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**www.sdnews.com**San Diego Community Newspaper Group

# Man's best friend is ready to do some business velocities and the pet search of the

True Pet Kitchens co-founder Kurt Trie has a four-legged customer looking for attention during the La Mesa Village Farmers Market. The Market is celebrating its 30th year anniversary. See the story on Page 8. (Photo credit: CeCe Canton Photography)

# Helix Charter High seniors look to make most of final year of school

By DAVE THOMAS

With the 2023-24 school year underway, seniors at Helix Charter High School are taking in their final year of campus classes and activities. As such, several Helix seniors were asked their thoughts on this school year and what they look to achieve.

We spoke with Oceane Smith, Rhys McElroy, Tori Guerin, Brayden Pape and Brooke Skullerud.

**La Mesa Courier:** How excited are you to go back to school for the final time at Helix?

**Oceane Smith:** Sure, I'm excited to start my final chapter at Helix like any student is but, the thought of a last first time scares

me. I am ecstatic about creating new memories, meeting new people and having new classes and I do feel ready to let go of Helix and move on in life. Helix has helped me feel confident about the future and going back will help me prepare for that journey.

Rhys McElroy: I'm very excited, it feels like it's been a very short time here at Helix and I'm ready to see what happens next.

Tori Guerin: I'm pretty excited to go back to school but it's definitely bittersweet since it's for the last time. I've had a lot of fun at Helix and have met some great people there so I'll definitely miss it when I'm gone.

SEE **HELIX SENIORS**, Page 2



Future high school student Hannah Knuth checks out the sprucing up done to the Helix campus before classes started earlier this month. (Courtesy photo)

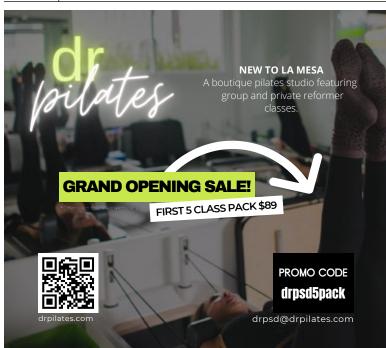
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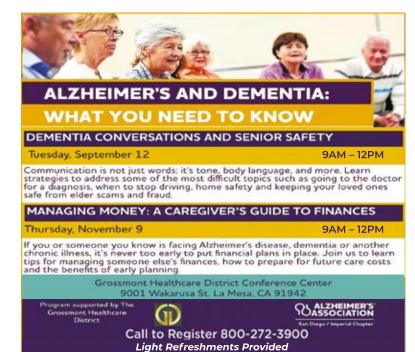


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**Rhys McElroy** 





Tori Guerin





**Brayden Pape Brooke Skullerud** 

## **Helix seniors**

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

Brayden Pape: I am very excited but also a little sad. I feel we missed out on our freshman year because of the pandemic and I wish we had another year to hang out with friends and bond.

Brooke Skullerud: I am so excited for the school year to begin but I am also very sad it will be the last year with all of my friends.

**LMC:** What are some goals you want to achieve in your senior

**Smith:** In my final year at Helix my biggest goal is to make a plan that will lead me to a successful future, by applying to colleges and receiving acceptance letters. While this is my main goal for the year like the majority of students my age, there are still several smaller goals that I am setting myself up to achieve this year. First of all as a varsity swimmer at Helix, one of my goals is to work hard on my mental and physical health in order to give me the strength to be the fastest that I can be in the water. In my last year I also want

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to focus on making sure that I am still pushing myself academically. I want to prove to myself that I have proficient testing skills by getting an AP scholar award to display my dedication to learning and comprehension.

**McElroy:** I want to apply to colleges this fall, and hopefully be accepted to a four-year university before graduating in June. But, much more importantly, I want to spend my last year with all of my friends finishing high school and doing all the classic senior activities.

Guerin: Of course I have a lot of academic goals like wanting to get all A's and I want to apply early to colleges but my overall goal for my senior year is just to have fun. I want to make new friends, join new clubs, and try things I haven't tried before. I want to make the most of my last year of high school.

**Pape:** I want to qualify for the speech and debate national tournament one last time.

**Skullerud:** My main goals are to finish my high school career strong and have as much fun as possible!

**LMC:** What are some memories you have up to now of your time at Helix?

Smith: One of my favorite memories was when everyone came back to school at the end of my freshman year. Times had not been normal because of COVID and seeing and meeting people allowed me to not only feel as if I was really in high school but it also allowed me to bond with people who are now some of my closest friends. That following year I remember going to my first high school dance and the feeling of excitement that I felt when I got to get dressed all fancy with my friends. My first homecoming is where I made the most cherish-able memories in high school and it all happened at Helix.

**McElroy:** My favorite memory at helix was during the last two months of my freshman year, when we were invited back to campus part time. Everyone was so energetic and excited to see each other. I met some of my closest friends and made amazing memories during a pretty harsh time.

SEE HELIX SENIORS, Page 6





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## Grossmont High seniors looking to make most of final year in school

**By DAVE THOMAS** 

With the 2023-24 school year underway, seniors at Grossmont High School are taking in their final year of all school life has to offer. As such, some Grossmont seniors were asked their thoughts on this school year and what they look to achieve.

We spoke with available seniors Lauren Botelho and Shelby Gilliland to get their takes on their final year on campus.

La Mesa Courier: How excited are you to go back to school for the final time at Helix?

Lauren Botelho: I'm very excited for my final year to be here at Grossmont. I have made so many friends here and am grateful to have my final year of high school with them. Grossmont has given me so many opportunities and it has been a great four years.

**Shelby Gilliland:** I couldn't be more excited to be back at Grossmont for my senior year. I've missed the campus and all of the friends I've made here. I can't wait to be back and start this year off with a bang thanks to G-Crew!

**LMC:** What are some goals you want to achieve in your senior year?

Botelho: For senior year I would really like to be able to go to all the after school activities



Staff at Grossmont High School are ready for another year of working with students back from summer break. (Courtesy photo)





Lauren Botelho

**Shelby Gilliland** 

such as dances and sports games. I really enjoy hanging out with friends and would like to be able to do so more often this year.

**Gilliland:** I would love to push myself to get all A's this year as well as meet new people and just get to know my senior class more.

**LMC:** What are some memories you have up to now of your time at Grossmont?

Botelho: All of the best memories I have of Grossmont would

PHOLES LIP

be from hanging out with friends. The last football game we had last year which had the theme of neon was my favorite game and I just remember having such a great time hanging out with people I don't hang out with very often inside of school. I also remember our Alarm Clock pep rally last year for Homecoming and how there was so much school spirit. I loved being able to see everyone enjoying themselves and the overall joy in the gym. It was so much fun.

**Gilliland:** Some of my favorite memories are the football games just because our spirit section is out of this world, and also our theater productions have left such an impact on me and I am forever grateful for those experiences.

SEE GROSSMONT SENIORS, Page 5

#### Homesellers: How to Get the Price You Want and Need

La Mesa - When you decide to sell your home, setting your asking price is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Depending on how a buyer is made aware of your home, price is often the first thing he or she sees, and many homes are discarded by prospective buyers as not being in the appropriate price range before they're even given a chance of

Your asking price is often your home's "first impression", and if you want to realize the most money you can for your home, it's imperative that you make a good first impression.

This is not as easy as it sounds, and pricing strategy should not be taken lightly. Pricing too high can be as costly to a homeseller as pricing too low. Taking a look at what homes in your neighborhood have sold for is only a small part of the process, and on it's own is not nearly enough to help you make the best decision. A recently study, which compiles 10 years of industry research, has resulted in a new special report entitled "Homesellers: How to Get the Price You Want (and Need)". This report will help you understand pricing strategy from three different angles. When taken together, this information will help you price your home to not only sell, but sell for the price you want.

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your FREE copy of this report call toll-free 1-800-270-1494 and enter 1016. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Get your free special report NOW to learn how to price your home to your maximum financial advantage.

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## Grossmont High welcomes Class of 2027 to start school year



As Grossmont High School began its 103st school year, it welcomed the Class of 2027 with preschool activities and then welcomed all students back on campus Tuesday, Aug. 15.

#### FRESHMAN ORIENTATION

Aug. 10, GHS's G-Crew for 2023-24 led the incoming ninth grade students through a variety of activities to acclimate them to the campus and to make their transition to high school smoother. Each student was assigned a G-Crew Leader for the year, was able to pick up their schedules, pick up their Chromebooks, take a campus tour, and have lunch

with their classmates and their G-Crew leaders.

#### **FRIDAY SPIRIT ACTIVITIES**

The first week activities, planned by the ASB, included a dress up Friday Class Color competition with the Freshman wearing gray, Sophomores wearing white, Juniors wearing gold, and the Seniors wearing Blue.

Friday's standing room only



The G Crew leaders are ready for a great school year. (Courtesy photo)

Welcome Back Pep Assembly featured a "Name that Tune" contest between three staff willing to face off against three seniors. When a song was played, the first person to hit the light up button and guess correctly got a point. The teachers volunteering to compete were Chris Ray, Yvonne Payne, and Jeremy Ogilvie.

Afterwards, English teacher Yvonne Payne shared, "Being able to quickly share the songs' names and the artists was tricky, but it made it really fun. I loved the back-to-school energy! Hearing the hype from the crowd among the blasting music was invigorating. I definitely learned a few things today!"

Two other Pep Assembly competitions were a quarterback challenge between the football and flag football quarterbacks and a large scale Tic Tac Toe competition. The energy "rocked the New Gym"!

That evening the first home football game was held against San Diego High with the students using the new Jack Mashin Stadium home stands for the first time.

#### **NEW STAFF MEMBERS**

This year, Grossmont High School welcomes three new classified staff, all of whom are Special Education aides, Ron Short, Special Ed Aide Mod/ Severe, Michele Barker, Special Ed Aide Mild/Mod, and Kira Sedore, Special Ed Aide Mod/Severe.

Michelle Barker shares that "I have a son with autism spectrum disorder, a degree in behavioral health science, and I've been working with special education at the middle school level for the past five years. I am currently working

towards my masters in school counseling and wanted to gain experience working with high school students. I am very excited for the opportunity to work at GHS and cannot wait to see my old middle school students who are now "big" high school students."

Kira Sedore exclaims, "I am very passionate about helping kids. I peer tutored when I was in high school and I really loved it. That has driven me to take this job, and I also want to continue to work for special education in the future. Last year I worked as a substitute aide for mod/severe. I love working with the kids. I am excited to get to know a new school and new students."

#### **TWO NEW TEACHERS**

Math teacher Devon Shrestha, Class of 2018, shares the "I wanted to teach at Grossmont because of the strong sense of community and school spirit. I graduated in 2018, so it hasn't been very long, but it feels very exciting to return to teach! It's a little strange to be colleagues with former teachers, though.

I am teaching Integrated Math I, all freshmen, and Integrated Math II, a mix of all grades. I look forward to getting to know my students and just getting the hang of teaching!"

Experienced 14-year Social Science teacher Bob Talley reveals that his journey to GHS "included five years at Valley Center High School before moving to Poway High School, where I taught the past eight years."

"I grew up in the Fletcher Hills area and attended Fletcher Hills Elementary School, Parkway

SEE **FOOTHILLER FOOTSTEPS**, Page 5





## **Foothiller Footsteps**

Middle School, and GHS for my freshman year before I transferred to and graduated from Coronado High School.

My family currently lives in Fletcher Hills and my daughters will eventually go to GHS. Moving from Poway High to Grossmont High allows me to volunteer at my daughters' schools, attend the visual and performing arts events/ sporting events at GHS more often, and be a more integral part of the community. It is a dream come true, and I really feel like I am coming home. Grossmont is the only school I would have entertained leaving Poway for.

I will be teaching a combination of 9th grade geography as well as 12th grade government/ econ. I have already helped with freshman orientation. GHS has a wonderful tradition of community, school spirit and engagement. I am thrilled to find ways that I can impact and support students both inside and outside of the classroom. It will be wonderful to participate in more of those activities and include my family. now that I am close to home. Go, Foothillers!"

Principal Dan Barnes exclaimed, "I am really excited about the new school year, meeting new students, and being with teachers and staff. Our focus continues to be fostering community, cultivating learning, and embracing positive change."

Obviously, there is great excitement and enthusiasm at GHS as another school year begins, with infinite possibilities for learning, friendships, and achievements in and out of the classroom.

#### **UPCOMING REUNIONS**

Class of 1968 55th Reunion: Sept. 28, 2023 from 12 – 3 p.m. at Anthony's Fish Grotto. Contact ckloezem@prodigy.net.

Class of 2003 20th Reunion: Sept. 2, 2023 7-10 Urbn Pizza, El Cajon

Visit our website at foothillermuseum.com to learn more about GHS, past and present. Contacts: (619) 668-6140 and ghsmuseum@guhsd.net.

## urussiiiuiit seniors

**CONTINUED FROM Page 3** 

LMC: What are your plans after Grossmont?

**Botehlo:** After Grossmont I am planning on attending a four year college to study marine biology. I still plan on staying in touch with all the people I've met the last four years.

Gilliland: The plan is to head to Grossmont Community College first but that could definitely change within the coming months.









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## Uptown News



















## Finding perfectionism in the classroom

📂 Helix Student Takes 🦱 By MUSTAFA DOST

In the cold, plastic-feeling room of math class, I felt a different kind of dread than the rest of the sleeping, laughing, or silent students did.

I got a 92% on a major test.

I would repeat the figure in my mind until my mouth started flipping through complaints looking for the one to convince my Mom I did horribly. But I couldn't ever find one. Just a quiet stare back, wondering what I was even trying to say.

Eventually the dread would follow me to every classroom. In history, 100% was 'average' or in English, not having my piece chosen as an example, was a clear sign of hatred for my existence from all those around me.

If you liked me, you would have used it.

Because if there isn't perfection, that means I'm flawed. Deeply too. If others don't have to study, when I do, and get much better results. I'm lesser than them. Lesser than those who get 75% or F's, because I knew they hardly paid attention, but still were on the same road, leading to the same diploma. There would be no difference in the papers we'll be handed that day.

Others would get A's too, but that was impressive. Jealousy inducing. Mine? I don't know, a

Eventually, it became my own eyes looking inward for every flaw in my flaking confidence to pick off. Dead, sunken in eyes, wondering what was this craving I had, that I would logically complete, but emotionally were drowning in.

The issue of perfection, especially across bios and interviews has become a buzzword used for someone disliking mistakes, as we all do, or having slightly higher standards.

But within the halls of rigorous high schools, a pure, naive, and tion breathes. The need to know you are worth something and not run of the mill, that people would treasure your existence when you live, and cry when you die. Many seek it through academics, the most prestigious thing, most accessible to the average teen. Honor societies. Teacher compliments. Awards. It expands even beyond school grounds. A post of one desirable body will inflame thousands to millions to destroy theirs: crying, hurting, harming.

Stuck already in the issues of violent mood swings and overexposure to harmful media online, leaves teenagers, us, the inability to veer from these emotions. Bearing the brunt of each strike, wave or phase of criticism directly to our self-worth.

But this issue is unique. Caused by us, a direct result of our minds. Leaving us, and only us, to realize the self-deprecating habits of wanting to find value outside of ourselves. Relieving ourselves from the habit.

Because we get we. And it's important for your happiness to realize there are others out there. So, there isn't another sense of incoming loneliness, or 'weirdness' for experiencing the things that all of us do, and struggle through. It goes beyond, 'it's okay to not be okay,' but instead, normal.

Your thoughts have to be replaced from the rushing tides of acid, dissolving every argument you make towards contentment, to understanding that your value is physical. That you can make any change for yourself. Your actions. Your words. The smile on your face.

I still stare at that 92%, with bright, inner, and nervous eyes.

Wondering how soon the next, inevitable catapult will launch perfectionism square on to my face.

Editor's note: This is a new monthly opinion piece featuring takes in and out of the classroom from students at our area high schools.

# San Diego Community Newspaper Group: A legacy of strong readership and local engagement



The San Diego Community Newspaper Group, the largest independently female-owned newspaper group in the region, proudly celebrates its steadfast commitment to delivering local news and fostering community engagement. Since its establishment in 1988 by a visionary publisher, Julie Main, the group has consistently proven itself as a vital information source for San Diego neighborhoods.

The heart of the San Diego Community Newspaper Group lies in its eight distinctive publications, each tailored to serve the unique needs of its respective community. These publications encompass three dynamic bi-weeklies: La Jolla Village News, Beach & Bay Press, and the Peninsula Beacon. Additionally, five informative monthlies fill the portfolio: San Diego Downtown News, Uptown News, Mission Times Courier, College Times Courier, and La Mesa Courier.

A key attribute that sets the San Diego Community Newspaper Group apart is its dedication to ensuring direct and reliable delivery to its readers. With an impressive average of 80% direct carrier delivery, the group remains committed to the principle of connecting with its readers on their doorsteps. The remaining 21% is accomplished through controlled bulk delivery, assuring widespread circulation and engagement.

According to a recent CVC Audit study (Jan. 1, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2022), the impact of these publications on their readership is undeniable. A majority of residents who receive their local publication express their loyalty by consistently reading it. Even more striking is the fact that more than 50% of readers report frequent purchases of products and services advertised within the pages of these publications, indicating a strong conversion rate for local businesses.

The survey also revealed intriguing insights into the reading habits of the community. An impressive 66% of respondents disclosed that they retain their papers for two weeks or less before discarding them. This rapid turnover not only reflects the relevance of the content but also underscores the timely nature of the information shared.

San Diego Community Newspaper Group's unwavering dedication to local news and community engagement remains a beacon in an increasingly digital world. The newspapers not only keep residents informed about events and developments in their neighborhoods but also provide local businesses with an effective platform for reaching their target audience.

As the San Diego Community Newspaper Group continues its legacy of serving the community, it stands as a testament to the enduring power of print media and its ability to foster a sense of belonging and shared identity among residents.

Through its dedication to quality journalism and its role as a marketing powerhouse, the group has truly become an integral part of the San Diego community.

## **Helix seniors**

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

**Guerin:** The best memories that I have gotten from Helix have come from two of the activities that I'm involved in which are basketball and speech and debate. Both of these activities have helped me meet some amazing people and make amazing memories. If I had to choose just one helix memory that is my favorite, I would choose when I got to emcee the homecoming halftime show. It was cool being in front of all those people, the energy was amazing, and it was super cool king and gueen.

**Pape:** Definitely the winter formal and spirit days. Also going out of town for speech and debate tournaments.

**Skullerud:** Some of my favorite memories from my time at Helix include sporting events, extracurricular activities, spirit weeks, and meeting new people.

**LMC:** What are your plans after Helix?

**Smith:** After Helix, I plan to go to college and study medical sciences. I am not exactly sure about the career I want, but I know that I am interested in areas of medicine. Besides school, I also plan to keep swimming. In

sity swim team and it has allowed sonal financial planner and posme to not only improve my skills in the water but to help me become a more open person and a part of a community. It would be amazing if I could be on a college swim team, but if not I want to make sure that a pool is always available for me so that I can keep improving my swimming skills and help me find a refuge.

**McElroy:** After Helix I'd like to attend a four-year university to double major in business or economics and ASL (American Sign Language) or ASL interpreting. After I graduate, my hope would be to earn my master's degree in finance with the

to announce the homecoming high school I've been on the var- eventual goal of becoming a persibly a certified ASL Interpreter.

> **Guerin:** My plans for after Helix are to go to college and to major in engineering. As of right now I'm interested in aerospace, but I am considering mechanical so I can learn about a wider range of things.

> Pape: I want to go to college and major in psychology. I also want to keep working to find sustainable solutions to homelessness in San Diego County.

> Skullerud: I am planning to continue my education at a 4-year university and pursue a degree in either psychology or business law.



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## La Mesa Village Farmers Market celebrates 30 years

By JESSICA MILLS

For the last 30 years, the La Mesa Village Farmers Market (LMVFM) has remained a popular hub for local vendors, fresh produce and community gathering.

Held every Friday from 3 - 7:30 p.m. on La Mesa Blvd. between Palm Ave, and 4th St., the market's 30th anniversary monthlong celebration will begin Sept. 1. Online, market and vendor giveaways will take place, and among the LMVFM's 84 vendors, visitors can shop farm fresh vegetables, bread and baked goods, meats, fish, plants and much more.

Bread Underground is among the LMVFM's vendors and is composed of family team Jackie, Jeff, Logan and Sydney.

Owner and baker Jackie Imray started Bread Underground as a bread delivery service during the height of the pandemic. What began as a passion project — delivering homemade bread throughout North County twice a week — quickly expanded into farmers markets, including the LMVFM.

"I roped my husband into the business because I wanted to start going to farmers markets," Imray said. "When we just started and were just doing the delivery, I was baking everything in my kitchen aid oven, four loaves at a time. Now I can do 25 loaves at a

time, which helps with timing and needing to produce more."

Bread Underground has been a part of the LMVFM since 2022 and according to Imray, is a special place to visit, shop, meet new people and support the community.

"La Mesa has that feeling of a village," Imray explained. "I think that if you're going to the farmer's market you're not only investing in the community but in sustainable living by buying local and supporting local vendors, farmers and people that believe in community."

Similarly, Farmer Juan Martinez of Heritage Family Farms believes that farmers markets are instrumental to the health of the community and economy.

"I really do believe that farmers markets are crucial for food sources, it's an outlet for local food sources," Martinez said. "It's almost like a place of dependence on survival, of our community being stable. Food is probably the most important thing to civilization."

Heritage Farms, a family run food source, has been a LMVFM vendor since 2020.

"There's five brothers and I'm just the one that supervises the whole thing from start to finish," Martinez said. "My kids help out too, they're teenagers and all out of high school now so they're helping out on weekends. My youngest helps out full time now. Two of my



There are plenty of reasons to smile at the La Mesa Village Farmers Market. (Photo credit: CeCe Canton Photography)

sisters also help out, a brother-inlaw, and my nephews. It takes a big family to do what we do."

While perusing vendor stands, visitors can also find True Pet Kitchens, an organization that specializes and prioritizes true ingredients, flavors and love for pets. Founder Melanie Dunwell started True Pet Kitchens due to a lack of clean ingredients when shopping for her own pets.

"I found it really difficult to find quality pet food and treats for my own dog," Dunwell said. "It's very hard to find pet food that isn't full of byproducts and unhealthy stuff. That's why I wanted to create something that's fresh, preservative free and has healthy ingredients for the pets."

Dunwell joined the LMVFM a couple months ago and appreciates its unique and supportive environment.

"I think the farmers market is great for people who are looking for fresh, quality products," Dunwell said. "I think it's also very important for people to support small, local businesses. It's a great environment for people to be, it's a fun place for people to go and enjoy themselves."

For the last 30 years the La Mesa Village Farmers Market has been a beloved spot for many visitors. Whether you're looking for pet treats, produce, bread or other local goods, there's a place for everyone at the La Mesa Village Farmers Market.

Further information about the La Mesa Village Farmers Market, their 30th anniversary celebrations and more can be found at: lamesavillageassociation.org/ la-mesa-village-farmers-market.



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For a limited time, readers of this paper will receive a special discount on our full chimney cleaning and safety inspection package with special attention to make sure your chimney avoids summer damage.

## **Back-to-School for grown-ups**



Whether you're cracking textbooks, doing the school run, or looking to learn something new, there's no time of the year, quite like "back-to-school" season.

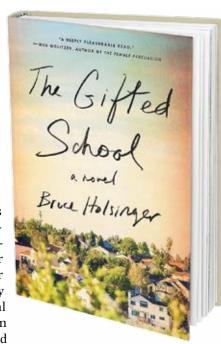
In celebration, let's explore some titles that remind us of locker-lined halls, over-filled backpacks, and new reading

If you dream of returning to class to master the culinary arts, The School of Essential Ingredients by Erica Bauermeister will transport you to a cooking class held by talented chef, Lillian, who brings together a group of characters, each with their own struggles and aspirations. As the characters learn to prepare richly described dishes, they also discover more about themselves and their classmates. The book beautifully weaves together their individual stories, showcasing how food can act as a catalyst for healing and self-discovery.

Next, we journey to a New Hampshire boarding school, where Pulitzer Prize finalist Rebecca Makkai's I Have Some Ouestions for You follows renowned podcaster Bodie Kane as she returns to teach at her former high school.

During her brief tenure, Bodie begins to wonder whether, Thalia, a classmate who was murdered at the school in the 90s, was preyed upon, not by the convicted

athletic trainer, but rather by a beloved teacher. She's not alone in her suspicion, as a community of internet sleuths, including some of her current students, is dedicated to uncovering "the truth" of Thalia's murder. The tension builds as Makkai weaves a tale that is part coming-of-age nostalgia and part true-crime thriller



The Gifted School by Bruce Holsinger can take you back to your classroom days. (Courtesy image)

Another ripped-from-the-headlines story is *The Gifted School* by Bruce Holsinger.

This witty and cunningly crafted tale delves into the cutthroat competition among privileged parents vying to secure their children's spots in a new exclusive magnet school. Behind the perfectly polished façades lie secrets,

betrayals, and unexpected plot twists. With razor-sharp prose, Holsinger exposes the complexity of these human relationships and the lengths that we'll go to protect what we cherish.

FEATURE / NEWS

We leave the privileged few in this next title, as we follow the lives of the everyday teens in the background of every YA novel, those who are not the "chosen

ones" tasked with saving the world, but just the regular kids going to school, exploring their identities, and growing toward adulthood. In The Rest of Us Just Live Here by Patrick Ness find a heartfelt ode to seemingly unremarkable lives filled with the magic of growing up.

The Reading List by Sarah Nisha Adams celebrates the transformative power of literature and human connections. Set against the backdrop of a library reading group, Adams beautifully weaves together the stories of previously unrelated individuals, who begin to find solace, understanding, and hope through the books they read and the bonds they form at the library. The Reading List showcases the healing nature of stories and the power of empathy.

To enjoy more learning at the library, join us for a special series of space-themed events in September, exploring rocket launches, life beyond Earth, and more. Attendees will receive free solar viewing glasses, in anticipation of the Oct. 14 Solar Eclipse.

For more information, call the branch at (619) 469-2151 or visit sdcl.org/lamesa.

#### **NEWS BRIEFS**

#### **LA MESA-EL CAJON AAUW BRANCH WELCOMES TECH** TREK CAMPERS SEPT. 9

The opening meeting of the La Mesa-El Cajon Branch of the American Association of University Women for the 2023-24 year features Tech Trek campers and their parents. Also available will be some Tech Trek alumni to share in the morning activities. The meeting will be Saturday, Sept. 9, with a social half-hour beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Tech Trek is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) camp designed to develop interest, excitement, and self-confidence in young women who will enter eighth grade in the fall. It features hands-on activities in STEM-related fields. In the residential camps, all sleeping, eating, instructional and recreational facilities are located on a university campus.

The Tech Trek campers will share their culminating project from camp and their experiences either on the UCSD campus or at the virtual camp.

Featured speaker will be recent SDSU alumna, Linda Clark.

Additionally, this meeting kicks off the branch's annual membership drive. The meeting is open to the public and members are encouraged to bring a friend to see what membership in the branch involves.

All meetings this year will be held at Foothills United Methodist Church 4031 Avocado Blvd. in La Mesa. Social begins at 9:30 and the meeting commences at 10 a.m. with a brief

business meeting including voting for the proposed budget.

For more information about this organization go to lamesaelcajon-ca.aauw.net.

New members are always welcomed and do not need to be invited to attend a meeting.

.....

#### **40TH ANNUAL CELEBRITY WAITERS LUNCHEON SET** FOR SEPT. 22

The 40th annual Celebrity Waiters Luncheon to benefit United Cerebral Palsy of San Diego County will take place on Friday, Sept. 22 at the Coronado Island Marriott Resort & Spa. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. with lunch served at noon.

The ticket price is \$80 per person with sponsorship opportunities available. A live and silent auction will be available along with raffle prizes. Join in while being served by some of Southern California's brightest talent. Christopher Knight from "The Brady Brunch" is scheduled to appear along with other Hollywood celebrities. San Diego's sports teams and media personalities will also attend.

Last year, more than 300 people attended, and over \$60,000 was raised. For more information, call 858-571-5365 or sign up directly at ucpsd.orgor fundraise.ucpsd.org/cwl23.

UCP is among the largest nonprofit organizations in the country with nearly 60 affiliates nationwide providing programs

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 15





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## Halls of Rolando Elementary once again abuzz with laughter and excitement



As the sun sets on a delightful summer and a new dawn rises upon us, the halls of Rolando Elementary are once again abuzz with the laughter and excitement of our students.

It is with great joy and enthusiasm that I, Benjamin Klaus, embrace my new role as principal of Rolando Elementary, and I am thrilled to extend a heartfelt welcome to all our students, parents, and staff as we embark on another incredible journey of learning and growth.

Having spent the last two decades shaping young minds in the vibrant city of San Francisco, I bring with me a wealth of experience and a passion for education that has only deepened over the years. It is an honor to join the La Mesa Spring Valley School District family and to contribute to the rich legacy of educational excellence that is the hallmark of this community.

The first day of school, Thursday, Aug. 10, marked a special occasion as students walked through our doors with backpacks full of anticipation and dreams.

The energy in the air was palpable as friendships were rekindled, new faces were warmly embraced, and the promise of discovery hung tantalizingly close. I was deeply moved by the warmth and spirit of camaraderie that filled the school, reflecting the close-knit nature of our community.

As we dive into the heart of the school year, I want to extend an invitation to all parents and guardians to join us for our upcoming Back to School Night on Thursday, Aug. 17, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. This evening promises to be an insightful opportunity for you to meet our dedicated teaching staff, explore the classrooms where your children will be learning and thriving, and gain valuable insights into the curriculum and activities planned for the year

At Rolando Elementary, we believe in fostering an environment where every child's potential is nurtured and their unique talents are celebrated. Our commitment our students to reach for the stars to academic excellence, character development, and a well-rounded education is unwavering. Together, as a united school community, we will guide and inspire

and become the future leaders of our world.

As the pages of this new chapter unfold, I am excited to witness the incredible achievements, friendships, and memories that will be created within these walls.

Let us embark on this journey with open hearts and eager minds, as we shape the future, one student at a time.



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September 1



September 3



September 9



GIRL NAMED TOM October 5



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## Octogenarian members take center stage at **Foothills Fine Art Gallery**

**Foothills Art Association** By DAWN IVY

We are so proud to feature more than 37 Octogenarian members at the Foothills Fine Art

Gallery in August. The show runs through Sept. 6.

The artists are experienced, skilled, inspiring, and award-winning. Their media and techniques are varied and they are all extremely creative and talented.

Whether watercolor, colored pencils, oil, acrylics, pastels or collage, their

work is admired and collected worldwide.

Be sure to stop by the Foothills Fine Art Gallery during this very special show.

You will be amazed at the talent.



Octogenarians continue to inspire with their artwork of nature and countless other areas of work. (Courtesv image)

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## COURIER

## La Mesa offers free trees to residents in areas with public right-of-ways

By ELAINE ALFARO

Set down roots, water a tree and help bring shade to the city through La Mesa's free tree program.

The City of La Mesa is offering free trees to residents who have public right-of-ways located in front of their property. Public right-of-ways are the small strips of land between the sidewalk and street that often are covered with grass, dirt or cement.

The free tree program is part of the city's Climate Action Plan (CAP) and was created in 2018; however, after implementing the free tree program in certain areas needing urban canopy growth,

the city is now opening up the program to all residents in La Mesa who have a public right-of-way in front of their property.

According to the urban tree canopy assessment cited in the CAP, "La Mesa has an existing urban forest canopy that covers 18% of the city (or 1,050 acres) with potential canopy coverage of 66% in the region. This measure assumes La Mesa can achieve 33% coverage by 2035, for a total urban forest of 2,450 acres."

Through a grant provided by CalFire in 2019, the city has worked on planting 350 trees in the public right-of-ways. The grant is set to expire in March 2024 and the city has achieved 75% of its tree planting goals through the partnerships with CalFire, Tree San Diego and Urban Corps, according to Hilary Ego, environmental program manager. Ego said the grant also allowed the city to conduct a tree inventory of all existing trees in the city, author and adopt an urban forest management plan and conduct education and outreach.

"With the free tree planting program, we are encouraging residents to sign up because we only have a certain amount of space in our parks and medians to plant trees, but there are [public] right-of-ways that are great for tree planting," Ego said. "The city will maintain the trees so they will

become part of our tree maintenance schedule. We're just asking residents to help water them."

Trees perform vital environmental functions such as removing air and water pollutants and capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Additionally, according to Serena Lee, administrative analyst I and member of CAP leadership team, some of the benefits of increasing tree coverage in the city include shade that promotes sustainable energy consumption and reduces the heat island effect. The heat island effect occurs when urban areas have dense concentrations of pavement, buildings and other surfaces that absorb and retain heat. This can increase

energy costs and heat-related illness.

According to the county's Health and Human Services Agency 2021 annual excessive heat report, in 2020 there were 432 heat-related prehospital calls on heat event days and in 2021 there were 223 heat-related prehospital calls on heat event days.

"With these hotter summers, we want to make sure people are staying safe and not overheating. One of the health issues related to climate change is heat illness and heat death," Lee said. "There needs to be a switch to help residents get used to these hotter

SEE **FREE TREES**, Page 13





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CONTINUED FROM Page 12

summers and more frequent heat related incidents. Part of what tree planting does is not only does it provide shade but it also can cool down the home if it is placed strategically."

Elektra Fike-Data, Tree San Diego's executive director, has worked with the city in their tree planting goals and educational outreach.

"It's definitely a collective effort. Through the climate action plan, as that entire plan is being implemented, the tree element serves as a visual representation of the efforts that the city is making," Fike Data said. "Trees are tangible. They provide eco-benefits, social and economic [benefits] as well. The city is working very hard to bring the benefits of urban forestry, including green economies, energy reductions and improving mental health through natural solutions, like tree plantings."

In order to apply for a tree planting, residents can fill out a watering agreement form which will go to the city and its tree planting partners, like Tree San Diego. In the form, applicants can list a preference for the type of tree they would like. Trees offered to homes without



One of the trees taking root in La Mesa. (Courtesy photo)

utility lines include Bottle Tree, Australian Willow, Chilean Mesquite, Brisbane Box and Cork Oak. Trees offered to homes with utility lines include Chinese Pistache, Crape Myrtle, Bay Laurel, Magnolias "Little Gem" and Western Redbud. According to Lee, preferences are recorded but not guaranteed.

Planting season begins in the fall. An arborist will be dispatched to survey the public right-of-way area to see if it is eligible for planting. The

public right-of-way parcel must be three feet by three feet and cannot be cemented/bricked over, according to Lee. If an applicant is a renter or part of an HOA, Ego said she recommends applicants speak to their landlord, property manager or HOA prior to applying. If approved by the City and partnering organizations, a tree will be planted in the public right-of-way, and recipients are expected to follow the watering schedule.

• Year one: five gallons of water, twice a week

• Year two: five to 10 gallons of water, once a week

NEWS / FOOD & DRINK

- Year three: five to 10 gallons of water, twice per month
- Year four and up: As needed in warm months and periods of drought

If you don't have a public right-of-way parcel in front of your property, Ego said there are other ways you can help contribute to promoting urban greenery such as switching to drought-tolerant landscaping and plants. You may even qualify for rebates. There are also public plantings, online training for tree stewardship and other ways to get involved at the city level and with organizations like Tree San Diego.

"I highly recommend taking advantage of free urban forestry education," Fike-Data added. "It's coming directly from our ISA certified arborists. They can attend live educational webinars with them [and] ask questions. It starts with education and awareness about how to care for this living thing and to do that in a careful manner requires learning about it."

To apply for a public rightof-way tree, fill out a watering form.

You can also learn more information on the City's CAP website and urban forestry website.

## Peach cobbler makes a scrumptious dish

What's Cooking with Julie

By JULIE WHITE



September is

a 30-day long

goodbye to

summer. You

have the warm

days but cool-

er evenings. A

prophetic head

of autumn.

Who doesn't like a warm scoop of fruit cobbler? Easy, summery and a scrumptious Southern dish!

#### **INGREDIENTS**

Peach compote:

- 6 large peaches, peeled, cored and sliced
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 6 Tbs butter melted Batter:
- 1 cup all purpose flour
  - 1 cup sugar
- · 2 teaspoons baking powder
  - 1/4 teaspoon salt
  - 1 teaspoon Cinnamon
  - Dash of nutmeg
  - 3/4 cup milk

#### COOKING

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

In saucepan cook the peaches, sugar salt over low heat till sugar is dissolved.

Remove from heat.

Melt butter and pour into a 9 x 13 pan.

Mix the batter ingredients and spoon over the melted butter in pan. Spoon peach mixture over the batter. Sprinkle a little more cinnamon over the this.

Bake about 35-40 minutes. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream if desired!



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## Why is there such a demand for La Mesa Village real estate?



Last month I put two classic La Mesa Village cottages on the market.

The one and only open house for both properties drew some 150 people and generated stacks of offers for both. Two potential buyers flew in just to attend the open houses.

One sold to an all-cash buyer for \$1,130,000 and the other for \$1.2M; both were two bedrooms/two baths - hats off to the owners for creating beautiful living spaces.

Twenty years ago, two-bedroom Craftsman Cottages in Downtown La Mesa like these would have sold in the \$350k - \$375k range. In 2003, per the SDMLS, the average sold price per square foot of a home in La Mesa Village\* was \$280. This year, so far, that number is \$842 – an increase of slightly over 300% in the last two decades!

What gives? Why is it a real estate event when a Village home comes on the market?

Having sold real estate locally for over 21 years, I have some theories:

1. Lack of inventory. Excluding the two on 3rd Street I just sold, only one other home has sold in La Mesa Village so far in 2023. There are currently no homes on the market in Downtown La Mesa. I frequently receive, "Any Village homes coming on the market?"

2. People gravitate toward beauty, charm, vintage, and history. Communities well known for their homes with character such as La Mesa, Coronado, Catalina, Laguna Beach, Kensington, and Mission Hills attract buyers passionate about historic architecture who are willing to pay a premium price for a 1920s Spanish Revival, 1930s Monterey Craftsman or 1960s Mid-Century Modern.

La Mesa is 111 years old. If you ever want to go down the rabbit hole of La Mesa's past, visit the La Mesa History Center located at the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House Museum and Society Archives at 8369 University Ave. It's open to the public every Saturday from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.



This home just sold for \$1.2 million in La Mesa Village. (Courtesy photo)

3. The restaurants. Today, everyone is a foodie and La Mesa Boulevard is an eating destination: Mario's, Sheldon's, Johnny B's, Casa Gabriela, Surfrider Pizza, Centifonti's, Konnichiwa, Curbside, Boss Chicken, Por Favor, City Tacos, Coming-Soon Limoncello, and Farmers Table are always deservedly busy.

Add the Regal and Pete's (no kitchens) and you have a very cool bar scene, too.

4. Walkability. From pre-dawn until late at night, people can be seen walking their dogs, pushing baby strollers, strolling to a restaurant, or taking the Secret Stairs. La Mesa Village is rated a 91/100 Walkers' Paradise.

On foot or by bicycle, one can shop at hardware or grocery stores, or boutiques; eat at cafés, diners, restaurants, or bars; visit

SEE **REAL ESTATE**, Page 15

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Please refer to the Deposit Account Agreement, Account Disclosure, Deposit Rate Sheet and the applicable schedule of fees, or speak with a banker for more details.

2. The FDIC provides separate coverage for deposits held in different account ownership categories. Depositors may qualify for coverage over \$250,000 if they have funds in different ownership categories and all FDIC requirements are met. For additional information, use the FDIC's Electronic Deposit Insurance Estimator (EDIE).

**Real estate** 

CONTINUED FROM Page 14

City Hall or the library; work out at a gym; meet with dentists, attorneys, accountants, chiropractors. Parking the car Friday evening and not starting it up again until Monday morning is not unusual.

5. Community. While the public may remember the fear and destruction of the May 30th, 2020 La Mesa Riot, many people - especially La Mesa locals - remember the organic coming together of hundreds of volunteers armed with bottled waters, brooms, dustpans, trash bags, paint and plywood to help businesses that had been burned to the ground, vandalized and/or graffitied. That goodwill outlasted the demoralization.

6. Events. La Mesa Village Events have put La Mesa on the map. The extremely popular Oktoberfest (the biggest one East of the Mississippi), December's Holiday in the Village, Friday Afternoon Farmers Market and Summer Classic Car Show held every Thursday (turns Downtown La Mesa into our own Nashville with packed streets, bars, and live music) are courtesy of The La Mesa Village Association – a non-profit organization made up

REAL ESTATE / NEWS / SENIORS

of La Mesa Village business owner volunteers to advocate on behalf of all local businesses. The LMVA is La Mesa's buzz.

7. City Hall. The La Mesa City Council, management, and staff are on a first-name basis with business and civic leaders. They recognize that a thriving Downtown La Mesa benefits the entire city with higher home prices, more tax revenue, and

prestige. La Mesa Village is to La Mesa what the Hotel Del is to Coronado.

\* Village Parameters: University Avenue North Fresno Ave South **Edenvale Ave East** Fairview Ave West

–Reach eXp Realtor and La Mesa Vice Mayor Laura Lothian at: Laura@ LauraLothianRealestate.com.

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## **News briefs**

CONTINUED FROM Page 9

and services to children and adults with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. Statistics show that one out of 325 people have some type of cerebral palsy. Fifty percent of children born with CP are born prematurely.

Locally, all monies raised stay in San Diego County, and 86% of all money donated is used for local program services that United Cerebral Palsy provides. UCP of San Diego County was founded in 1958.

#### **SAN DIEGO ELKS LODGE #168 DONATES TO SIX CHARITIES**

San Diego Elks Lodge #168, located at Navajo and Jackson Dr., started off July with a bang.

The Lodge donated \$2,000 to the Lake Murray Fireworks and Music Fest.

It also donated during the month of July a total of \$23,000 to five other charities. The money was part from grants from the Elks National Foundation and from the San Diego Lodge's Charity Investment Fund. \$6,000 was donated to the Armed Services YMCA located next to the Military Housing in Tierrasanta and serves military families with a variety of events, i.e. school supplies in backpacks, various opportunities for children such as a horse camp adventure, and Christmas parties with toys for the children.

Becky's House of the YWCA received \$5,000 to help support survivors of domestic abuse.

The Lodge helped the Just In Time for Foster Youth with \$4,000. Just In Time provides essential support toward self-sufficiency for foster youths ages 18-26 exiting the Foster Youth Care System. Some of that support includes helping with first apartments, transportation, completing college, first jobs, financial guidance, emergen-

cy support, and emotional support. San Diego Food Bank received \$4,000 to help distribute food to those in need. The Lodge also donated \$5,000 to Support The Enlisted Project (STEP) to educate enlisted military personnel with financial planning and also with donations of food, clothing and baby supplies.

San Diego Elks Lodge #168 is proud to serve the community with financial and volunteer support.

#### Make the Right Choice Senior Living

Established in early 2008, Jean Brooks (UCSD Graduate) and Todd Brooks (Air Force Veteran, US Air Force Academy Graduate) wanted to develop better Assisted Living Care Homes and Services for seniors at fair & competitive rates. Right Choice Senior Living has Residential Care Homes located in highly desirable neighborhoods close to UCSD, La Jolla, Pacific Beach, Clairemont (Mount Street Area), La Mesa, Del Cerro. See us today before making your final choice. Make the Right Choice Today.

We are excited to announce that Silverlight Homes of La Mesa will be joining the Right Choice Senior Living network of Assisted Living Care Home Communities

Beautiful La Mesa Neighborhood Close to ALL, Small Intimate Homelike setting, Reasonable Visitation & Outings, Accommodations & Experienced Teams ince 2008 For photos, video tours please visit. https://silverlighthomesllc.com/

For more info call (619) 246-2003 or go to the www.rightchoiceniorliving.org. NOW HIRING CAREGIVERS! CALL NOW!

Learn more about MesaView Senior Assisted and Independent Living!

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 super-

vision. Schedule a tour to learn more about MesaView Senior Assisted

and Independent Living!

#### **Grand Opening New La Mesa Care Home** We are excited to announce that Silverlight Homes of La Mesa will be

joining the Right Choice Senior Living network of Assisted Living Care Home Communities.

Beautiful La Mesa Neighborhood Close to ALL

• Small Intimate Homelike setting • Experienced Team since 2008 Reasonable Visitation Accommodations

• For photos, video tours please visit: silverlighthomesllc.com

Veteran Owned & Operated

619-246-2003

**NOW HIRING CAREGIVERS CALL NOW** 

## 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









DRE#01362585



#### **SELLING or BUYING?**

## Call Me

I can't wait to get started! 619.540.7744

Laura@LauraLothian Real Estate.com

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La Mesa Village Homes

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-See past columns at

**WWW.SDNEWS.COM** 









## **2023 SOLDS**



















