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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

EDUCATION

College Preparatory Middle School welcomes students and families to a new school year



Old and new faces dot the landscape.
Page 4

OKTOBERFEST

Are you headed to La Mesa's 50th Oktoberfest Sept. 29-Oct.1?



Special coverage begins on Page 9

EDUCATION

Grossmont High School celebrates Homecoming



Annual celebration puts focus on number of students. Page 14

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Hauling in the pass for Helix Charter High

Helix Charter High's Jackson Daniels, left, goes up for the ball during the team's 38-34 win over Edison last month. Helix is back in action on Sept. 28 when it visits West Hills High School. Heading into that game, Helix is sporting a perfect 5-0 mark. For more fall sports coverage, see Page 5. (Photo credit: Ryan Rengifo)



La Mesa Branch Library renovation plans get another reading towards expansion

By JESSICA MILLS

Circulating over 60,000 titles each month, the La Mesa Branch Library, located at 8074 Allison Ave., is one of the top library branches in the San Diego Library system.

Around 17 years ago, the library was torn down for a new police department and the city promised to build a new 20,000 square foot library. A 10,000 square foot building was built temporarily and due to a funding issue with the city, the library still occupies the space.

According to La Mesa Mayor Mark Arapostathis, in November 2021, the City Council directed library staff to form a Task Force to research expansion options for the branch. The task force contracted with a consultant to conduct a Library Needs and Feasibility Study. That study can be found at: <https://pub-lamesa.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=10557>.

Mayor Arapostathis detailed the study's findings.



SEE LIBRARY RENOVATION, Page 2

Kids on a tour of the La Mesa Branch Library earlier this year. (Courtesy photo)

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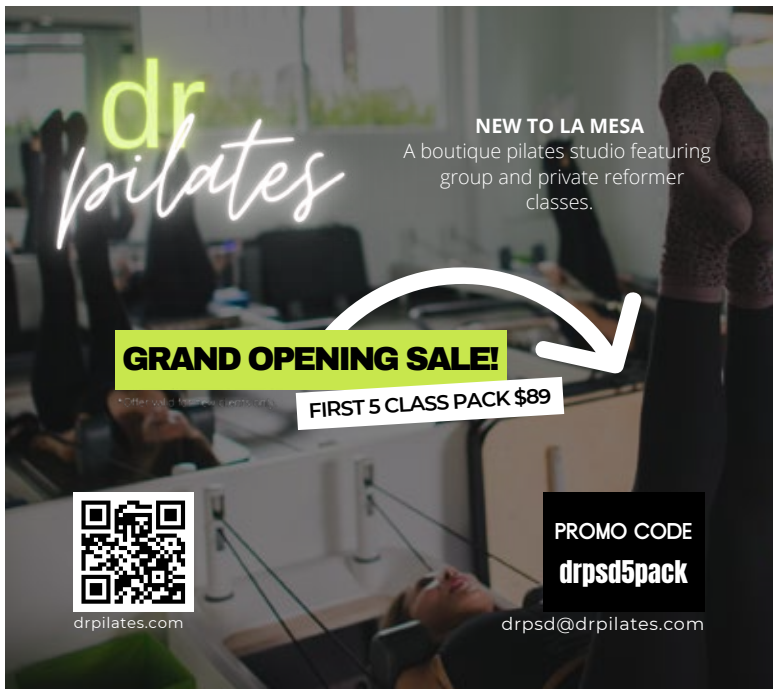
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Focusing in on the Small Image Show

Foothills Art Association

By DAWN IVY

"Sometimes the smallest things take up the most room in your heart." ~ Pooh Bear

We invite FAA members and members of the community to view and shop an amazing collection of small images, with big appeal, at the Foothills Art Association's annual Small Image Show.

The Small Image Show is a juried members' show with entry fees and prizes awarded. The maximum image size is 7 inches x 7 inches, excluding the frame.

This juried show will be displayed in the Foothills Fine Art Gallery through Wednesday, October 4, 2023.

Join us...and celebrate the little things in life!

The Small Image Show Reception & Awards was held on



Checking Out The Sets by Jami Wright. (Courtesy image)

Saturday, Sept. 16 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For more information, visit our website at FoothillsArtAssociation.com, email foothillsartassoc@gmail.com,

com, or call the gallery during open business hours at (619) 464-7167.

The Foothills Fine Art Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Library renovation

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

"66% of La Mesa residents have a need to access free reading or entertainment materials and 71% use books provided by the La Mesa Branch Library," Arapostathis said.

"The top four most important library amenities/facilities to households are: access to free reading or entertainment materials, children's reading and event area, public Wi-Fi and indoor event space."

Based on these findings, three renovation plans were presented to the City Council.

Option one recommended a vertical expansion — adding a

second floor with additional community spaces, staff areas, study rooms and a patio. Pros: building on existing space, the U.S. Postal Service Office would maintain its office, additional community spaces and areas for nondisruptive social events. Cons: elevator and stairs are required, ceiling on the first floor would be compressed to accommodate for the second story and framing may require updates. Estimated cost: \$7,285,15.

Option two is a horizontal expansion and converts the USPS office into community spaces, staff area, study rooms and a patio. Pros: least costly option, additional space is not needed, all functions remain on one floor, additional community areas and separated areas for social events. Cons: lobby and bathrooms would be relocated to accommodate the community room, extra changes may be necessary to support the expansion and the USPS will need to be moved. Estimated cost: \$5,878,57.

Option three involves a new building on an existing civic center lot, adjacent to the current library. The current library building would be repurposed for the city center. Pros: new building would connect public transportation to the civic center, community rooms have controlled access and acoustic separation from the main library, additional buildings could be built on top of the library, the current library building remains to be utilized and construction above the library could be a funding source. Cons: most costly option and funding would need to be sourced. Estimated cost: \$13,842,645.

The city council voted unanimously to go forward with option two, the horizontal expansion.

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More celebrations highlight 30th anniversary of La Mesa Village Farmers Market

There is still celebrating going on as La Mesa Village Farmers Market celebrates its 30th anniversary. The Market takes place each Friday from 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the location of La Mesa Boulevard between Palm Avenue and 4th Street. The celebration during the month of September kicked off earlier this month and highlights the many offerings, vendors and more that so many in La Mesa have come to love and enjoy. Additionally, different market vendors are handing out free 30th anniversary reusable totes filled with freebies & coupons from local businesses to shoppers during the month-long celebration. From produce, bread and more for humans to pet treats and countless other items, there is pretty much something for everyone.

For more information on the La Mesa Village Farmers Market, visit: lamesavillageassociation.org/la-mesa-village-farmers-market.



(Left to Right) Dr. Mark Arapostathis, La Mesa Mayor; Robyn Guy, (former/outgoing) Assistant Market Manager; Pam Rader, Secretary/Treasurer - La Mesa Village Association; Tanya Troiano, (new) Assistant Market Manager; Shane Ray, Market Manager; Theresa Favro, President - La Mesa Village Association. (Photos Credits: Rippee Photography)



(Left to Right) Pam Rader, Secretary/Treasurer - La Mesa Village Association; Theresa Favro, President - La Mesa Village Association; Elizabeth Ranta, Marketing - La Mesa Village Association.

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

LA MESA- Are you an “Empty Nester” who needs a home for the future? Is it time to downsize or to move into another home more suitable for your glorious retirement years?

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If you find yourself in this situation, you’re in vast and good company. And what that means is that there are many wonderful opportunities for you to create this new chapter in your life...if you know what it takes to get the most out of the equity you’ve built up in your current home.

To help you understand the issues involved in making such a move, and how to avoid the 9 most common and costly mistakes most Empty Nesters make, a new report called “Empty Nester: How to Sell the Place You Call Home” has been prepared which identifies these issues, and shows you how to steer clear of the mistakes that could cost you literally thousands of dollars.

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College Prep welcomes students and families to a new school year

 College Preparatory Middle School
By MITCHELL MILLER 

As we begin a new school year here at College Prep, we are thrilled to see many new students

and families as well as all of our returning Tiger families. We started the year with a very successful Ice Cream Social, allowing our newer students to come visit the campus, meet some of their teachers and get rid of those butterflies that come with a new

school year. Thanks to our amazing PTSA for hosting the event as well as members of our newly formed Student Government Association (SGA) for showing our new families around the campus. We have plenty to celebrate as we build upon our foundation of

success, including being designated as a California Schools to Watch (2023), National Schools to Watch (2023) and being ranked #8 California Charter Middle School and #64 California Middle School by US News & World Report.

These achievements are a true reflection of all of the hard work by our students, families and staff... and we feel that we are just getting started.

We already have lots going on so far this year including our PTSA's Feed the Tiger Fundraiser (9/11 – 9/22), Parent-Teacher Conferences and our annual Scholastic Book Fair (10/9 – 10/13).

We also have many fun activities to plan for: assemblies, our quarterly College Bound Celebrations and various grade level field trips which includes, of course, 6th Grade Camp at Camp Cuyamaca.

As we embark on a new school year, our students are getting ready to complete their Beginning of the Year i-Ready Diagnostics which provides a wealth of information regarding our students' areas of strength and areas that they may need a little extra support. This information will then enable us to track their progress throughout the school year.

After-School Tutorial begins this week which provides an opportunity for our students to work with their teachers to get any extra support needed to start the school year off on the right foot.

We would like to remind our Tiger families of the importance of attending school, on time so that their students are ready to learn, each and every day. As we get reoriented to the school routes, we ask our families to please be courteous, safe and good neighbors during student drop off and pick up.

Here's to a wonderful new school year, filled with learning, growing, and fun. We look forward to continuing to build our nurturing community where all of our Tigers are supported as we prepare them for high school and beyond.

And as we say each day at College Prep, please Take Care of Yourself, Each Other and This Place! Mitchell Miller is the director of school operations at College Preparatory Middle School.

For all things College Prep – visit our school website: MyCPMS.net.

—Mitchell Miller is the director of school operations at College Preparatory Middle School.

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Helix, Grossmont fall varsity sports going in search of more victories

By DAVE THOMAS

With September winding down, fall varsity sports teams at both Helix Charter High School and Grossmont High School, respectively are well into their campaigns.

That said, a number of teams are looking for more wins as October looms on the horizon.

At Helix in **boys' water polo** action, the Highlanders under head coach John Dorfi had a 4-2 record going into action recently.

According to Dorfi, key players include Asher Eaton (driver/utility), Xylen Rotsart (2 meters), Coen Riggins (2 meter defense) and Tobin Gloyer (driver/utility).

"Our goals for the season are to win the league and make CIF Top 10," Dorfi remarked.



Helix boys' water polo member Asher Eaton sees action during an earlier season invitational matchup. (Courtesy photo)

• In **girls' field hockey** play, Helix was at 0-4 for head coach Rhona St. Clair-Moore entering last week.

St. Clair-Moore noted key players to date include Katie Evans, Yesica Tula Alonso, Morgyn Miller and Karoline Dominguez.

"After coming off of a summer where our players did not play, we are trying to quickly regain the high level of play that Helix is used to," St.Clair-Moore stated. "Players are working hard to defend our league title once league play begins in October."

• On the **girls' tennis** courts, Helix was sitting with a record of 9-2 as of late last week for head coach Dan Potter.

According to Potter, the team is led by number one singles player Ella Short, seniors Jade Findley and Brenda Arevalo, and junior Selina Bilbrey.

"Our goal is to compete for the Grossmont Hills League championship and return to the Division I CIF playoffs," Potter remarked.

• On the gridiron, the Helix **football** team came into this week with a record of 5-0 and a number three ranking in San Diego for head coach Damaja Jones.

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For breaking news and investigative story ideas contact the editor by phone or email.

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Coming out led to unconditional love and support from family and friends

Grossmont Student Takes

By AUBREY WISNIEWSKI



I never thought that I would come out.

I have known I liked boys and girls ever since I was little, but speaking that into existence seemed forbidden.

That changed recently when I came out on social media while simultaneously announcing that I am my school's Gender-Sexuality Alliance club's new secretary.

The post was uploaded and I was met with surprise and support.

I felt overwhelmed with my own anxiety and fear. When this went public, I knew I could be met with the disgust and homophobia of others. I have always surrounded myself with people full of love and tolerance, but there are always going to be people with prejudice in their hearts, either using other people's identities as the butt of their jokes or treating them with genuine hatred and disgust.

The mixed emotions gave me whiplash.

I felt tired, proud, and confused. I was afraid of looking too straight to be considered gay and being met with malice from preconceived notions of who I am. I am privileged.

Through the mixed emotions and anxiety I have been met with unconditional love and support from family and friends. Being in this position, I could only imagine how difficult this process would be for my peers whose only support comes from school provided resources.

We live in an age where sexuality and the protection of our community's youth has become politicized. It is no longer just a question of who a person is attracted to or who a person identifies as. We are moving backwards.

On Aug. 14, 2023, the Grossmont Union High School district voted to terminate the long-existing contract with the mental health service San Diego Youth Services. This program provided for all students and had programs specifically geared towards LGBTQ youth.

These programs included services such as gender affirming care, drug and alcohol abuse resources, and community building. Queer youth have higher suicide rates. These services save lives.

Community members initiated the dissolution of this contract when they spoke against SDYS, describing them as having "creepy agendas" being pushed upon students.

Never once has a "creepy agenda" been pushed upon me, even as a gay student.

These services have simply been available for the students who want to use them with parent consent.

GUHSD board members agreed with these misinformed community members, letting their own personal bias lessen their compassion for these children depending on the important resources that have been revoked. Church and state are no longer separate. These board members are violating students' constitutional rights by allowing their own beliefs to obstruct their ability to adequately provide for their community.

They describe wanting to move to a service that better represents "East County values" even after cries of protest from the GUHSD community.

The new program, Wellness Together, does not provide specific services for LGBTQ+ youth.

This is unacceptable, considering queer children need specialized care due to higher rates of suicide and mental illness.

Not providing adequate care is inherently hateful, abusive, and directly contributes to higher suicide rates.

Editor's note: This is a monthly opinion piece featuring takes in and out of the classroom from students at our area high schools. This month's piece was written by Grossmont High School student Aubrey Wisniewski.

Library renovation

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

La Mesa Branch Library Branch Manager Cassie Koldewyn expressed her support of the library's renovation decision.

"The La Mesa Branch supports the goals of the City of La Mesa by participating in community events, promoting City services and partnering on programs. An expanded library space would help enhance those efforts by providing quiet meeting spaces, a dedicated and enclosed location for large-scale programs and increased access to reading, viewing and listening materials."

However, Friends of the Library President and Library Task Force member John Schmitz stated his support for the third option.

"The building the library currently occupies wasn't designed as a library," Schmitz said. "If we started from scratch, the amenities could be tailored directly to the library's needs. The biggest needs are a community room space that allows for programs that might otherwise be disruptive, a children's area and study rooms. Having the ability for an individual or a small group to do something without being disturbing to others or others disturbing them seems to be a nice feature."

Additional information about the library is located at <https://cityoflamesa.us/1027/La-Mesa-Library>.

Protecting every type of family in every community

City Attorney News

By MARA W. ELLIOTT



As prosecutors, often the hardest cases we face are the ones with victims abused by the people who were supposed to love and protect them. It is the ultimate betrayal: parents who harm their children, children who harm their elderly parents, and intimate partners who harm each other.

The betrayal in these cases is so severe that victims need immense support to heal and recover. Our Family Justice Center, known as Your Safe Place, provides this added level of support every day.

When you elected me as your City Attorney, one of my first steps was to move Your Safe Place out of the Police Department and into our office.

I made that move, because you have entrusted your City Attorney to always protect the most vulnerable members of our society, especially those who cannot defend themselves. I wanted to set the expectation that attorneys in my Office would focus on delivering both justice

and compassion to those vulnerable children, parents, partners, and spouses who had experienced trauma and betrayal.

One of the strengths of our City is its openness and diversity; we understand families come in all shapes and sizes.

That is why we have expanded the work of Your Safe Place from a narrow focus on domestic violence to include sex trafficking, sexual assault, family violence, and elder abuse. We have also expanded our layers of protection to include assistance obtaining a Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) to help keep weapons away from abusive individuals.

Even as we work to serve every person with whom we make contact, we understand that help remains out of reach for many others.

We know there are people experiencing abuse in every community across San Diego, but not every community has easy access to transportation, and not every victim can take time away from work. That is why we have launched the mobile clinics of Your Safe Place. Our dedicated staff is fanning out across the

City to provide support to those who need it where they need it - in their own neighborhoods.

Bringing justice and compassion to those who have experienced betrayal, abuse, and violence is some of the most rewarding work we do.

If you work with a community organization or neighborhood group, we invite you to partner with us. We are actively seeking safe spaces in every community to increase access to our services. This is your opportunity to bring hope and healing to neighbors, colleagues, friends, and family.

When community organizations and neighborhood institutions contact the Your Safe Place mobile unit, we work with them to find a convenient time for our team to visit their facilities. Together, we help spread the word about the availability of our services in a manner that is geared toward that community's comfort level. Later, we schedule appointments with those who need the support.

Our mobile clinics can help the members of your community with free support services to anyone who has experienced

domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, family violence, or elder abuse. The support may include safety planning, legal help, restraining orders, immigration services, housing support and protection from gun violence. Please consider partnering with us to help those in need in your own community.

To plan a mobile clinic visit by the Your Safe Place team, contact Your Safe Place at (619) 533-6000 or via email at Infoysp@sandiego.gov.

If you believe you are in danger, contact the Your Safe Place, a Family Justice Center, which provides free comprehensive services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, family violence, and elder abuse. You are not alone. We are here to help.

Reach the Center at 619-533-6000 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. For assistance 24 hours a day call 888-DV-LINKS (888-385-4657). For emergencies, call 911. More details are online at sandiego.gov/fjc.

—Mara Elliott is the City Attorney of San Diego.



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Fall sports

CONTINUED FROM Page 5

Jones noted there have been various contributors to date so far, including quarterback Ryland Jessee, running back/defensive back Kevin Allen, defensive back/wide receiver Jackson Daniels, offensive/defensive lineman Daniel Larsina, offensive linemen/defensive linemen/linebackers Jirah and Jeremiah Savaiinaea, and defensive and offensive linemen Anthony and Jordan Gash.

“Our goal is to compete for a CIF championship,” Jones commented.

• In **girls’ volleyball** play, the team was sitting with a 6-2 record for head coach Zoe Varela Beltz as of last week.

According to Varela Beltz, key players to date this season include Temukisa Sangiao, Bella Barrios, Guilianna Guarotta, Kyra Miles and Niloofar Jorbozeh.

“Our goals are to continue to grow as a program and to make

it to the state playoffs again this year for Division II.”

At Grossmont High, the **girls’ golf** team was sporting a 6-1 record recently and a number 10 rating in Division I.

According to head coach Jim Earley, top returners are sophomore Anabella Van Cotthem (league champ ‘22), senior Erica Freeman (conference champ ‘22) and senior Leah Yost.

“Our goals are to win our tough league, make it to CIF as a team, and have as much fun as possible,” Earley stated.

• In **football** action, Grossmont headed into play last week with a mark of 2-2 for head coach Anthony Lawrence.

Lawrence noted key players include senior quarterback Hudson Herber, senior defensive back/wide receiver Josh Ferrara, senior wide receiver Cody Bigley, senior wide receiver Elias Burlaza, senior defensive back/linebacker Zelan Reynolds, senior defensive end Jacob Suter, senior linebacker/defensive back Walter Jackson and senior running back Isaac Aceves.

“By the end of the season I want our team to understand the importance of hard work and attention to detail,” Lawrence stated. “I want us to leave everything on the field. I also want us to all have passing grades at the end of the semester and treat everyone we come across on campus or in the community with love and respect.”

• In their first season of **girls’ flag football**, the Lady Foothillers got off to a 3-0 start for head coach Tony Lawrence.

According to Lawrence, key players to date include Guliana Balistrieri, Dahlia Blake, Marissa Farace, Ashley Beard and Gabi Thomas.

“Our goal is simple – to understand football concepts, work hard and have fun,” Lawrence commented. “When we started, most of the girls did not know what the line of scrimmage was, what a ‘snap’ was or basic understanding of how to catch a football and keep running. Now we employ six different defensive looks and a 30-play playbook. We had a spirited ‘discussion’ between two players about who has to be off the line of scrimmage so we have a legal formation. The idea that they grasped that was more than I hoped for – now they are debating it. We have a strong junior varsity and an amazing group of hard-working players who I treat like football players and athletes – not high school kids or ‘girls’.”

• In **boys’ water polo** play, the Foothillers under head coach Clint McLaughlin have had a tough schedule to start out the year were at 1-7 early last week.

According to McLaughlin, the 2023 varsity team has a lot of new faces contributing to the program this year.



The GHS girls’ tennis team takes a moment out from watching teammates in action. (Courtesy photo)

“The 2023 team has only one returning starter from the 2022 team, but the new players are learning quickly and making big strides,” McLaughlin commented. “The team has really grown together through camping trips and travel trips they have been able to attend already this season and are really working hard in the pool.”

McLaughlin noted the squad has a strong group of seniors leading the team this year.

Senior Ryan Motta is an all-around stand out, Daniel Drake is our defensive specialist, Jacob Starkey is our go-to on offense, Keler Smith is our point guard and Andrew Hall is great utility man for us,” McLaughlin remarked. “We also have a great group of up-and-coming sophomores led by Gabe Acuna, Garrett Bowles, Carson Hall and Peter Nelson.”

As McLaughlin sees it, this team has really grown throughout this season already and its goal is to be hitting full stride in the next couple of weeks, which will allow them to compete for the league championship and hopefully make a big run in the CIF playoffs.

• In **girls’ volleyball** action, Grossmont under head coach Grace Campbell went into play last week sporting a 4-4 record.

Campbell said key players to date this season include Abby Chiu, Evin McDowell, Dahlia Blake and Ellie Dilgard.

“Our goals are to finish above .500 and make a solid playoff run,” Campbell noted.

Editor’s note: All fall varsity sports head coaches at both schools were asked to provide information for this article.



GHS golfers Erica Freeman and Anabella Van Cotthem have had much to smile about in their last two seasons of golf for the Foothillers. (Courtesy photo)



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La Mesa Oktoberfest all set for 50th anniversary

La Mesa Oktoberfest will celebrate a monumental 50th year with the largest celebration to date in the La Mesa Village from Sept. 29-Oct. 1.

This San Diego staple event kicks off Fall celebrations across the county with three days of free Oktoberfest celebrations, live music, traditional food and drink,

games and so much more for the whole family. To commemorate the milestone 50th year, La Mesa Oktoberfest is rolling out a limited release

of collectable 50th Anniversary memorabilia and merchandise available while supplies last.

Dance the day (and night) away with non-stop performances by local and regional bands for young and old alike with German Polka bands, indie rock jams, cover bands, brass musicians and more! Grab your steins and get ready to "Prost!" (Cheers!), because there is a libation to satisfy the taste of every Mann or Frau at this year's Oktoberfest – including a traditional keg tapping ceremony not to be missed.



A fully loaded food court will offer a wide variety of traditional



There is much to do and see when attending the annual La Mesa Oktoberfest. (Photos courtesy of McFarlane Promotions)



celebration



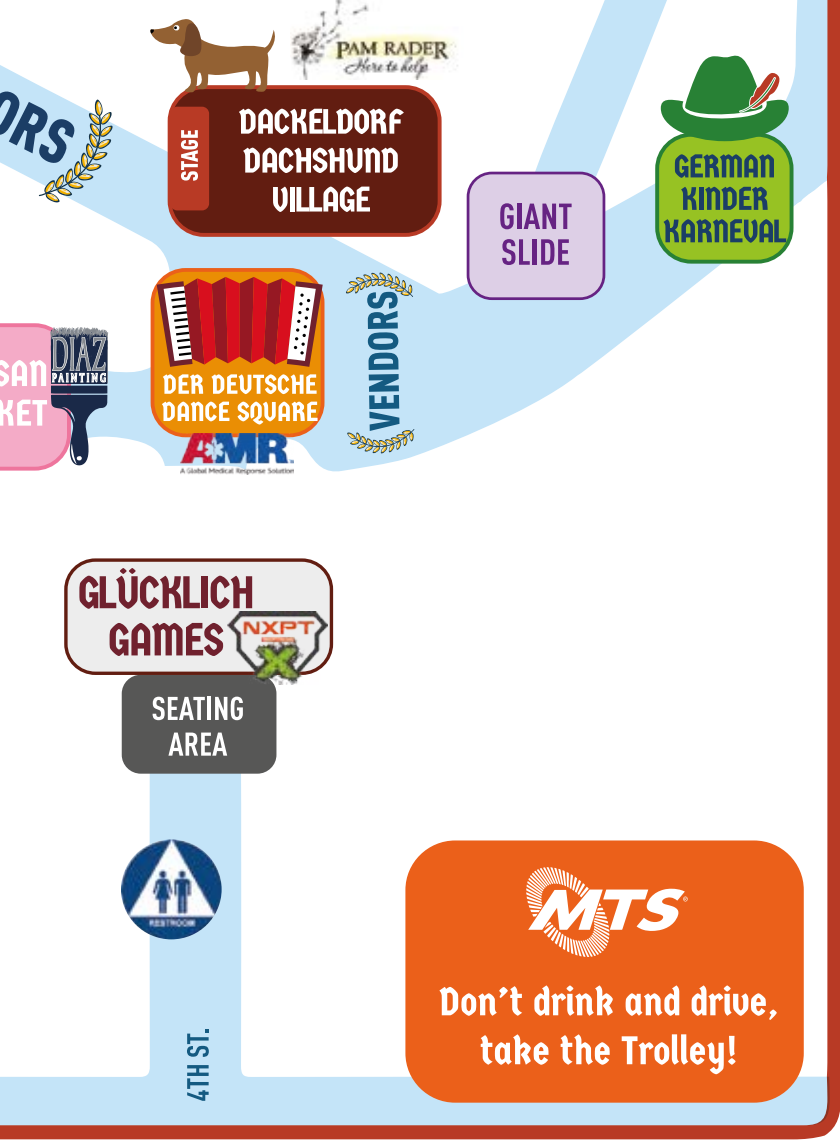
German food, giant pretzels, bratwurst, schnitzel, and other delicious delights. Those who are looking for a less traditional bite will delight at the Food Faire featuring more than 40 unique food vendors throughout the event grounds ready to satisfy any craving.

Gather up your brute and brawn for the Glücklich Games and battle it out in a series of ferocious games. Attendees will have the chance to compete in challenges like Keg Stands, NXPT Workout Challenges, Air Bike Sprint, Sandbag Toss, Farmer's Carry, Tank Push and more. Winners receive

coveted La Mesa Oktoberfest metals and bragging rights.

Another long-loved tradition of La Mesa Oktoberfest are the long rows of specialty vendors throughout the event.

The Artisanal Market features boutique, small-business vendors offering unique and hand-made items. Guests can expect more than 100+ vendors to browse and shop. This is a huge part of the La Mesa Oktoberfest culture from the festival's beginning and is the perfect stop for holiday shopping for your loved ones (and yourself).



2023 50th Anniversary Lineup - Three Epic Unique Areas

The Hofbräuhaus Biergarten is the largest biergarten featuring the Main Stage of cover band and oompah band programming, a large tent style communal seating, sing-a-longs, interactive games, walk up German food booths and over 150 ft of beverage service stations. For VIPs, there is an additional VIP-only bar at this stage for optimized service.

Friday, Sept. 29 th	Saturday, Sept. 30 th	Sunday, Oct. 1 st
4PM–4:45PM: Polka Party	10:30AM–12:15PM: Polka Party	12:00 PM–1:00 PM: The Beatles Cover Band
5PM–5:45PM: Lady Dotty & the Diamonds	12:30 PM–1:15 PM: Smooth Excursion	1:15 PM–2:00 PM: Polka Party
6PM–6:45PM: Polka Party	1:30 PM–2:15 PM: Polka Party	2:15 PM–3:00 PM: Jimmy's Buffet
7PM–8:15PM: Betamaxx	2:30 PM–3:15 PM: Red Headed Stranger	3:15 PM–4:00 PM: Polka Party
8:30PM–10PM: Cassie B Project	3:30 PM–4:15 PM: Polka Party	4:15 PM–5:45 PM: The Trip
	4:30 PM–5:15 PM: Solitary Diamonds	6:00 PM–6:15 PM: Polka Party
	5:30 PM–6:15 PM: Polka Party	6:30 PM–8:00 PM: ABBA LA
	6:30 PM–7:30 PM: Power Snake	
	7:45 PM–8:15 PM: Polka Party	
	8:30 PM–10:00 PM: Paging the 90s	

The Palm Avenue Bier Hall has been expanded for 2023 and is the most traditional biergarten with restaurant-style service, oompah bands, polka groups and interactive games. Alternating Oompa Brother's Band and interactive games Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Der Deutche Dance Floor is a lounge-style biergarten with classic San Diego vibes including craft bier, free-play games, and DJ beats.

Friday, Sept. 29 th	Saturday, Sept. 30 th	Sunday, Oct. 1 st
DJ Lineup: 4PM: TPE 6PM: DJ Yodah 8PM: DJ Dax	DJ Lineup: 10AM: DJ Yodah 12PM: TPE 2PM: DJ Edge 4PM: DJ Latina	DJ Lineup: 12PM: TPE 2PM: Wolfgang Alexander 4PM: DJ Yodah 6PM: TPE
Interactive: Hula Hoops, Interactive Dance, Ana's Belly Dancers, Groove Dance Floor	Interactive: Hula Hoops, Interactive Dance, Line Dances, Visionary Dance Theatre, Ana's Belly Dancers, Groove Dance	Interactive: Hula Hoops, Interactive Dance, Ana's Belly Dancers, Groove Dance

A Biergarten Pass is \$5 for adults and free for children. Upgrade your experience and go VIP with packages ranging from \$10 to \$45. For those under 21 there are also packages available with perks like VIP entry, VIP restrooms, and flower crowns or chicken hats.

La Mesa Oktoberfest VIP Ticket Packages for the Hofbräuhaus Biergarten:

- Hofbräuhaus VIP Experience (\$15)**
Biergarten Pass with access to all 3 biergartens | Hofbräuhaus Biergarten Dedicated VIP Entrance | Dedicated VIP Bar | Additional Restrooms Available for VIP only, Front of the line entrance privileges.
- Hofbräuhaus VIP Experience (\$30)**
(2) 16oz Biers | Biergarten Pass with access to all 3 biergartens | Hofbräuhaus Biergarten Dedicated VIP Entrance | Dedicated VIP Bar | Additional Restrooms Available for VIP only, Front of the line entrance privileges.
- Hofbräuhaus VIP Experience (\$40)**
(2) 16oz Biers | A 50th Anniversary Commemorative Stein | A Chicken Hat | Biergarten Pass with access to all 3 biergartens | Hofbräuhaus Biergarten Dedicated VIP Entrance | Dedicated VIP Bar | Additional Restrooms Available for VIP only, Front of the line entrance privileges.
- Hofbräuhaus VIP Experience (\$45)**
(2) 16oz Biers | A 50th Anniversary Commemorative Stein | A Flower Crown or German Alpine Hat | Biergarten Pass with access to all 3 biergartens | Hofbräuhaus Biergarten Dedicated VIP Entrance | Dedicated VIP Bar | Additional Restrooms Available for VIP only, Front of the line entrance privileges.



Celebrating its 50th year, La Mesa Oktoberfest continues to top its traditions and present Bavarian festivities that San Diegans of all ages can partake in. All are invited to come and experience this beloved multi-generational tradition that has come to be a local must-stop each Fall.

Hold on to your Lederhosen – 2023 is going to be one for the books.

For more information, schedules, line-ups, and to purchase VIP passes, visit: LaMesaOktoberfest.org.

Volunteers have huge impact on success of annual La Mesa Oktoberfest event

By DAVE THOMAS

Any successful event more times than not needs a slew of volunteers to make it go.

With that in mind, this year's 50th annual La Mesa Oktoberfest is no different. Given the contributions of the volunteers, this popular event runs much more smoothly.

We caught up recently with Laurel McFarlane, president of McFarlane Promotions, the event's organizer. McFarlane noted the importance of volunteers and how their contributions and more make a big difference.

La Mesa Courier: Approximately how many volunteers will be helping with this year's La Mesa Oktoberfest and what are some of the jobs they will have for the event?

McFarlane: In total, we have about 40 volunteers for the La Mesa Oktoberfest. They will be assisting in the set-up of the event, overseeing parts of the

event like the Dachshund Races, the Glucklich Games, information booth assistance, and VIP check-in.

LMC: Are most of the volunteers from the La Mesa area? Do you get volunteers from throughout San Diego wanting to help with this event each year?

McFarlane: While most of the volunteers come from East County, we do receive inquiries from people all around San Diego expressing interesting in volunteering at the La Mesa Oktoberfest. Especially for areas such as the Dachshund Races; they're a big hit!

LMC: How important are volunteers to making such an event like this not only take place but run as smoothly as possible?

McFarlane: Volunteers are a vital facet in making the La Mesa Oktoberfest possible. We have amazing individuals who help in various areas within the festival like the Dachshund Races, the Kinder Karneval, the Glucklich

Games, etc. All areas that are FREE to the public. We aim to provide free, interactive areas that are fun for all ages and volunteers are critical to help not only run the areas, but also keep it free for the community to come out and enjoy it. Apart from that, it's a wonderful opportunity for us to provide fundraising opportunities to partner opportunities like Boy Scouts and Kwana's.

LMC: What advice do you and your Oktoberfest officials give the volunteers before the event happens?

McFarlane: Above all else, we remind the volunteers to enjoy themselves at this event and have fun! We always make sure to remind them to be courteous and kind to all guests and if there is ever any question, to not hesitate to just ask one us! We look to support our volunteers as much as possible. And, of course, we always give them a friendly reminder to keep hydrated, wear sunscreen, and help themselves to the water and



Volunteers are a key piece of the puzzle when putting together a successful La Mesa Oktoberfest each year. This was the scene last year at the Glucklich Games, a free activation within Oktoberfest with NXPT Fit Gym in La Mesa. (Courtesy photo)

snacks we provide in the volunteer area.

LMC: What is it like working with all these volunteers on such a big event for the La Mesa community?

McFarlane: In short, it's nice. It is truly something special to each year be able to work with an amazing group of self-less

individuals who are here to cultivate a sense of community. That's what this event is all about, and has been since its origination 50 years ago. The La Mesa Oktoberfest is all about community building in La Mesa and that is achieved in part with the amazing volunteers. It is truly something special.

La Mesa Oktoberfest all set for 50th anniversary celebration



Take in all the fun Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at the 50th annual La Mesa Oktoberfest. (Photos courtesy of McFarlane Promotions)

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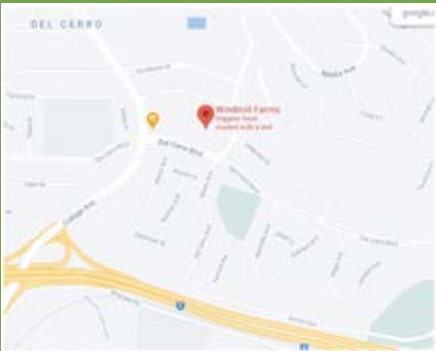
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Homecoming has evolved over time at Grossmont High School

Foothiller Footsteps
By LYNN AND CONNIE BAER

Since 1921, after the graduation of Grossmont High's first class, Homecoming has been a tradition, but over the past 102 years, it has evolved.

In the 1920's Homecoming was called "Alumni Day"; the celebrations varied, but often included an alumni play, a basketball game,

a dance, and alumni attending classes of their favorite teachers.

In 1930, the yearbook states, at "its annual "visiting day" at Grossmont.... as many "old grads" as can possibly do so return to the familiar haunts and halls of their alma mater to live again, for a while, in memories of the time when they, too, were students here."

This year, Homecoming week included dress up days: Wednesday, Dress like Your Favorite Celebrity; Thursday, Western Day, and

Friday, Extreme Blue and Gold. Homecoming was celebrated Friday and Saturday, Sept. 8-9.

Friday began with KUSI's Alarm Clock Pep Rally, with the students and staff arriving at 5:45, followed by spirited activities designed to "raise the roof" and the decibels of the New Gym.

During the school day, the annual pep rally was another enthusiastic event that delighted the students. It included the

SEE GROSSMONT HIGH, Page 15



Homecoming is always a great time at Grossmont High School. The 2023 Court included (L-R): Cody Bigley, Ellie Dilgard, Molly Blakeley, Faythe Jordan, Queen Dahlia Blake, King tony Canepa, Joey Clark, Brandon Hermosillo, Elias Burlaza, Mylie Weston. (Courtesy photo)

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Grossmont High

CONTINUED FROM Page 14

introduction of the 2023 inaugural Girls Flag Football team (GUHSD’s only Flag Football team), followed by student and staff competitions, and performances by the cheer squad.

Again, the GHS staff’s willingness to “look silly” continued to build school spirit by their participation in two contests.

TEAM BOWLING

In the first contest, after being pushed, one staff member rides a dolly down the gym floor and runs into empty boxes, trying to knock

them down. The brave volunteers were Ms. Beckhard (Rider), Mrs. Carlino (Rider), Mrs. McLaughlin (Rider), Ms. Ray (Rider), Mr. Talley (Push), Mr. Valoria (Push), Ms. Barker (Push) and Ms. Alvarado (Push).
Chris Ray, the Sports Medicine Pathway teacher, shared, “Today I was one of the riders for the

teacher bowling event. It is a lot of fun interacting with the students. It’s a great way to create more school spirit, and it is something we can talk about in class besides the usual work assignments.”
Pusher Michele Barker, Special Education aide, revealed, “I volunteered to do the human bowling because I love engaging the

students & showing them that I’m not afraid of making a fool of myself to make them laugh! I’m working towards building self-confidence in my students, which is something I wished I had going through high school. The students responded very

SEE GROSSMONT HIGH, Page 16

Casting a spooky glow from Mount Helix



With Halloween not too far down the road, sights like this should get you in the mood for some spooky fun. This photo was submitted recently by a resident who lives down the mountain from the cross at Mount Helix. This image shows the lights from the cross and the low clouds that made for a spooky glow just hovering there. Speaking of Halloween earlier, do you go all out decorating your home for the big day in October? Do your neighbors put up a lot of decorations? If so, send some of your Halloween photos to: Dave@sdnews.com by Friday, Oct. 20 and they may run in our Oct. 27 issue. (Photo credit: Patty Kreiger)

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Grossmont High

CONTINUED FROM Page 15

favorably; a lot of my former students are used to me being silly on campus. I can't wait until I can volunteer for the next one!"

DON'T FORGET THE LYRICS

In the second contest, a staff member picks a high energy song. Then while it is played, they sing it in front of the school. While they sing the lyrics, they empty a very wet sponge on an administrator.

Teacher singers and their songs were Ms. Montesanto - Song: No Scrubs (TLC); Ms. King - Song: Love Story (T-Swift); Ms. Ecker - Song: God's Plan (Drake); Mrs. Williams - Song: Single Ladies (Beyoncé); Mrs. LoPrell - Song:

Closer (Chainsmokers) and Senora Joyce & Senora Velarde - Song: Vivir Me Vida (Marc Anthony).

While they were singing, these staff members were getting wet: Mr. Rutherford - Teacher; Mrs. Vargas-Wilson - Counselor; Mr. Galvez - VP; Ms. Brooks - VP; Ms. Froumis - VP and Mr. Barnes - Principal.

A delighted Senora Melissa Velarde exclaimed, "I love to volunteer because it is important that my students see me being involved at school. I especially love this assembly and I have been participating in this activity for years. All of my students told me that they saw me and that they really liked the dance, song, activity. Always fun!"

Senora Mercedes Joyce shared that "We have sung "Vivir Mi

Vida" at the assembly for years now, and it has turned into a GHS tradition. The kids learn this song in class, and they love to participate while we sing at the assembly. I love to see the kids involved in school activities.

As soon as we get back to the classroom, they always say "Señora Joyce, we saw you singing! We wanted to sing too"! We loved it! "Vivir Mi Vida" is a song that will always bring good memories to the students and the teachers." This year, Dan Barnes escaped a drenching by dancing with the proficient singers, who were not liable to make a mistake while they sang.

ROYALTY COURT

In the 1920's-1946, Grossmont students selected a Harvest

Queen to celebrate the harvest of farm crops. Grossmont's first Homecoming Queen was chosen in 1947 while the first Homecoming King was chosen in 1974.

This year's Homecoming theme was Music Festival, which was reflected in the half-time show and in the on campus dance held on Saturday night. The halftime festivities included performances by the Royal Blue Regiment and by dance students. Fireworks followed the announcement of the 2023 Royalty Court: Cody Bigley, Ellie Dilgard, Molly Blakeley, Faythe Jordan, Queen Dahlia Blake, King Tony Canepa, Joey Clark, Brandon Hermosillo, Elias Burlaza, and Mylie Weston.

After the weekend, senior Alex Banman exclaimed, "This was

my favorite homecoming of my 4 years at GHS! It was awesome! Friday started at 6 a.m. with the KUSI Alarm Clock Pep Rally, then a school-wide assembly, and finished with fireworks at the half-time show! The Saturday evening dance was a blast!"

For 102 years, at Homecoming, students and staff have created memorable ways to commemorate the words, "It's Great to Be Young and a Foothiller."

For information about Foothiller history and the GHS Museum, email Connie and Lynn at ghsmuseum@guhsd.net or call 619-992-1497; visit our website at foothillermuseum.com to read our August newsletter.

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Phra Ram 9 Thai restaurant, your neighborhood go-to eatery

What's on the menu?
By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON

La Mesa is fortunate to have a large variety of Thai restaurants. If you are looking for a neighborhood comfort food restaurant with calming decor, and a quiet place where you can talk to your dining companions without raising your voice, Phra Ram 9 Thai Restaurant checks all the boxes. Phra Ram is a unique name that Wikipedia defines Phra Ram as “the epitome of moral leadership, ethics, selflessness, and living true to dharma”, a nice vision for any establishment. At Phra Ram, you can sit down or order take-out. There is a small outside patio if you prefer al fresco dining. It has a very extensive menu with many seafood specialties. Some house specialties include fish and seafood dishes. Bangkok Seafood- shrimp, calamari, green mussels, scallops with cabbage served in a fresh pineapple (except on to-go orders). The Crab Lover is fresh crab in fried rice. Although the name is not too tempting, Evil Fish is another unique dish of steamed fish filet topped with creamy choo chee curry sauce and green beans.



If Thai food is on your mind, Phra Ram 9 is a good place to start. (Photo by Robin Dohrn-Simpson)

If you prefer shrimp, the Tango Shrimp is battered shrimp covered with the same creamy choo chee curry sauce and green beans. The Phra Ram Delight is shrimp or chicken topped with peanut curry sauce served over noodles. Ho Mok is an exotic curry seafood with shrimp, calamari, green mussels, and scallops served in a young coconut. Pad See Ew is stir-fried fresh noodles in brown sauce with broccoli, oriental broccoli, and an egg. You can still get the standard Thai dishes like Pad Thai and Red, Green, Yellow, or Panang curries, which are savory and cooked to your preferred heat level. The popular dessert of sweet rice with Mango is always a delight. You can also try sweet rice with coconut ice cream or sweet rice with fried banana. Phra Ram is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. - 9 p.m., closed only from 3:30-4 p.m. to reset from lunch to dinner. It is located at 3705 Avocado Blvd in La Mesa. For to-go orders, call (619) 670-9099.

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Is a pickleball court going to be part of your home plans?

Real Estate Update

By LAURA LOTHIAN



It was a beautiful spring morning in 2020 as I pulled into Collier Park's parking lot excited to join my pickleball friends for some morning games when I saw the heavy chain and padlock barring entry onto the courts. The COVID shutdowns had come to Parks & Recreation.

Several players stood in the parking lot stunned and demoralized at losing an activity that brought sunshine, health, fun, camaraderie, and fitness.

I started playing in 2018 and in one year, I dropped from Size 14 to Size 8. Not only was I hooked on the socializing and fun of the sport, but it was how I successfully lost weight and kept it off.

"What the hell are we going to do now?" we asked each other. All public courts were closed, not just Collier.

I suddenly remembered an odd-looking court I had seen at a client's Mount Helix house. It looked like a tennis court for preschoolers. When I asked her what it was, she replied, "A pickleball court." It was 2010 and I had never heard of pickleball, so her response had not registered. But it did now.

I contacted her and asked if my friends and I could play on her court and she enthusiastically said yes! No one we knew had a pickleball court at their house so for the next two years, her house was our nerve center. Thanks, Claire!

Now I know at least a dozen people with pickleball courts at their homes. Some have created

rudimentary pickleball courts on their driveways with portable nets and chalk and some have gone deep like the one pictured below in Granite Hills with 360-degree mountain views, outdoor kitchen/bar & vanishing edge pool.

In the last few years, the sport has exploded. According to a report by the Association of Pickleball Professionals, more than 36.5 million people played pickleball from August 2021 to August 2022.

It's enjoyed by people of all ages with 18 – 34-year-olds making the largest age bracket. With its popularity growing and public parks overflowing with players - which means waiting for games - many homeowners are building pickleball courts on their properties.

Yahoo News reports there are now more calls to add pickleball courts to homes than pools and decks. Architectural Digest calls pickleball courts "Real Estate's Hot New Thing."

A big yard is not needed. Playing lines measure 20 feet by 44 feet but a total playing surface of 30 feet by 60 feet is the minimum size recommended.

Court materials are the same as tennis courts, asphalt, and concrete, with a perimeter fence needed to contain errant balls. To avoid direct sun in players' eyes, if possible, build in a north-south direction.

The cost to build a pickleball court starts at around \$40,000, once built, upkeep is low. Popular, fun, healthy, and great at family and friendship bonding, is there a downside to owning a private pickleball court? Unfortunately, there can be.

The paddle hitting the hard, plastic ball creates an unmistakable popping sound that players love but neighbors can hate. Pickleball noise measures about 70 decibels 100 feet away from the court. A normal residential area averages roughly 40 to 55 decibels. While 70 isn't dangerous, it can be annoying.

For those wanting to build their own courts, consider the following:

1. Hire a professional court builder. There are many in San Diego County.
2. Contact your city to see if permits are needed.
3. Once built, play at courteous times.
4. The social aspect is a big draw but no need for blasting music and excessive hooting, hollering, and swearing.
5. Invite your neighbors. Teach them to play if they never have.
6. A couple of hours daily is plenty of time to play. Don't have so many players that games go on all day.
7. Don't be overly generous loaning the court to friends, guests, or paying strangers (Swimply/Airbnb) when you're not there. This prolongs the hours neighbors have to deal with the noise.
8. Mitigate the sound with noise abatement screens, acoustic baffles, sound barriers, trees and vegetation.
9. Stay out of the kitchen (inside joke!)

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

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Mt. Helix Toastmasters seeking to add new members

By DAVE SCHWAB

Mt. Helix Toastmasters, an 85-year-old club in La Mesa looking for new members, is inviting the public to visit or interact with it online at its weekly meetings.

The group, founded in 1938, meets Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at La Mesa VFW Post 1774 at 8118 University Ave.

Formed when most clubs were all-male, Mt. Helix is one of only two such Toastmaster clubs remaining among the more than 120 co-ed clubs region wide. Mt. Helix welcomes female speakers and visitors, acting as a gateway to introduce them to the organization and help them find a club just right for them.

Founded in 1924, Toastmasters International, now headquartered in Englewood, Colo., is a nonprofit that builds confidence and teaches public speaking skills through a network with approximately 270,000 members in more than 14,200 clubs in 148 countries. Members prepare and deliver speeches, respond to impromptu questions, and give and receive constructive feedback. Toastmasters empowers members to meet personal and professional communication goals.

La Mesa dentist Larry Pawl, a Mt. Helix member for 28 years, said public speaking is important because it gets your thoughts across. “As a dentist I need to tell people what I think is in their best interest, and before Toastmasters I couldn’t do that,” he said. “Now I have the ability to get my thoughts across. Toastmasters has allowed me to build rapport, talk to people like they want to be talked to, and my productivity has been on a steady rise since I joined.”

Retired Navy Lt. Cmdr. Scott Montgomery, a 20-year Mt. Helixian, remains a club member because “I wanted to make a positive impact on the world and one of the best ways to do that is through public speaking. Mt. Helix is a venue where one can make mistakes in a friendly environment and improve. It is also an excellent way to learn to lead a meeting. I wish I’d joined at an earlier age.”

Bill Buzzell, who’s been club president numerous times, said the group helped him overcome a disability. “What Mt. Helix helped me with the most was my stuttering problem,” he said. “When I was younger I stuttered terribly. But it wasn’t until I first came to Toastmasters that I was actually able to beat that stuttering demon once and for all. If it had not been for that, I would not have been as successful as I’ve been in my career. And I give all the props to Mt. Helix and all the guys in the club.”

Mt. Helix also welcomes, and has benefited, English-as-a-second-language members, like Mason Miralay, an Iranian-American who joined the club about two years ago. “It (club) has improved my speaking skills and given me confidence to speak promptly, both professionally and personally,” he said.

John Flaherty, a 15-year member, joined Mt. Helix to advance his career. He said the club has helped him do exactly that. “It has taught me the dynamics of how to run an effective meeting,” he concluded adding, “Toastmasters gives you the confidence to speak in large groups and helps make the butterflies go away. It teaches

you how to be comfortable (even when you’re uncomfortable.” Those wishing to check out Mt. Helix Toastmasters via Zoom on Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m can join in at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85026052038?pwd=ODBOaVE1TW12dJRPanY3eH-Q1OUtHZz09>.



The Mt. Helix Toastmasters group was founded in 1938 and continues to this day. (Courtesy photo)

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