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La Mesa's HOME program is working to get people off the streets and into some form of housing. (Photo by Laura Lothian)

Bringing HOME to the City of La Mesa

By ELAINE ALFARO

According to San Diego County's Regional Task Force On Homelessness (RTFH), "The 2022 Point-in-Time Count found no less than 8,427 individuals experiencing homelessness across San Diego County, a 10% increase from 2020."

This uptick in the number of people experiencing homelessness hasn't resulted in a drastic increase in La Mesa. La Mesa's Point-in-Time count indicated La Mesa had 52 un-sheltered individuals in 2020. In 2022, the count reported 53 un-sheltered individuals. However, the looming

threat of increasing housing costs has made an impact on the community.

Deanne Ross, business owner of Act II in downtown La Mesa, said she's seen the presence of homelessness near her business: "It's an ongoing problem and it's everywhere."

Recently, La Mesa City Councilmember Laura Lothian said the council received an email regarding a need for support with housing.

"We received an email last week from a woman who has been renting for four years and is getting

Book closes on busy 2022 in La Mesa area

By DAVE THOMAS

As La Mesans and those near-by welcomed in 2023, there was much to look back on in regards to 2022.

From people looking for more normalcy in the COVID era to San Diego State University celebrating its 125th anniversary and more, a lot occurred over the last 12 months.

Here is a snapshot of the last year and some of the highlights that we touched upon.

JANUARY

A winter surge of COVID cases led local schools, businesses and others to adjust more how they went about their daily affairs.

Several universities and schools in the area noted they would go back to virtual classes to kick off the 2022 spring semester.

• A February preliminary hearing was set in the death of a promising young medical student, a victim of a hit and run in La Mesa.

Jok "Michael" Joseph, Jok, 18, was struck by a vehicle on Feb. 27, 2021, on Bancroft Drive just south of Golondrina Drive in La Mesa. The La Jolla Country

Day School grad (2020) died in an area hospital six days later from his injuries.

Scott Douglas Satterfield, 61, was taken into custody on April 8 and pled not guilty to a felony charge of hit and run in which someone died (see more below in March).

• Longtime La Mesa resident **Alma Jaeger** celebrated her 104th birthday on Jan. 14.

A Chicago native, Jaeger and her husband, Edward, and 10 children relocated to San Diego in 1957.

FEBRUARY

Students at both Grossmont High School and Helix Charter High School showed their love for fellow students and the community.

At GHS, a group of seniors under the banner of a program called Peer Listening have been supporting the school community with any arising social or emotional needs.

Krista Santoro, co-advisor for Peer Listening, noted there were many needs for students as they returned to campus in the wake of COVID and other

SEE **YEAR IN REVIEW**, Page 2



It was a busy year on the SDSU campus as the school celebrated its 125th anniversary. (Courtesy photo)

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NEIGHBORING COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS



No criminal charges to be filed in alleged 2021 SDSU rape case. How do some SDSU students feel about the decision? Pick up a copy of the January College Times Courier issue to read more.

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Year in review

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

matters. “Not only do these students meet one-on-one with students needing to talk to someone and host meditations with students in conflict, but also these seniors look for any way they can to affect the school community as a whole,” Santoro stated.

The peer listeners crafted more than 400 heart grams and hosted music at lunch where they handed out the free heart cards to any student who wanted to spread kindness. The group also hosted a door decorating contest. Each participating teacher was provided a quote related to kindness for the theme.

Meantime, a group of students at Helix were volunteering with the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program.

The efforts involves things such as transporting food to previously-unhoused senior citizens.

Helix students **Brayden Pape** and **Lauren Rainey** were among the students making the effort to help others.

Pape is a PATH San Diego volunteer and founder of PILT (PATH Interscholastic Leadership Team). Helix is tied to PATH through PILT and all projects for PATH at Helix are implemented through PILT. Rainey is PILT’s project director of kit projects.

“I get enjoyment from knowing that what we do is give people experiencing homelessness hope, put smiles on their faces, and provide them with necessary things all humans should have access to,” Rainey commented.

MARCH

It was a memorable season for the **Grossmont High girls’ water polo team**.

The Lady Foothillers were unbeaten in Grossmont Hills League action. They ended up ranked third in the Open section of CIF San Diego. While losing in the CIF Finals, the team made it the furthest any Grossmont Union high school team had gone before. They also went to states for the first time in the program’s history.

• La Mesa residents for the first time could take advantage of San Diego’s community choice aggregation program. The program from **San Diego Community Power (SDCP)** not only generates renewable power but could also lead to reduced electric bills over time.

La Mesa became one of five cities in the greater San Diego area to be part of the program (Imperial Beach, Encinitas, Chula Vista and the City of San Diego).

• Scott Satterfield pleaded guilty to felony hit and run in the La Mesa death of Jok “Michael” Joseph Jok.

Deputy District Attorney David Vallero said Satterfield faces a maximum sentence of four years in state prison at his April 7 sentencing.

APRIL

The celebration continues for **San Diego State University** as it celebrates 125 years of educating locals and those coming to the area to study.

SDSU dates back to 1897. That is when the San Diego Normal School was in a building in Downtown San Diego.

SDSU was set to graduate its 500,000th student this year during commencement ceremonies.

Among some famous students to attend SDSU are Tony Gwynn, Gregory Peck, Raquel Welch, Carl Weathers, Marshall Faulk, Kawhi Leonard, Art Linkletter and Marion Ross. Among those who’ve visited the campus over the years was President John F. Kennedy several months before his death in 1963.

• **Daniel Joseph Corona**, 62, pleaded guilty to gross vehicular manslaughter in the death of a worker at an adult daycare center in La Mesa. Corona crashed his SUV into the building. He was reportedly impaired at the time and under the influence of illegal drugs.

Braden Jockmyhn, 41, died as he worked in the Golden Life Center at 7373 University Avenue in La Mesa on July 28, 2021.

Corona was to face a maximum sentence of 12 years and four months in prison, according to Deputy District Attorney Hailey Williams.

MAY

It had been three years since Helix Charter High held a traditional prom.

This changed in 2022 as students approached a pandemic head on and came out on the other side smiling.

San Diego’s famous US Grant was the hotel setting as students took in the beautiful venue, music, food, photos and more. Among class officers in attendance and responsible for organizing the evening were **Owen Dahlkamp** (treasurer), **Claire Tran** (president), **Sienna Baird** (secretary), and **Jada Ferguson** (vice president).

• *La Mesa Courier* caught up with the three candidates running for the San Diego County Board of Supervisors Fourth District seat in the June 7 primary. The district is made up of La Mesa, Lemon Grove and a big portion of central San Diego including the College Area.

Incumbent **Nathan Fletcher** and challengers **Amy Reichert** and **Sidiqa Hooker** were on the ballot.

All three talked about the challenges facing area residents, businesses and more.

Fletcher (top vote getter) and Reichert finished one-two to square off in the November election.

JUNE

The celebration was on at **Helix Charter High School** as the students, staff and families rejoiced in the school’s 70th graduation.



The 49th La Mesa Oktoberfest was a big hit. A variety of activities and good food and drink pleased many people during the three-day event. (Courtesy photo)

It was the school’s largest graduating class ever with 566 students receiving degrees.

• **Neighboring school Grossmont High** also had reason to celebrate, with 471 graduates being recognized for all their hard work.

For 101 years, GHS students and staff have taken great pride in the traditions that surround graduation, many begun in its first decade. To date, some 39,000 have graduated from the school.

JULY

City Tacos founder **Gerry Torres** recently became a U.S. citizen.

Torres, originally from Mexico, moved to San Diego in 1992. He opened his first City Tacos in North Park in 2014. He later expanded to other areas including La Mesa.

• La Mesa’s **San Pasqual Winery** recently received five medals at the 2022 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition.

The area business took home one gold medal, three silvers, and one bronze medal.

Co-owner Mike McWilliams noted that the winery has always prioritized the customer experience at their tasting rooms in addition to training staff to emphasize customer service.

AUGUST

The City of La Mesa said it would partner with the **San Diego Regional Green Business Network** to offer a local green business certification program and implement the City’s Climate Action Plan (CAP) measures.

“The La Mesa Green Business Network is a great way for businesses in La Mesa to learn new ways to be more environmentally friendly and receive recognition for their efforts,” said Hilary Ego, La Mesa’s Environmental Program Manager.

New area businesses signing up for and completing certification with the program by Oct. 31 would reportedly be eligible to receive priority support and a \$500 cash or rebate incentive.

SEPTEMBER

La Mesa’s annual **Oktoberfest** celebration was set to get underway Sept. 30 and run through Oct. 2.

The 49th annual event attracts visitors from all over the area, offering plenty of events, attractions, music, great food and drink and more.

Pinner wants his artwork to tell a story



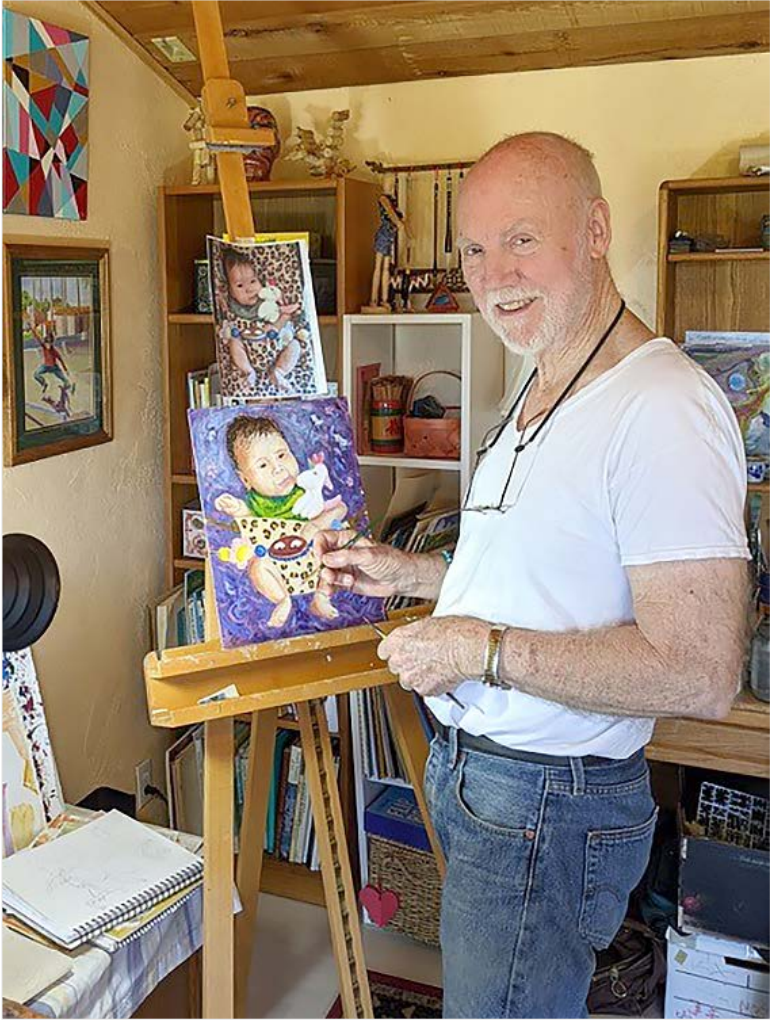
R.J. Pinner wants his artwork to tell a story.

He likes to include some narrative in his work. Pinner prefers to give a painting a sense of place and space, a context, a meaning.

In painting he experiences the joy of creating, the excitement of discovery. He says "I value the honor of sharing an auspicious subject, the satisfaction of completion, and a sense of connection with art history. I ask the question of any art. "Is there a statement about life?"

He regards realistic art as a form of bragging although he also imagines that it is an exercise in seeing clearly and carefully, and even honoring the beauty of objects. But above all, he seeks the meaning in his art to revive primitive images which summon the core understandings of life.

Pinner says, "Going to the source, I encounter images of birth, death, sex, conflict, comradeship, shelter and family within human society. In the wilderness there is bear, wolf, eagle, deer, raven, trees, cactus, snake, etc. all of whom own a place in life. These inner universal archetypes percolate up from the source of life – symbols of celestial energy. I must admit



R.J. Pinner experiences the joy of creating, the excitement of discovery.
(Courtesy photo)

I'm not a good realistic painter and for the reasons mentioned I'm not inclined to improve upon that."

Pinner serves as the website coordinator for the Foothills Art Association, a position he has held for several years.

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

Empty Nesters: FREE Special Report Reveals 9 Costly Mistakes to Avoid When Selling Your Home

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Homeless

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

ready to lose her rental unit. And she's in a panic. She goes: 'I can't afford rent. I can't afford a deposit.' She was a good tenant and an employed person," Lothian said.

In this woman's situation, Lothian said the city could assist her with finding help.

For individuals already facing the experience of homelessness, La Mesa's approach to helping people get resources and support has put HOME at the center.

La Mesa's Homeless Outreach and Mobile Engagement (HOME) initiative has navigated the nuanced issue of homelessness in La Mesa to recognize the gravity of this experience in San Diego.

In the first three quarters of 2022, the HOME team connected 34 people to permanent housing, and 15 people were connected to temporary housing in this timeframe, according to La Mesa Police Department Capt. Matt Nicholass.

Prior to the creation of HOME, Nicholass said the police department attempted to create services for unhoused individuals through a variety of initiatives.

"Some of these [initiatives] included uniformed officers bringing services to people themselves and officers assisting and riding with service providers," Nicholass said. "The results and levels of engagement achieved through these initiatives were minimal."

But in 2020, through a collaboration among the city of La Mesa, La Mesa Police Department and People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), the Homeless Action Plan and HOME were created.

"The reason we're doing [HOME] is two-fold: to not burden the police department with non-police calls and to have more effective help when it's a non-uniform person," Mayor Mark Arapostathis said. "We wanted to do this in a non-threatening way. Our HOME clinicians have been trained to do just that."

HOME is structured to dispatch trained specialists, including a full-time outreach worker and mental health clinician, to respond to non-emergency calls for service. HOME also facilitates contact with anyone suspected to be experiencing homelessness.

"HOME utilizes an evidence-based practice known as progressive engagement," Nicholass remarked. "This model allows the HOME Outreach worker to start by addressing things that clients identify as areas of need."

Since its inception in 2020, Nicholass reported that 67 people have been connected to permanent housing and 18 people were connected to temporary housing.

"The main approach is using clinicians to make contact and build trust," Arapostathis went on to say. "We looked at some best practices in other cities and we saw that it was working around the United States."

And according to local business owners, like Ross, the impact of HOME in La Mesa has been clear. Ross said that she usually contacts the police department for support once a week due to individuals sleeping in front of her business.

"It was truly a problem, to the point where sometimes we couldn't even walk in the front door of our business because people would be sleeping out in front of our businesses," Ross said.

"I think the La Mesa Police Department have done an amazing job over the last six months or so of identifying these people, of getting them help, of speaking with them one on one, and taking the necessary steps to put them in places where they need to be."

Nicholass explained via email that a key reason why homelessness is a prevalent issue in La Mesa is the lack of accessible housing.

"One of the most significant issues that clients face is the affordability of housing. Many of the clients that we work with are on a fixed income," Nicholass stated. "There are very few rental options for people with that kind of income. Another issue clients face is the dearth of short-term housing options in La Mesa and East County San Diego. The complexity and wait-times

associated with accessing physical & mental health treatment also continue to be a significant barrier for people living on the street."

Lothian brought up the MTS trolley, which, in her opinion, may be contributing to unhoused individuals moving throughout the county of San Diego.

"It's really clear to me that the homeless are using it to travel the county wherever they want to go," Lothian said.

Arapostathis said the trolley station is an atypical location for HOME to gauge because it's not a stationary location, and the resources HOME offers focuses on individuals located in La Mesa.

"The HOME program is dispatched based on the calls that we get," Arapostathis said. "If there's a person that someone has called about over and over again, we usually engage if we look at it and if it looks chronic, not maybe at the trolley station because that could be a fluid situation. Someone comes and they're there for a few hours. Then, they get back on the trolley, and they're gone. It's only when it's seen to be a chronic situation."

Ross mentioned that she's contacted the MTS because her store is located near the trolley station, and they've brought in officers when requested. Ross said that the La Mesa Police Department has also connected with the village association to offer support.

"I'm part of the village association, and the village association has had the police come talk to us and different things," Ross said. "It's been really good."

To stay connected with individuals located in La Mesa who are wanting support, the HOME team



While numbers tend to be smaller than other parts of the greater San Diego area, homeless individuals can be found on different streets in La Mesa. (Photo by Laura Lothian)

has access to the Coordinated Entry System (CES) which connects people to long-term housing options provided by non-profits throughout the San Diego region. Nicholass said the HOME team provides transportation to and from appointments related to jobs, housing and healthcare. The HOME initiative reported in their historical statistics that 18 rides were given in quarter four of 2020. In quarter two of 2022, HOME coordinated 96 rides for clients.

As the city and police department continue to address the multi-faceted experience of homelessness, Arapostathis said that he has goals for program growth in 2023 and continued support to help people transition into autonomous living.

"I've talked to the city manager. My goal is to increase the number of members of our HOME team," Arapostathis said. "The goal is always to decrease the number of people that are unsheltered. But, really, it's not just decreasing the number. We want to increase the number of people that we've helped become autonomous of aid — independent and not having to rely on any program or the government, where they can live their life without extra help."

Nicholass said there are a few ways people can get connected to HOME. La Mesa Police Department offers walk-in options on Mondays from 12 to 4 p.m. The HOME hotline can be reached at (619) 667-1475 to leave a message and/or set up an appointment with an outreach specialist.

Editor's note: La Mesa Courier did this story/ran these images to bring to light the problem of homelessness in La Mesa and the efforts being made by City officials to help those struggling to find affordable housing. No matter the communities we live in throughout the greater San Diego area, homelessness is an issue to some degree. We encourage everyone reading this story to think about how best to help those seeking to get off the streets and into a better living situation.



A fire a little over a week before Christmas destroyed one family's La Mesa home. (Courtesy photos)

La Mesans rally around Muldoon Family after pre-holiday fire

By DAVE THOMAS

For one La Mesa family, the true meaning of the holidays and how others help those in need shined brightly this past holiday season. A fire in the early morning hours last month at the Muldoon home near Maple and Homewood in La Mesa destroyed the family's residence shortly before the holidays. According to family member Jerry Jones, a friend of the Muldoons for some 25 years and a neighbor for 12, the blaze took the home that Monie Muldoon and her husband Michael had for some 40 years. As a result, family members started a GoFundMe account to help recover some items in the residence. The couple lost nearly everything and the residence will not be inhabitable for a long time to come. Jones went on to say that fire investigators believe the blaze began outside and quickly reached the home's man cave, likely on the wall where there was a fair amount of memorabilia. Investigators think there was an electrical issue of some sort. The couple, their three small dogs, and their bearded dragon were in the residence when the fire occurred. Michael was woken up by the cracking and popping of the roaring fire, and then the bedroom window breaking, which let the

flames rush into the home. The same cracking and popping that woke up Michael, also woke up Conor Muldoon, their youngest son who lives across the street. Before firefighters got on the scene, the son raced across the street to help his parents. With the power out and the house full of smoke, he had to guide his disoriented mom out of the burning residence. Monie Muldoon, who spent the night in the hospital with her husband following the fire, is no stranger to helping others. She has been a special education teacher at Highlands Elementary School in Spring Valley for more than two decades. She also started the Monie & Mo's food pantry right out of her residence to help in providing food for her hungry students. Lastly, the Muldoon's are known to have weekly Sunday dinners, which translated into their home was open to anyone wishing to visit, eat, relax and enjoy each other's company. According to Jones, the outpouring of support from the community has been quite uplifting. "Many folks have contributed to the GoFundMe and left comments like: 'Thank you for providing such a beautiful gathering place for so many years.', 'I loved the Sunday evening family gatherings when I visited San Diego.'" Jones noted.

Community members have also offered support through meal trains, animal boarding, and other supplies. "This is a tough time for Monie and Michael, but the love and support has been incredibly meaningful to them," Jones went on to say. "They are so grateful for all that the community has done. They want people to remember to always be thinking about how they can give back to the community. Not everyone in need has a GoFundMe. There are many organizations focused on those in need (like the Monie & Mo's food pantry) and any and all support from the community goes a very long way." The Muldoons want to not forget the firefighters from Heartland Fire & Rescue. "Two of our La Mesa stations responded to the fire, and the family has told me numerous time how amazing they all were. They helped prevent a much greater loss for Monie & Mo's pantry." As Jones noted, "We are so incredibly grateful that more wasn't lost that night. While we all lost this space, we were so much closer to losing these amazing people than we first realized. Please hug your loved ones, especially this holiday season." To help the Muldoon Family, visit: gofundme.com/f/monie-michael-muldoon-house-fire-recovery-fund.



Loved ones look over some of the damage left by the December fire.

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Words you cannot use in real estate

In the community

By LAURA LOTHIAN



Several years ago, the San Diego Association of Realtors flagged one of my listings for a speech violation.

They emailed me my listing with instructions to replace my unacceptable words with acceptable words. I read and re-read my description unable to find the word or sentence I wrote that was considered a speech violation. When I called SDAR for clarification, I was advised that writing, "Located next door to Kindercare" was my offense. Evidently, it was discriminatory to point out the logistical fact that a house was next door to a childcare facility.

I remember asking, "What if I had written the property was next door to a butcher shop, would I have been flagged for discriminating against vegetarians?" I recall not changing the description even under the threat of a fine because I thought the charge was absurd and censorious.

Since most real estate agents and people of their own volition and civility steer clear of

hot-potato words and phrases that clearly discriminate against people based on race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin, the public might be surprised to learn that A) the government, via the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, censors speech, B) Real estate agents could face fines as high as \$110,000 for using certain wrong words in their listings, and C) how innocuous many of the words are on HUD's Fair Housing 150-Banned Words/Phrases List, such as: Board Approval, Couple, Disabled, Employed, Empty Nesters, Exclusive, Executive, Families, Family, Golden Age, Grandmas House, Healthy, Independent Living, Job References, Kid, Kids, Lady, Male, Man, Mature, Membership Approval, Men, Newlyweds, No Children, No Play Area, Person, One Person, Perfect for Two, Prestigious, Private Community, Professional, Religious Landmarks (like near a church), Restricted, Retired, Retirees, Seasonal Worker, Senior, Single, Smoker, Student, Traditional, Two People, Wheelchair, Young, Youth.

Below are a couple of examples that could get agents, brokers,

home sellers, home renters, landlords, and property managers in trouble:

- Describing a five-bedroom house, next to a playground, on a cul-de-sac where dozens of kids live and play as "Family Friendly."

- Describing a home with wide corridors, bath & shower rails, and a ramp as "Ideal maneuverability for people with disabilities or in a wheelchair."

- Describing a small guest cottage as "Perfect for one person or two people."

This distinction is important: in the first two examples above, the agent is target-marketing the most likely buyers, like beer commercials during football games. Nothing in these ads suggests a single person would be barred from buying a five-bedroom house, or an able-bodied person barred from buying a house with ramps and rails. As for the third, I'm at a loss as to who or what is being discriminated against. Small space calls for a small number of occupants.

If an agent's or broker's policy is to disallow certain words and phrases, that is their right but censorship of the people by the government is a violation of the First Amendment (...Congress

shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech....) In our constitutional republic, a government list of banned words should not exist.

Words and phrases naturally go out of style, without the need for government intervention. When was the last time you heard a woman described as a hussy or harlot? Currently, many agents are distancing themselves from *Master Bedroom*, *Master Bath*, *His & Her Closets*, *Jack & Jill Bath*, and *Walking Distance*. A+ for cultural sensitivity but to be mandated to not say these words and then punished with fines if you do is not the American Way. Free Speech is the cornerstone of every right we have.

The Twitter Files demonstrate an alarming trend of growing government censorship and autocracy.

In my personal opinion, government censorship is never justified.

People should be free to say or write what they wish and personally benefit or suffer from their choices.

—Reach eXp Realtor and La Mesa City Councilwoman Laura Lothian at: Laura@LauraLothianRealestate.com.

Don't fall victim to unscrupulous contractors

DA Notes

By SUMMER STEPHAN



Are you thinking about having work done on your home that will cost more than \$500 in labor and materials?

If so, you should take precautions before hiring a contractor. Any person providing home improvements or repairs above the \$500 handyman exception is required to have a state issued license from the Contractors State License Board (CSLB).

The District Attorney's Office prosecutes criminal violations of the contractors' laws including unlicensed contractors, unauthorized use of someone else's license number, requesting more than a 10% deposit, failure to have workers' compensation insurance and even theft for failing to deliver services or materials that were paid for by the homeowner.

These crimes are especially common when it comes to

installing solar panels, building accessory dwelling units – commonly referred to as a granny flat – or building swimming pools. A pool is a wonderful addition to a Southern California property but be wary of phony contractors. Unscrupulous pool builders have been prosecuted for taking large cash payments upfront, digging a gigantic hole, and then abandoning the project. The homeowner is left without the pool they dreamed of and paid for nor the funds to finish what the crook started.

Here are some tips to help you be a savvy consumer and keep your homeowner dreams alive:

- Check the contractor's license out on the CSLB's webpage. Is the license active? If it is in a suspended status, stop and find someone else.

- When hiring a contractor without a license you take on the responsibility and risk as an owner-builder.

- Does the contractor have a business card? Does the name of the person you are dealing with

match the name associated with that license number?

- Check the personnel list on the license for additional qualified employees. Is the address of the construction business local?

- If there is a discrepancy between the business card, invoice, contract and the CSLB's webpage, call the business number listed on the CSLB page to confirm all parties are known to each other.

- A con artist will frequently use a name similar to a reputable construction firm and sometimes the unlicensed individual is former employee of the reputable firm.

- Check references. In San Diego you can also check the San Diego Superior Court filings for past civil and criminal cases.

- If the individual has no online presence, then that is also a possible red flag. Is it a new company, joint venture or new license? If so, ask how much experience the contractor has with your plans.

- Always get a minimum of three bids for any job. If the quote is too good to be true, ask why.

- Will the contractor be working alone or have employees? If there are employees check to see if there is an active workers compensation policy on file with the state under the contractor's license number.

- If you hire someone without active worker's compensation,

you may be responsible for any injuries that happen on your property.

- Licensed contractors are required to have a minimum \$25,000 surety bond.

- Legitimate contractors should not ask for more than a 10% deposit upfront.

Although this may seem like quite a bit of effort up front, it will save you time, money and heartache. Victims of unscrupulous contractors rarely recoup their financial losses from the criminals and always wish they had spent more time researching their contractor.

These crimes are not rare in California, the CSLB even maintains a "Most Wanted" list. If you suspect you have been the victim of construction fraud or an unlicensed contractor, report it to the CSLB by phone at 800-321-CSLB (2752) or online at: cslb.ca.gov.

As your District Attorney, I'm committed to increasing communication and accessibility between the DA's Office and the public in order to keep you safe. I hope these consumer and public safety tips have been helpful.

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

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Helix Charter High students, staff have busy start to 2023

**Helix Highlights**



By **LAUREN KNUTH**

It has been a busy start to 2023 for students and staff at Helix Charter High School.

Among some of the highlights:

CIF STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Congrats to Ella Giordano, CIFSDS Student-Athlete of the Year for the Grossmont Conference. Ella is a talented, top-tier volleyball player who led our team this season. On the court, she is a force at the net with a powerful kill and strong block. Off the court, she is a leader to her teammates and to her classmates through her hard work and dedication to the classroom. Ella's future is bright.

SPORTS MEDICINE GRANT

Kathryn Welch and the Sports Medicine / Patient Care Pathway received a \$14K grant from the Girard Foundation to assist students in obtaining Medical Assistant certifications for pathway completers. Students will complete the Medical Assistant Course at Helix and sit for the Nationally recognized Medical Assistant Exam. If they pass, they will be certified Medical Assistants and can immediately start working in doctors offices, hospitals, home health and several other

medical care facilities. This is a great career or introduction into further medical careers.

HELIX INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ASSOCIATION

The Helix Instrumental Music Association is hosting its 29th Annual Spring Gala on Thursday, March 9 at the Thursday Club in Point Loma. Enjoy an evening of dinner, drinks, live music, and live and silent auctions in support of instrumental music at Helix Charter High School. Tickets are now on sale here or through our website - helixinstrumental.org/. If you are able to donate an auction item, contact helixinstrumental@gmail.com.

BLOOD DRIVE

Helix is hosting a blood drive in partnership with the San Diego Blood Bank on Tuesday, Feb. 21 from 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. All blood types are greatly needed. With less than a one-day supply of most types, donate if you can. Students, families and community members are welcome to donate. Parking is available at 4200 Lowell St. and the Blood Mobiles will be parked by our gym. Visit mysdbb.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/76591 for more information.

STUDENT EQUITY ADVISORY TEAM

We have created a Student Equity Advisory council, where

a variety of students participate in two half-day learning summits covering the following topics: Student Connectedness, Student Voice, Identity, Implicit Bias and Microaggressions. Students also meet as a team throughout the year to provide feedback to Helix Leadership on school practices, policies and procedures that impact their experiences at Helix.

Educational equity at HCHS is achieved when every student in our system has the access, opportunities, and support they need to reach their full personal and academic potential, and students are able to thrive in an inclusive school with safe, engaging classrooms. The purpose of the Student Equity Advisory Team is to elevate the voices of students as partners in their own education and to inform our practices at Helix.

BIOLOGY STUDENT INTERNSHIPS WITH BOZ INSTITUTE

Biology teacher Melanie Harrington has been helping students obtain Internships at the Boz Institute as Project Managers and researchers for the Metagenomics Program. Students who received internships for the Spring are Cherish Carter, Stellamaris Scott, Mia Feldman, Maggie Funk, Malak Hasaballa, Dylan McNabb-Faumuina, Jake Mortier, Chloe Moultrie, Viola Ross (Vi) and Julian Saquez Vasquez.

About Boz Institute:

Boz Life Science Research and Teaching Institute in Mission Bay offers unique research opportunities in neurobiology, epigenetics, metagenomics, marine biology, environmental and data science to high school and college students. The institute, established in 2019 in partnership with UCSD Extended studies, has served over 600 local, US, and international students who participated in diverse research immersion programs/courses and presented their work during science meetings and symposia. Besides the life science research, Boz is soon to launch a student-managed international metagenomic database and offer a comprehensive data science (biostatistics and bioinformatics) certificate program. For details, visit www.bozintitute.org.

DIGITAL ARTWORK

GUHSD is having their 2nd Annual Foothill Art Association Show. Schools from the district including Helix are displaying their work throughout the month



Helix Charter High student Ella Giordano has had quite a school year to date. (Courtesy photo)

of January. On Monday, Jan. 23rd from 5:30 – 7 p.m., there will be a reception for the students and public at Porter Hall Art Gallery, located at 4910 Memorial Drive, La Mesa and its hours are Tues-Sat 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Stop by to support and vote for our wonderful artists.

—Lauren Knuth is the community relations & engagement coordinator at Helix Charter High School.



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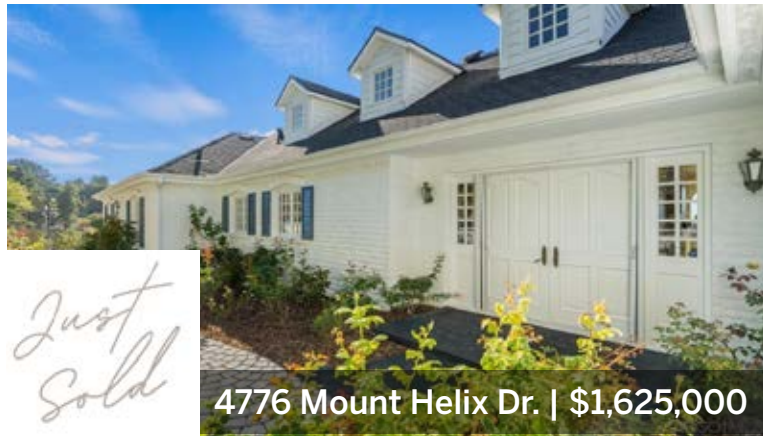
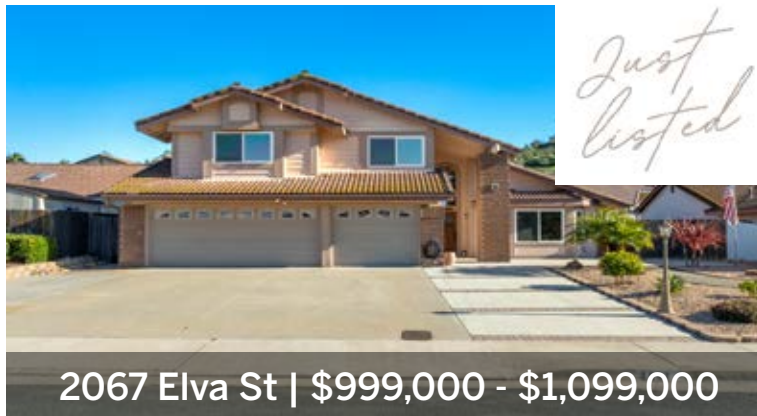
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Helix Charter High winter sports teams scoring victories

By DAVE THOMAS

A number of Helix Charter High winter sports teams are in the heat of action as January winds down.

• On the boys' basketball court, Helix under head coach Jason Cavazos came into action last week with an overall record of 9-10, 1-0 in league action.

According to Cavazos, key players this season have included senior guard Bruck Kifleyesus (leading scorer), senior guard Ahkwon White (leading three-point shooter), senior point guard Eli Green (team captain), junior guard Jackson Daniels (good energy guy) and senior Diego Salcido (three-point shooter).

"We have played a really tough preseason schedule and have been through a lot of adversity this season with two senior starters leaving the team for family reasons, dislocated shoulder, knee injury, rolled ankles, bike accident, stitches to the head, and the flu

spreading throughout the team," Cavazos commented. "However, through all the adversity we have still found a way to grow and come together as a team. We are heading into league and we are ready."

• In girls' water polo action, head coach Lenelle Wylie's team was sitting at 10-3 heading into last week.

"We are competitive with the best teams in the County, with a mix of experienced and new players," Wylie commented. "We bring intensity to each of our games until the final buzzer."

According to Wylie, some key members of the team to date have included Sadie Henry (Senior utility, great center defender, matches up with the opponents best player), Mia Barkett (Senior attacker, great outside shot, speed, offensive intensity, strong field blocker), Riley Hull (Junior attacker, great speed, counter attack specialist, post-up player, great outside shooter).

• In girls' soccer play, head coach Fenan Berhe's team was sporting a mark of 2-7-4 as of last week.

According to Berhe, some key players to date have included senior, center/midfielder Mia Martinez (Brings a calmness and technical ability to the midfield as well as sets the tone to the level of dedication and work rate expected from the girls. Both in practice and in game is a model teammate and role model for the younger players); senior, center defender Kylie Smith (Is vocal leader in the back, giving teammates guidance and acting as a coach on the field. Has shown an adaptability in terms of forming partnerships, eliminating opposition attacks, and starting team's counters); senior, center midfielder Alyssa Gonzalez (Brings experience from the highest level and uses that to be a leader on the team. Brings a level head and composure to the team, helping players understand the game better and keeping a positive mindset).

"Starting with a brand new roster this year, only returning two of 19 players last year, the season has been a difficult one," Berhe commented. "There are encouraging signs of players better understanding their roles, raising expectations, and building a solid foundation for the future. Our goals for the remainder of the year are to get healthy and gain momentum heading into playoffs."

• On the wrestling mats, Helix was 0-1 in dual meets as of last week for head coach Adam Krzywicki.



The Helix Charter High girls' soccer team under head coach Fenan Berhe takes in some advice. (Courtesy photos)

"Tournaments are a big part of the wrestling season," Krzywicki noted. "We have finished in the Top 10 in one of the tournaments we have competed in so far."

According to Krzywicki, key wrestlers to date have included senior Oliver Perez at 134 pounds (Great teammate and leads by example on and off the mat); senior Fa'atui Schwalger at 172 pounds (Team leader, working hard to get the most out of his senior season); junior Alijah Davis at 197 pounds (Gives maximum effort for the entire match and sets an example for teammates to follow); freshman Ames Hoevker at 140 pounds (Has quickly climbed through the ranks of freshmen, junior varsity and varsity, finding success at all three levels in a short period of time).

"The season has gone well so far," Krzywicki continued. "We are improving week after week with the ultimate goal of being at our best when we get to the post-season. Overall it is a young,

inexperienced team that is getting its first real experience at the varsity level. The team has shown resilience in the face of adversity and is working hard to reach their full potential."

• In girls' basketball play, head coach Freddie Garrett's team was 13-6 following action over the last week.

As of last week, senior captain Alethze Marquez (center) leads the team with 12 points and 11 rebounds a game.

Senior power forward Angel Riggins has also contributed to the success by averaging eight points, eight rebounds and three steals per game.

"The girls have competed very well this year to earn their 13 wins thus far in the season," Garrett stated. "As a team, we're trying to get on track and gain some good team chemistry during league which will give us better odds of going further in the playoffs and hopefully make it to CIF's."



Senior Angel Riggins shoots a free throw during a girls' basketball contest.




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Art is essential part of curriculum at Grossmont High School

Foothiller Footsteps

By

CONNIE AND LYNN BAER

Since its inception in 1920, Grossmont High School's staff and its community viewed art as an essential part of its curriculum. The floor plans for the 1922 "Castle" reveal a classroom, labeled "Art Department", in a prominent location; the 1922 yearbook names Luella M. Hughes as its music and art teacher.

In 1949, the school celebrated the construction of a home and arts building, which for the next 67 years, became the home of art and photography classes. Today's 2016 art building houses classrooms beyond the imagination of those early teachers with spacious rooms and modern equipment that stimulate the students' creativity.

2-D AND AP STUDIO ART

Art teacher and department chairman, Susan Phillips, shares, "The new building has been a game changer, as it shows a tangible respect for the Arts. Because

the students are in a clean modern environment, they are more engaged and take pride in their work and keeping the studio clean."

"I teach 2-D beginning through A.P. Studio Art, focusing on various forms of drawing, painting and printmaking. During a recent project, Reinventing Da Vinci, we studied Renaissance drawings; then, the students were required to create an original artwork that combines an image from Da Vinci's artwork with one or more of his inventions or science studies. The style of the artwork should invoke the feeling of a Renaissance drawing."

"Our students show work throughout the community in such venues as Foothills Art Gallery, Studio C Gallery in El Cajon, Annual District Show, the San Diego County Fair as well as the SDMA Young Art show.

"Currently their work is on display at both the Foothills Gallery and the main branch of the La Mesa Library through the end of January. The Studio C Gallery show will be starting towards the end of February."

3D DESIGN AND ADVANCED 3D DESIGN

Art teacher Gwenne Pagarigan shares, "I teach 4 periods of Beginning 3D Design and 1 period of Advanced 3D Design. There are 180 students from all grade levels in 3D Design."

"In 3D Design we learn and understand the principles of art, and explore our identity as artists and people using art from other cultures and time periods as a basis for our exploration. We do this using a variety of mediums including paper, ceramics, and metal. We hand-build and wheel throw with clay, and students learn to paint and glaze their work.

"This year students have collaborated to build sculptures, developed coil designs and forms, and experienced wheel throwing with clay. Students have made surface designs with colored pencils, paint and glaze.

"A recent activity was creation of paper hats, a project influenced by our trip to the Mingei Museum in Balboa Park. One of the exhibits was an artist called "moses", an artist best known for his whimsical and sculptural paper bag hats and head pieces from different times and cultures. The students were challenged to research and create a paper hat in the style of moses.

"Another activity was the creation of a metal tapestry, a short collaborative project inspired by the work of El Anatsui, a world famous Ghanaian artist. Students experimented with the folding, crumpling, and crushing aluminum cans and then created the individual pieces that were combined into the tapestry."

"We participate in the District Art Show and display our work in the District Office. You can follow our Artistic journey on Instagram at foothiller_3D_design."



Kate Heubach and Sydney Luhnow modeling paper hats in front of metal tapestry. (Courtesy photos)

PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL ART

Teacher Carolyn Jungman shares, "I teach in both the Visual Arts Department and the CTE AME Pathway (Arts, Media, & Entertainment). In Visual Arts, I teach Beginning & Intermediate Photography, as well as AP 2D Design with a Photography emphasis. I also teach Beginning Digital Arts & Advanced Digital Arts. Our 3-year CTE AME pathway focuses on the digital media industries. Students in this pathway take Photography 1/2, Digital Arts 3/4, then Digital Arts 5/6.

"My photography classes learn everything from camera settings to digital editing in programs like Photoshop alongside composition, history of photography,

and different styles of photography. We have in-class photoshoots almost weekly, photographing everything from dry ice to light sabers and creating special effects like levitation and ghosting in Photoshop.

"My digital arts classes create artwork using digital programs like Photoshop & Illustrator. The students create logos, design t-shirts and stickers, and learn how to bring their designs to life using methods like screen printing, sublimation, and traditional printing. Simply put, we make cool stuff!

"The goal of the AME Pathway (in addition to the photography & digital arts content) is to

SEE GROSSMONT HIGH, Page 13



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The Pioneer BBQ: Low and slow, with a Southern flair

What's on the menu?

By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON



The barbecue scene in San Diego has grown by leaps and bounds over the past few years. Many chefs have thrown hats into the ring each with their own flair and specialty.

At La Mesa's The Pioneer BBQ, Executive Chef Tim Eylens honors his Indiana roots with fine meats smoked with White Oak in their Southern Pride Smoker and side dishes with a southern flair, collard greens and Bourbon Pecan Pie are just a few ways.

Growing up around his family restaurant, Eylens knew that he wanted to be a chef by the age of eight. At the age of 17, he had his first BBQ smoker and enjoyed learning how to smoke different meats.

After many years of working for a few different Cohn Family restaurants in San Diego, he decided to strike out on his own and got himself a traveling smoker trailer. He called David Cohn to thank him for everything the family had done for him and his family and David struck him a deal. Start a BBQ restaurant for us!



Located on Lake Murray Boulevard, The Pioneer BBQ has its own flair and specialty. (Photos by Robin Dohrn-Simpson)

That is how Pioneer BBQ began.

Pioneer BBQ meats include smoked meatloaf, house made hot links, prime beef brisket, smoked pulled pork, and baby back ribs. You can purchase meat by the pound or a feast that includes two to four side dishes, depending on the amount of meat purchased. Vegetarians can also enjoy The Pioneer BBQ with a plant-based

Impossible Burger.

"In Indiana, I had a variety of influences including people who loved collard greens, and this has become a side dish that we offer in our menu," Eylens said. Other popular side dishes are mac and cheese, mashed potatoes, brisket chili, and street corn.

There is a fun kids' menu with Sloppy Joes. Too bad you have to

be a kid to get one of these.

Bring your Valentine here for a special dinner with salad, three types of meat, three sides, and a choice of dessert- either the Bourbon Pecan Pie or the Banana Bread Pudding.

Check out the daily specials that offered all week long, including their version of Taco Tuesday. Go to thepioneerbbq.com/ for the

menu and daily specials.

Located at 8622 Lake Murray Blvd, San Diego, CA 92119, (619) 825-7787, Weeknights are evenings only, 4-8 p.m. and weekends offer lunch and dinner opening at noon.

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

NEWS BRIEFS

ENROLLMENT FOR 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR AT HELIX CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL NOW OPEN

Enrollment at Helix Charter High School for the 2023-2024 school year is now open. You can find instructions and a link to apply at: helixcharter.net/enroll.

Helix is a charter school and all new students must go through the lottery. Lottery applications are accepted Jan. 5, 2023 through March 1, 2023. Applications submitted after March 1, 2023 will be waitlisted in the order they are received.

Applying to Helix is a two-step process that can all be done

online. The first step is to watch the Enrollment Informational Video (required) and the second step is to apply through the link on our website.

There is a comprehensive FAQ doc on that page that should answer most questions.

If you still have questions, email: enrollment@helixcharter.net.

CDO FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY HOSTS LOVE THE LIBRARY EVENT FEB. 11

Casa de Oro Friends of the Library will host a Valentine's-themed Love The Library event on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 5 to 7 p.m.

at the Casa de Oro branch of the County Library, 9085 Campo Rd., #180, in Spring Valley.

The event will include refreshments and live music by father-daughter duo, guitarist Fred Benedetti and vocalist Regina Benedetti. The event is free to members (non-members can join for a nominal fee).

The Friends of the Casa de Oro Library supports the library with used book sales and other activities. The group advocates for the new 11,000-square-foot, free-standing library facility while

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 13

Vegetable Lentil Soup

What's Cooking with Julie

By JULIE WHITE



- 2 quarts Vegetable Stock
- Salt and pepper to taste

COOKING:

Over medium heat sauté veggies in olive oil.

Combine all ingredients and bring to a boil.

Lower heat and simmer over low heat for 45 minutes.

Serve hot with a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese if desired.

Most grocery stores now sell a carton of prepared chopped carrots, celery and onions.

Really handy for a quick soup. (Mirepoix is the French name).

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tbs Olive oil
- 1 onion chopped
- 2 carrots chopped
- 2 celery stalks chopped
- 1 tomato chopped or one small can of crushed tomatoes
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground cumin
- 1 pound of Lentils, sorted and washed



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Grossmont High

CONTINUED FROM Page 11

introduce and empower students with industry-standard technical skills and real-world experiences so they're prepared to enter a creative college program or career. Those students receive additional soft-skill training & access to our network of industry advisors to build connections, giving them a strong foundation of knowledge.

"We have many shows and competitions coming up this semester, including the La Mesa Library in the month of January, the GUHSD District Art Show at Parkway Plaza in May, and the San Diego County Fair Student Showcase in June/July. I encourage my students to put their artwork on display and outside the walls of our classrooms for the world to see!

"Our students love getting feedback on their work - feel free to follow us on Instagram at @ghsphotoda."

A Class of 2010 GHS alumnus, Jungman has a unique perspective on the Art Department.

"My first year teaching was in the old 1949 art building, which was a unique experience as those classrooms were the same rooms I had been a student in. The old photography classroom was fitted for a film photography program, but we'd transitioned to digital photography.

"I enjoyed working in the darkroom as a student in the old

building; I'm working to bring it back to my current program using the facilities in the new building. My second year teaching, we moved to the new building. For photography, I have a beautiful iMac lab with space for class photoshoots and our digital arts program. I do have a small print lab for film photography that I'm working to get functional for my advanced level students.

"It's been fun teaching in both spaces and combining my memories of GHS as a student with my experiences here as a teacher - especially as our campus evolves and grows!"

One hundred two years ago, Grossmont High School incorporated art as an essential part of its students' learning. While the details of the creation process may have altered some of the forms in which students express their emotions and experiences, the value of art to the student's quality of life was as indisputable then as it is now.

For information about Foothiller history and the GHS Museum, email Connie and Lynn at ghsmuseum@guhsd.net or leave a message at (619) 668-6140. Enjoy learning more about Foothillers, past and present, on our website at foothillermuseum.com and our Facebook page at Grossmont High School Museum and Alumni.

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

News briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 12

providing general fundraising and volunteer support.

For more information or to register for the event, visit: casadeorolibrary.org.

LEAP ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS BEGINNING FEB. 1 FOR SECOND COHORT OF ENTREPRENEURS

The City of La Mesa, in partnership with the East County EDC, launched the LEAP program, which distributes up to \$20K in grant funds to new restaurant, retail, and other enterprises.

To qualify, recipients must open a business within the incorporated City of La Mesa.

The program will provide each entrepreneur with a robust start-up training program, individualized advising sessions, and an accountable case management system.

To be eligible for the LEAP program, you must be:

- At least 21 years old;
- Resident of San Diego County;
- Willing to open a brick-and-mortar location within the incorporated City of La Mesa.

Non-profits are not eligible for the LEAP program.

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 14

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Never too late to read books from the past

La Mesa Reads

By **JAKE SEXTON**



Although we have entered a whole new year, it's not too late to catch up on the most popular and beloved titles of 2022.

Well, it's never too late to read books from the past, books have no expiration date. Read a book published this morning, books from your youth, some Shakespeare, Sun Tzu, we've got them all. But let's get back to 2022.

The most commonly checked-out books from San Diego County Library this year were: children's books.

It makes sense, those books are much shorter, and kids definitely have more free time to read than you do. Sometimes they're even forced to read books by teachers and lit-loving parents. If there are children in your life, you might be familiar with popular series like Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Dog Man, and Wings of Fire. And if you're not, feel free to give any of those a look to see what is captivating the kids of today.

But we have plenty of grown-up titles that were exceptionally popular as well, you adult you.

This year's One Book, One San Diego title, Brit Bennet's The Vanishing Half, was one of the most checked-out books at our library. This title is a provocative, decades-long tale of two twin sisters, separated in their teens who live wildly different lives due to history, geography and race.

Another popular title from this year was the witty romantic comedy Book Lovers by Emily Henry.

Anyone with access to the Hallmark Channel is familiar with the "big city girl finds love in a small town" trope, and this book embraces some parts of it, while subverting others. When this overworked big-city literary agent reunites with a jaded big-city book editor in a small town a prickly relationship ensues. The author doesn't force characters to abandon their complexities, or deeply-held beliefs in the name of feel-good kisses.

And finally, we have a couple of titles that prove that everyone still loves a good mystery.

Lucy Foley's The Paris Apartment is a Hitchcockian tale about down-on-her-luck Jess Daniels, who accepts an invitation to get a fresh start on her life by moving in with her brother in Paris. On her arrival, Ben is gone, the apartment empty, and a building full of unfriendly neighbors have no light to shed on his disappearance. Looks like Jess will have to unravel this mystery herself!

And Liane Moriarty's Apples Never Fall combines a complicated family saga with another disappearance. The intricate and passionate lives of the famed tennis stars of the Delaney family are told in flashback, as matriarch Joy Delany has gone missing. Is her absence something sinister or years of dysfunction coming to roost?

The La Mesa Library has many programs returning from a holiday break.

Chair Yoga on Wednesday mornings, Tech Help on Tuesday and Sunday afternoons, Storytimes for kids on Thursday mornings, and much more.

Check sdcl.org/events and click "La Mesa" for all the details.

News briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 13

For more information about LEAP and to apply beginning Feb. 1, visit: eastcountyledc.org/leap-program/.

AAUW, LA MESA-EL CAJON BRANCH, SPEECH TREK CONTEST RETURNS

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

Each year a critical topic is selected and students, along with a branch/teacher coach, create, prepare, and present an original, 5-6-minute speech. This year's topic is, "How can communities, organizations and citizens of all ages help protect and expand voting rights?"

This year's contest will be held via Zoom on Feb. 7, 6 p.m. All speeches

will be videotaped for the State-level competition.

Participating this year are Hussein Al Hussein, a senior from Granite Hills High School, Caitlin Hackenburg, a junior at Canyon Hills High School, and Kyra Sharma, a sophomore attending La Jolla High School. Those wishing to be part of the virtual audience should contact chairperson, Sandra Martinez at sagaleamartinez@gmail.com for the zoom information.

The winning participant's video will then be sent to the AAUW State competition. Winners at the local level in the La Mesa-El Cajon branch will receive \$500 for first place, \$250 for the runner-up and \$125 for third place. The winner at the State level will win \$1,500, second place will receive \$1,000, and third place will take home \$500.

The State winners will be announced on April 22 at the annual meeting and their speeches will be available for viewing on the AAUW-CA Website following that meeting at: (aauw-ca.org).

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Year in review

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

• Both Grossmont High School and Helix Charter High School celebrated Homecoming festivities.

The GHS Homecoming Court was made up of **Ashlee Austin, Sophia Carrasco, Lexi Zaenger, Sarah Niskey, Piper Tatum, Justin Tucker, Brandon Case, Austin Mitchell, Scott Roberts** and **Patrick Jones**.

The HCHS Homecoming Court included **Wayne Akpakpan, Nate Flores, Wyatt, Loorya, Timothy Nguyen** and **Fa’atui Schwalger**.

OCTOBER

La Mesa Courier chatted with the candidates running for the mayoral seat and a pair of city council seats, respectively.

Incumbent Mayor **Mark Arapostathis** was set to face challenger **Kristine Alessio** in one race. In the council race, four candidates would battle it out for two seats. They included incumbent **Laura Lothian, Meigan Afshan, Patricia Dillard** and **Tony Orlando. Kathleen Brand**, who had earlier dropped out of the race, was also on the ballot (see December below).

Candidates in both races stressed the need to focus on improving business opportunities in La Mesa, making necessary repairs to bad streets, meeting the needs of the police and fire departments, working to lower homelessness in the community and more.

• **Helix Charter High School** was designated a Blue Ribbon School.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes outstanding public and non-public schools for their achievements.

Helix was one of 297 schools nationwide and one of only four in California to be recognized this year.

NOVEMBER

Plans for a proposed apartment complex where the former historic **Randall Lamb** building once stood (southeast corner of Palm Avenue and Allison Avenue) awaited a verdict.

The plan is for a 5-story building with 64 units, 8 of which would be affordable, low-income units. There would also be 29 off-street parking spaces on the ground floor, and various landscape and hardscape improvements, according to a report presented to the Planning Board.

• A feature on the **La Mesa Village Farmer’s Market** looked at this weekly Friday event that is a crucial part of the community for nearly 30 years.

It is estimated that 2,000 to 3,000 people frequent the weekly event on any given Friday.

DECEMBER

It took a good month to certify the results, but Mayor **Mark Arapostathis** was re-elected to office.

Arapostathis defeated challenger **Kristine Alessio** 11,386 votes to 8,989 votes.

In the race for La Mesa City Council (two seats available), **Patricia Dillard** was the top vote getter, while incumbent **Laura Lothian** also secured a seat.

Dillard tallied 8,600 votes, with Lothian coming in second with 8,414, votes.

Meigan Afshan received 8,403 votes, while **Tony Orlando** captured 6,598 votes. **Kathleen Brand**, who had earlier dropped out of the race, secured 3,938 votes.

• The La Mesa Village Association (LMVA) reported that it is continuing to fundraise for the much-anticipated **downtown district sign** that will be a new focal point in the La Mesa Village.

The Downtown District Sign will be located in the heart of the Village at La Mesa Blvd. And Palm Ave. and will consist of two columns of brass plaques around the top and a total of 1,512 hand-painted 4” x 4” ceramic tiles.

Those are but a few of the happenings in La Mesa this past year.

La Mesa Courier wishes you a Happy New Year and thank

you as always for reading our publication.

Editor’s note: Neal Putnam, Jack Jaeger, Kendra Sitton, Connie and Lynn Baer and Elaine Alfaro contributed to this article. This is an abbreviated version of the year in review story that appeared online at: sdnews.com. To see the full story, visit: sdnews.com/book-closes-on-2022-in-la-mesa-area/.



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Located in downtown La Mesa, MesaView Senior Assisted Living offers Independent Living, in a smaller, home-like environment. Experience the comforts of home while benefiting from trained staff who put your safety, health, and well-being first every day. Completely remodeled and updated, MesaView’s quaint and inviting feel is met with extensive outdoor space and gardens, as well as newly designed living spaces. MesaView promotes the physical, social, and spiritual aspects of its residents’ lives, embracing cultures and celebrating their experiences. A short walk to local stores, restaurants, and coffee shops, MesaView offers independent living services for those who are able to live on their own but want to live in a community setting or prefer a living situation that includes housekeeping, social activities, dining, transportation, security. MesaView Senior Independent Living does not provide care or supervision to its tenants, does not hold itself out as doing so, is not a residential care facility for the elderly, and does not accept or retain residents who demonstrate the need for assisted living care or supervision. Schedule a tour to learn more about MesaView Senior Assisted and Independent Living!

619-466-0253 • 7908 La Mesa Blvd. La Mesa, Ca 91942

Senior Apartments in the Heart of La Mesa



Offering senior (55+) Independent Living services in single level cottage style apartments around a secure courtyard in downtown La Mesa.

Offering: meals, laundry, housekeeping, access to transportation and social activities, activity room and patio, all apartments fully renovated including walk in showers, kitchens & access to awake staff 24/7.





Call Today! Limited Availability! 619-466-0253 • 7908 La Mesa Blvd. La Mesa, Ca 91942

Get Care Now

Reserve your arrival time at the Alvarado Hospital ER

Scan this code to reserve your arrival time.





Alvarado Hospital Medical Center

If you have a **non-life threatening** medical emergency, you can now reserve your arrival time at the Alvarado Hospital Emergency Room. Visit our website at **AlvaradoHospital.com/get-care-now**, or scan the QR code above.

Please Note: GetCareNow assigns you a time slot (based on availability) and reserves your space in line. While this reserves your spot in line in the emergency room, it does not guarantee you will be seen at this exact time due to patient volume and the varying urgency of medical needs.



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I'm super honored to have Laura "The Legend" Lothian and her 20+ years of experience serving hundreds of clients across San Diego as a part of the Fast Forward Movement @eXpRealty

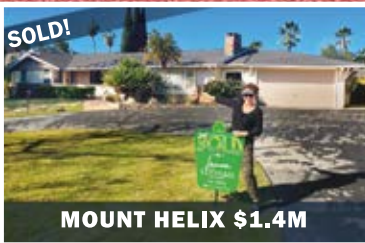
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I'm thrilled to be back on the Boulevard and with THE real estate company of the future!
Thank you, Kyle and Company for such a warm welcome!

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