEUMAN, Page 11



Neuman delivering a first pitch



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# Neuman

CONTINUED FROM Page 10

a lot of advertising for sellers because the listings work 24 hours a day. While I'm in bed, my listings are around the world.

I still get just as big a kick out of first-time homebuyers, although I don't do it a lot anymore, but it's still fun to see that people ... the excitement in somebody's eyes when they get their first home. And it's always a great pleasure to see the enhancement for a seller to be able to move into the next phase of their life, whether they're buying something else, whether they're relocating, whether they're downsizing, whatever they're doing, that's still very rewarding. I mean I can do anything now. I don't need to work, but real estate still offers that immense satisfaction that comes from helping people thrive after 40 years.

## Since COVID hit, we've seen a very, very tight market, what's your insider's perspective on, the changes in real estate in the past year-and-a-half?

Well, it actually was good for the business in some ways because it taught a lot of us that we can work remotely and some of the inefficiencies are being ironed out of the marketplace because of the fact that you can have better viewing properties online and eliminate a lot without hauling somebody around. It has created a change in the marketplace where a lot

more people working from home so they need more space. They were stuck together for a year and a half so there's a lot of babies coming along. They were stuck together for a year and a half so there's some divorces coming in. And then there's people that realize that being stuck a year and a half, the house wasn't big enough.

It was actually good for the market — the scarcity of the inventory and the low interest rates is what's driving this market right now. But I don't think we're going to see that change. I don't think we're going to have a huge downturn crash like we had in 2008. I mean, the prices are high, but we live in the finest city in the United States, best weather. People [could] get a great house in Arizona for a lot less. And I tell them 'but every morning when you wake up, you're in Arizona.'

I think the other thing that the COVID did for us is... it was kind of a culling. It took a lot of the agents that were not doing any business out of the marketplace. That's always good for the market because the people who remain are generally more professional and able to provide better representation for the buyers and sellers than the people who are just drifting through because they have a license and they're part time or their spouse works or something like that.

## What are you most proud of in your career?

The thing that has helped me the most in 40 years was being

adaptive. When I started when interest rates were 18%, I was able to adapt to the market. That became a loan that was called a Fannie Mae blend where they blended interest rates. That gave me an interest rate of between 5 and 12%. So I think adapting to the market has always been my strongest suit.

I remember in '94 to '95, the builders, couldn't sell their houses because the people couldn't sell their houses so I created a builder trading program where you could bring your house to the builder and he would buy your house if you bought his. And instead of giving it a discount on his house, he would give me a discount that I could apply to the less expensive houses. And we did 550 of those from 1994 to '96 when the market was dead for everybody else. That's the F word in real estate, flexibility.

I think probably the most amazing thing is when you sell \$3 billion worth of property. At this point, it's a big deal to me because I've done it over 40 years and it took 6,700 houses to get there. Now, my average price house sells at a million dollars so I'm going to get passed up very quickly, but it's gonna take somebody a long time to sell 6,700.

I've averaged 165 houses a year

for 40 years. The average real estate agent in the state of California does two deals a year. So, if you do 10 deals a year the brokers will fall over themselves to get you.

There are a few enormous producers but there aren't a lot of them. When I started, the houses were \$70k. You can sell 10 houses and that's about a million dollars worth of business. It's pretty astounding.

## How many more years do you think you have in this business and what keeps you there?

Well, I'm very healthy. I am 75 years old. We have a house in Venice, Italy. It's still doing the deals. I still like coming to work. I don't like golf. I think it's a good walk ruined. I'm not a fisherman. If I travel for a couple of weeks, I'm ready to come home with my own bed.

I just enjoy the business. It's what keeps me young — working with people and dealing with people. It keeps me invigorate. I know too many people who have retired. Shortly thereafter they seem to fade away. I don't have another passion other than selling real estate and doing real estate. That is my passion.

I'm very fortunate I have a wife who understands that. She goes to Venice for two months and then comes home for two



Gregg Neuman (Photos courtesy Neuman and Neuman)

months. During the two months she's gone, I work like a maniac. She comes back, I spend some time together with her.

We are helping people still and we are making money. It can't be any better this year: we've already closed over 150 transactions. And again, when you're asking about how COVID affected the market, my average sale price last year was \$700,000. Now my average sale price is a million dollars.

I think anybody who knows me knows that real estate is my life. It's what I truly, truly enjoy. I don't want to boast, but I'm in an enormously successful career. There are people who probably have sold more money than I have but I don't think anybody's sold more houses.

—Reach Kendra Sitton at [kendra@sdnews.com](mailto:kendra@sdnews.com).



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- Voting in-person?** In-person voting locations will be open across the county for four days, Saturday, Sept. 11 – Tuesday, Sept. 14.
- Take advantage of early voting:**
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## Elephant

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

San Diego Police officers were called to the zoo by the zoo itself and Navarrete was arrested without incident. Police said the man "wanted to take a photo with the African bull elephant."

The zoo said the elephant habitat "is home to our Asian and African elephants." They said the man went through "multiple barriers, purposely and illegally trespassed into a habitat" around 4:20 p.m.

—Neal Putnam is a local court reporter.

## Newsom Recall

CONTINUED FROM Page 6

have a much lower turnout than general elections and you have a recipe for minority rule in California.

Some recall-sympathizers may see this election as a chance to "balance the government" and place a Republican in the Governor's Office, but such arguments distort the word "balance" to such a degree as to be meaningless. Californians have already spoken. We made the overwhelming decision to elect a Democrat as governor in an incredibly high-turnout election. Recalling a popular governor in a low-turnout election and replacing him with a fringe candidate who fails to impress even a majority of voters in that election isn't balancing anything; it's frankly destabilizing.

Republicans in California (and nationally) have learned that they cannot win elections by actually appealing to a majority of voters. Instead, they abuse the rules of our democracy to subvert the will of the people and institute minority rule. We've seen this same tactic play out across the country and California is next. Republicans know that their only real shot at power is through these kinds of shenanigans. Instead of adapting to reality and adopting a message with broad voter appeal, Republicans resort to subverting the democratic process itself.

California needs a strong, visionary, forward-looking governor who focuses on the problems of inequality, climate change and homelessness. For his faults, Gavin Newsom has pushed forward policies and legislation to tackle these issues. By-and-large his prospective replacements are either Trumpists, QAnon supporters, or other opportunists looking to take advantage of a glitch in the system.

We should never have gotten to this point, but unfortunately we have — thrust here by a persistent and virulent hatred of a popularly-elected governor. The way out of this predicament is simple: vote. Vote no on the recall of Gavin Newsom and we can avert the subversion of our democracy. If you haven't already, open the ballot you got in the mail, vote no, and mail it back. Then tell others to do the same.

It's never been so easy to avert a catastrophe. Vote.

—Brian Schrader is a local business owner, software developer, writer and San Diego resident living in Normal Heights.







## ECB development

CONTINUED FROM Page 13

His family was interned during World War II in Arizona. When the Japanese people returned to San Diego, many could only find places in the old redevelopment areas in Southeast San Diego.

"When it goes back to eminent domain and these old redevelopment areas, and why they're so near and dear to my heart, is because of cycles of different pain that occurred in those areas," he explained.

City Heights remains housing stressed to this day. The finished project will be reserved for people earning between 50 and 60% of the area median income. The units come in a variety of sizes from studios to three-bedroom apartments. Many affordable housing projects only include small units so multi-bedroom options will be particularly helpful for low- and very low-income families according to Sarah Lyman, Executive Director of Alliance

Healthcare Foundation. Its location next to public transit foregoing the need for a car is also attractive to families.

"Housing is one of the primary social determinants of health and it's critical that we continue to grow as an active contributor to affordable housing solutions," Lyman said.

The project will receive funding from the city, county and housing commission. Bridgedeck Partners particularly credited current County Chair Nathan Fletcher and Councilmember Stephen Whitburn for their support. Past city councilmembers Georgette Gomez and Chris Ward helped with the development as well.

"San Diego needs to have affordable homes for everyone. This project is a perfect example of what we need—housing that is accessible to transit and financially within reach for low-income and working San Diegans. I look forward to seeing more projects like this come to District 3 and throughout all of San Diego so that we can ensure housing



Grand opening of the Bus Rapid Center Line in early 2018 located on the decks above the I-15 next to Bridgedeck project. (Photos courtesy Bridgedeck Partners)



Architectural rendering made in 2020 of the project.

opportunities for all," Whitburn said in a statement.

A challenge in creating affordable housing is the many types of funding that need to be managed – from tax credits to affordable housing deals to grants and loans. Permits and government approval processes add another layer of difficult.

"It's like playing seven-dimensional Sudoku," said Laruen Grattan, co-founder and chief community officer of Mission Driven Finance.

"We were delighted to be able to use finance as a tool for change



Grand opening of the Bus Rapid Center Line in early 2018 located on the decks above the I-15 next to Bridgedeck project.

and help structure this \$2 million engagement combined across our firm, the San Diego foundation and Alliance Healthcare Foundation in order to get that crucial early capital that allows senior lenders, construction financing, permit financing time to come forth," she continued. "Because we want to see great projects like this – hundreds of units of affordable housing right on a transit corridor."

While the path to creating affordable housing projects is still extremely complicated and difficult, recent state laws and changes in local that allow dense infill housing near public transit were

essential for having this project move forward.

"I don't know if the work is going to be easier in terms of getting projects approved but at least there's a pathway now. And there's projects that you can build by right now that you could never ever build two or three years ago," Iwashita said.

With those approvals and permits as well as full funding, 190 more low- and very low-income individuals and families will be able to have affordable housing within the next few years.

—Reach Kendra Sitton at [kendra@sdnews.com](mailto:kendra@sdnews.com).



A rendering of the apartment building that can accommodate 190 individuals and families.



## Quick tips to improve your home internet experience



As more households are working and learning from home these days, here are some easy tips to help improve your internet experience.

**Use audio instead of video for virtual meetings.** Video calls can be a strain on your service. Consider video for must-

see moments. Or turn the camera on only when you're speaking.

**Doorbell cameras and pet cams.** When you're home, lower the resolution on doorbell cams and pet cams. You can still effectively monitor the areas. And turn off pet cams if you're at home.

**Get a 360 View.** Cox Panoramic Wifi gives you wall to wall coverage, including those dead zones in your home. If you have Cox Panoramic Wifi, use the Cox Panoramic Wifi app to:

- Manage devices on your home internet;
- Pause the wifi on other devices (like the kids' iPad) when you're on important video calls.

**Computer Virus Protection.** Computer viruses and malware can slow down your internet. Use the free Cox Security Suite Plus powered by McAfee to protect your home computer. Cox Panoramic Wifi customers can turn on Advanced Security in the Cox Panoramic Wifi app.

**Secure your wifi.** Password protect your home wifi to keep out unauthorized users.

**Location, location, location.** Your internet experience may be slowed down if your wifi router or modem is in a bad location. Remember to:

- Elevate your modem or router on a shelf or tall piece of furniture (wifi signals travel outward and downward);
- Avoid placing your router near a microwave, mirror or fish tank, which can affect the signal.

For more tips, visit [www.cox.com](http://www.cox.com).





# E Street plans

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

Associates, a civil engineering and transportation planning firm, and JT Barr, principal, and Lindsay DeCeault, project manager of Schmidt Design Group, a landscape architecture and planning firm. Both firms are based in San Diego.

The project was managed by the City of San Diego's Urban Division and funded with a SANDAG Smart Growth Incentive Program grant written for the city by Civic San Diego. The proposed concepts for the greenway are a culmination of ideas presented to the community at public workshops.

The masterplan can be utilized by the city to facilitate the construction of the corridor on a block-by-block basis as development and funding opportunities arise.

Said Brian Schoenfisch, the new Urban Division Deputy Director, "Greenways are an essential component of the Downtown Community Plan, helping the City achieve its climate goals by encouraging more people to get out of their cars and explore the City on foot and bicycle. Implementation of a network of downtown greenways will transform underutilized areas of the public right-of-way into places to build community, encourage healthier lifestyles, support our local economy, and fill our downtown with life."

The E Street Greenway is located between Horton Plaza and Interstate 5, starting on 4th Ave. and ending on 16th St. It is divided into two segments: The East Village District and the Gaslamp District. Each district's unique flavor will be honored through streetscape and urban design.



E Street will be pedestrian friendly. (Renderings courtesy Schmidt Design Group)



One of six designated Green Streets in the Downtown San Diego Mobility Plan, the greenway intersects with the 8th Ave. Greenway, the 14th St. Greenway and two-way cycle tracks along 6th Ave. and Park Blvd. Together, these will establish balanced modes of transportation for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

The western two blocks of E St. between 4th Ave. and 6th Ave. celebrate the history of the Gaslamp Quarter while providing an expanded hardscape to accommodate nightlife crowds.

The remaining nine blocks along E St., between 6th Ave. and 16th St., alternate between social spaces and park spaces as the Greenway traverses East Village. Each block will include outdoor gathering and dining responding to the evolving nature of urban redevelopment and the proposed adjacent commercial uses.

While all 11 blocks will be unified by the plant palette, furnishings and interpretive signage, each block will have unique elements that reflect the history

and character of the block and the neighborhood.

Plants play an essential role in the overall experience of the greenway. A proposed double row of street trees will provide shade, help improve air quality, reduce the heat-island effect, and increase the aesthetic experience. The shrub and groundcover palette includes drought-tolerant species having a range of scales, textures, and flowers. In addition, planted stormwater filtration basins will be incorporated to help filter stormwater run-off.

Furnishings will be consistent throughout the Greenway, including benches, moveable seating, urban rockers, bike racks, bike repair stations, play components, trash receptacles, raised planters and signage.

Artwork will be incorporated throughout, including permanent and temporary public art installations as funding becomes available.

Pedestrian experience and safety are high on the plan's priority list. Interpretative signage

will be provided throughout the Greenway and may include way-finding—a means of informing pedestrians the location of their points of interest in the vicinity, such as parks and recreation facilities.

The pedestrian experience will also be enhanced by removing on-street parking on the north side of the street, traffic-calming measures, programmed amenities and enhanced plantings.

The design of street crossings will provide the maximum amount of security for the pedestrian. Natural landscape areas will serve as a buffer between the street and sidewalk and bulb-outs at the intersections, increasing pedestrian safety.

The three eastbound travel lanes along the Greenway segment of E St. will be modified to a single lane in each direction to be consistent with the alignment east of 13th St.

This Greenway increases the space for seating, play, discovery, dog runs and landscape while emphasizing adult and children's

play. Secondary garden trails and interactive sculptural elements will also be found along the corridor.

Explained landscape architect JT Barr, the concept of play is integral to the overall Greenway experience, offering robust play opportunities that reflect the diversity of the city's residents and visitors. They create a continuum of play, ranging in type, activity level, scale, function and aesthetic. This rhythmic composition encourages users to navigate the entirety of the Greenway and discover all that it has to offer.

To see a completed block, click here [bit.ly/3zzuGxT](https://bit.ly/3zzuGxT).

—Delle Willett has been a marketing and public relations professional for over 30 years, advising clients including the San Diego Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy and others with an emphasis on conservation of the environment. She can be reached at [dellewillett@gmail.com](mailto:dellewillett@gmail.com).

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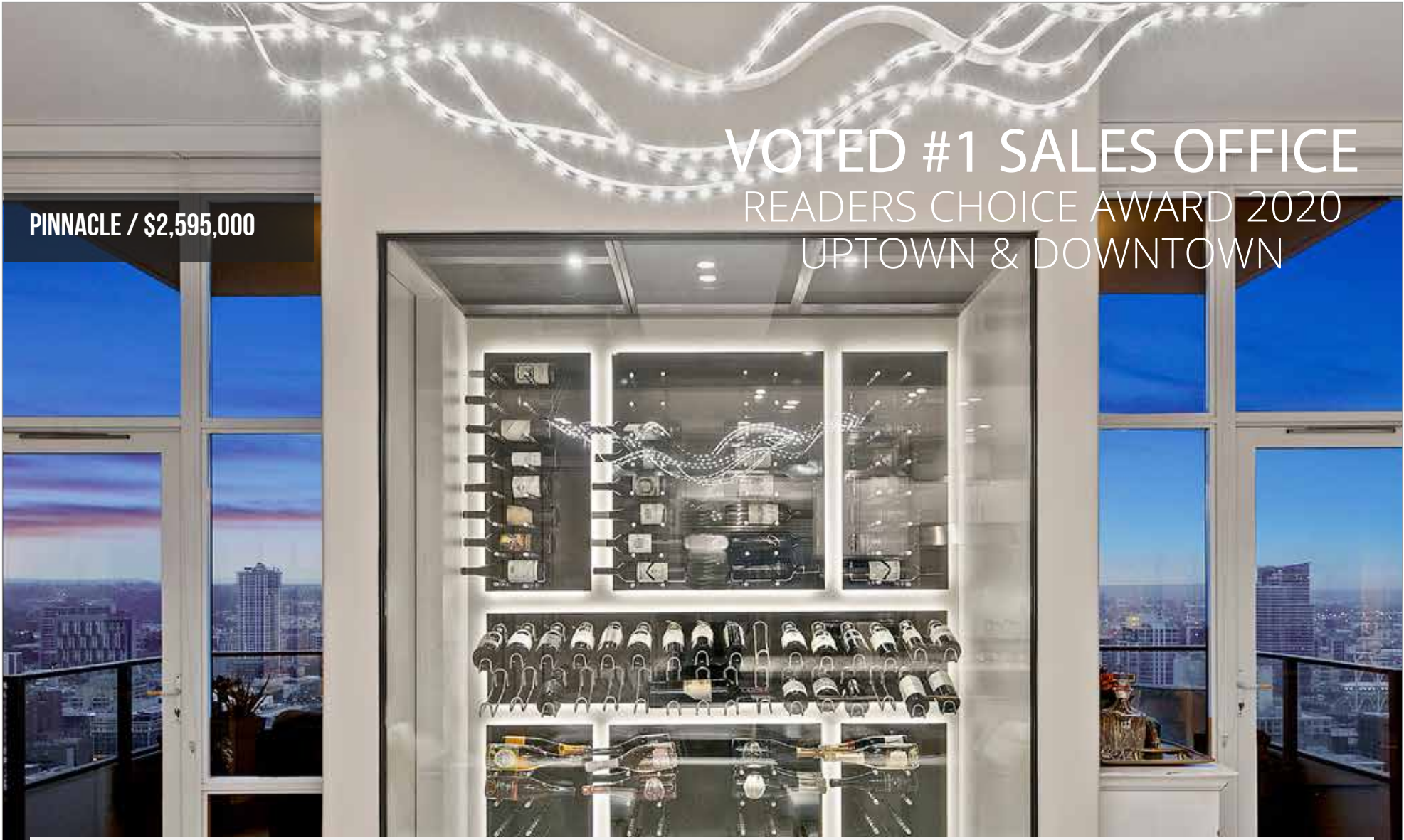


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