

Murder trial for man accused of killing North Park teacher underway

By NEAL PUTNAM

The attorney for a man suspected of killing a well liked teacher in North Park told a jury Monday, Feb. 26 his client fired shots in self-defense after the teacher punched him outside his home.

Mario Fierro, 37, who taught at Cathedral Catholic High School, was shot six times and died Feb. 1, 2021, outside his Kansas Street residence near Monroe Avenue.

Jesse Milton Alvarez, 33, is charged with killing Fierro and has pleaded not guilty. His attorney, Kerry Armstrong, told the eight woman, four man jury Alvarez will testify and tell them why he confronted Fierro.

Fierro was dating Alvarez's former girlfriend, Amy Gembara, who broke up with Alvarez in Sept., 2019, but Alvarez had repeatedly continued to contact and stalk her by mail, phone and other methods.

"He doesn't take social cues very well," said Armstrong. "He just didn't understand he was supposed to stay away from her."

Alvarez was diagnosed with autism only after the shooting and arrest in 2021, said Armstrong. He had purchased firearms as "he was concerned for his safety" because there were riots in some cities.

Deputy District Attorney Ramona McCarthy told jurors that Alvarez's computer searches included "how to shoot someone in self defense," and "how to commit the perfect murder."

"This case is very simple," said McCarthy. "His ex was in love but it wasn't with him. She was in love with him," pointing to Fierro's photo on a screen.

Alvarez is also charged with a special circumstance of murder by lying in wait. If he's convicted of first-degree murder, he will be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The trial before San Diego Superior Court Judge Daniel Goldstein is expected to last through March 15.

"This case is a horrible tragic case...but keep an open mind," said Armstrong to jurors. "Religion plays a large part in Mr. Alvarez's life."

Armstrong said Alvarez saw a notice of his ex-girlfriend's engagement online and a photo on social media seemed to show her drinking alcohol, of which he disapproved.

"He believed it was his role to protect her," said Armstrong, adding that he did not go to Fierro's home to kill him.

Gembara was the first witness and she smiled when asked about

Fierro. "Every day with Mario was a gift. He was genuine. He was very loyal," she said.

She detailed her break-up with Alvarez, saying "I thought he was a person of faith. I didn't feel safe." Gembara said Alvarez talked about committing suicide.

Gembara said Alvarez kept calling her, leaving her messages, attempted to break into her apartment, and she went to court to get a temporary restraining order. When that expired, a judge declined to make the order permanent, so his contact continued, she said.

She moved to another residence, but he learned of her new address. She changed phone numbers several times, and added a doorbell camera at home. Once Alvarez approached her while she was at Disneyland, but she just walked away, she said.

David Lam, who used to live near Fierro, testified he was "woken up by noises," particularly gunshots. When he looked outside, he saw "a body on the ground," he added. Lam said he gave police an identification of a vehicle leaving the scene.

The prosecutor said Alvarez, who was staying with his brother in Serra Mesa, had driven his brother's car to the scene. Police later arrested Alvarez at his brother's home.

Uptown // Downtown Briefs



Lafayette Hotel inducted into Historic Hotels of America

The Lafayette Hotel and Club in San Diego, California, is pleased to announce it has been inducted into Historic Hotels of America, the official program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for recognizing, celebrating, and promoting the finest historic hotels in the United States.

The Lafayette Hotel and Club is one of more than 300 hotels and resorts throughout the country that is recognized by Historic Hotels of America for preserving and maintaining its historic integrity, architecture, and ambiance. To be selected for membership in Historic Hotels of America, a hotel must be at least 50 years old; has been designated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark or listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and recognized as having historic significance.

The Lafayette, built in 1946 by Larry Imig, was the only hotel constructed during World War II.

CH Projects to build hotel in Little Italy

CH Projects's founder Arsalun Tafazoli recently purchased six properties for \$13 million with his new LLC Inside Voice on the northern end of Little Italy. He plans to build a boutique hotel, two restaurants, offices and a wellness center but will need to win an appeal with the San Diego Airport Authority as the hotel is in the flight path. CH Projects is the hospitality group behind the Lafayette Hotel's \$31 million renovation and manages two other hotels, La Pensione Hotel in Little Italy and La Avenida Inn in Coronado.

Hotel del Coronado to open Nobu restaurant

Hotel del Coronado has announced plans to open Nobu at Hotel del Coronado, marking the continued expansion of The Del's culinary experiences and the newest addition to the world-renowned Japanese restaurant founded by Nobu Matsuhisa and Robert De Niro. The opening of Nobu at Hotel del Coronado in

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Celebrating 10 years of crow art at Studio Door

By DREW SITTON

Ten years ago, when Studio Door owner Patric Stillman decided to make the monthly theme of his Hillcrest gallery “The Crow Show: Homage to the Ravens” he had no idea he was inviting the ire of scientists and birdwatchers everywhere upon his head – or that the show would be the gallery’s greatest success.

“I had noticed a lot of artists were painting crows in their artwork, and I thought, well, that can be fun. I’m just trying to come up with something different because it seems like everyone does the same type of shows,” said Stillman, whose original concept for Studio Door was to have rotating monthly themes for exhibits in the gallery.

At the time, Stillman had no idea ravens and crows are not the same creature. Fortunately,

many scientists and birdwatchers were happy to enlighten Stillman about the finer points of the passerine bird family. Since then, he has expanded The Crow Show to incorporate all corvids, especially since a large black bird may not be identifiable by species in abstract art pieces.

“I definitely have a ton of people that come in that month that are telling me their stories about their relationships with the crows in their yard or that sort of thing. Because they’re very intelligent, and they actually have social skills, and they’re able to recognize human faces,” he said.

He has learned a lot about the unique features of the birds which are found on every continent except Antarctica. Corvids can also be quite controversial as they are an invasive species that can drive out local bird populations.



The Crow Show is popular enough that patrons have had art snapped up by others if they waited overnight to make a final purchasing decision. (Photo by Patric Stillman)



The Studio Door will host a reception for artists and patrons on Saturday, March 16 from 6-9 p.m. (Photo by Patric Stillman)



(l-r) “The Intellectual” by Kenda Francis, an artist in El Cajon; “Big Beak” by San Diego-based artist Paul Michael Glaser (Photos courtesy the Studio Door)

“My own interest in crows has grown over the years because I’ve been wondering what makes them so attractive to both the artists and the patrons,” Stillman said. “I’ve become much more aware of living with them and having them surround us.... I just am so amazed that their capabilities to communicate and work as a group.”

A decade since opening the Studio Door along Fourth Ave. in Hillcrest, The Crow Show is the only original theme he still follows and is his most popular exhibition of the year.

“There’s a lot of artists that are really devoted to that show,” Stillman said.

Artists who had their work passed over by jurors have told him they immediately started working on the next year’s submission. Patrons too were calling

him in February to see when precisely the Crow Show opens so they would get a first look at potential purchases, a request that does not occur for other shows.

Ahead of the annual show, Stillman puts out a national call for corvid art and receives hundreds of submissions. A different juror each year then selects 50 to 60 pieces that will be in the gallery while an additional 50 artworks are displayed on the Studio Door website.

For the first time, Stillman juried the Crow Show himself in honor of the 10 year anniversary. He said the show always draws strong work but this year seemed exceptional, with pieces normally qualifying for the studio show being relegated to the online gallery.

Although the Crow Show is national, with the international addition of Canadian artist

James Crow this year, the majority of the artists still reside in San Diego where places for mid-career artists to display their work have evaporated, according to San Diego Magazine. With wealthy people buying less art, the Studio Door has survived by being a community gallery with artworks ranging from a few hundred dollars to thousands.

“It’s definitely highs and lows... I’ve survived 10 years which I think is just amazing,” Stillman said. The Crow Show is a major contributor to Stillman’s success through tough situations such the early stages of a small business and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year’s Crow Show will be on display at the Studio Door, 3867 Fourth Ave. From March 1 through 30. A reception will be held from 6-9 p.m. on Saturday, March 16.

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Beauty blossoms at the Bea Evenson Fountain

By CYNTHIA G. ROBERTSON

Walking up the El Prado towards the bridge leading to the Inez Grant Parker Memorial Rose Garden, you'll find a gorgeous fountain. The Bea Evenson Fountain is one of the most acclaimed landmarks of the park. Both children and adults gravitate towards it. You'll often see performers in the vicinity with the fountain offering a calming atmosphere. Seats at the fountain allow you to watch up close the water spray that can shoot up as high as 25 feet.

From mid-February through about mid-March, the fountain becomes even more picturesque with the nearby ornamental pear trees in full bloom. The trees' white blossoms resembles white lace and light pink pearls; the blossoms dress up the walkway leading to the fountain. It is a sight to behold. Even the normally blasé observer will appreciate the breath-taking view.

While Kate Sessions is known as the "Mother of Balboa Park," Bea Evenson, the fountain's namesake, was also a tireless and beloved civic volunteer. She strove to preserve and protect the Spanish Colonial architecture of Balboa Park. In 1967, she founded and became the leader of a civic group named The Committee of 100. In doing so, Evenson sparked community interest and raised funds to help preserve the original architecture of the 1915 Exposition buildings along the Prado in Balboa Park.



Pear tree blossoms will be in bloom until mid-March. (Photos by Cynthia G. Robertson)

Bea Evenson died on October 31, 1981, at the age of 81. A small plaque to her memory was affixed to the west side of the Bea Evenson Fountain in the Plaza de Balboa in Balboa Park in 1981.

After Evenson's death, the fountain debuted in May 1981, quickly becoming the centerpiece of the north El Prado area. With its enchanting display of waterworks inside a tiled, circular pool, the fountain has always attracted immediate attention with its lively water.

To the east of the fountain, you might notice a small wind gauge on top of a slim pole. This gauge controls the height of the fountain's water spout. On windy days the spout is lowered to keep water from spraying into the air. The fountain shoots up with its full strength on days with no wind.

Often mirrored in the fountain waters is the Natural History Museum Building, affectionately called The Nat by locals. From the back steps of The Nat, you can enjoy another view of the fountain. The museum, founded in 1874 as the San Diego Society of Natural History, was given a major reconstruction in 2001. The remodeling of this oldest scientific institution in Southern California more than doubled the facility's size. Watch for its new nature garden to blossom into being sometime in the summer.

Directly opposite The Nat, the Fleet Science Center offers outdoor seating at their Craveology Café, an excellent place to take in views of the iconic fountain and all the activity surrounding it. Hot dogs, grilled cheese, and slushies are just a few of the treats on the café's menu. In the evening, pretty rainbow lights line the eaves



The fountain is the centerpiece of the north El Prado area of Balboa Park yet is a late addition to the park as it was completed in 1981.

of the Science Center; the colors frame the fountain spray, lending a mystical quality to the icy, white fountain water.

Balboa Park is a plethora of beauty, thanks to commitment and perseverance of people like Bea Evenson. She would be thrilled to know that today millions of people are now enjoying the fruits of her labor.

— Cynthia G. Robertson is an award-winning freelance writer and photographer, putting together interesting and informative articles for more than 30 years. Her stories, essays and poems have also been published in "Acorn Review" and several anthologies, including "Six Feet Apart...in the Time of Corona." She blogs about her observations of nature and spirituality, and in 2019, she penned her first novel, "Where You See Forever." Find out more at www.cynthiarobertson.com.

WOMEN'S HISTORY TOUR

A new tour focused on women's history in Balboa Park and San Diego is available just in time for Women's History Month. Free in the month of March, the public tour travels between treasured park landmarks and discusses the remarkable women who contributed to the park's rich history.

The tour is hosted by the Balboa Park Visitors Center, and is the product of a collaboration between the Women's Museum of California, San Diego History Center, and Forever Balboa Park. Tours meet at the Bea Evenson Fountain, in front of the Fleet Science Center, and run from 12 p.m. on March 3, 14, 20 and 30. Sign up at eventbrite.com.



While playing in the water is not allowed, many recreational enthusiasts run or even bike around the flat edge of the fountain.



The fountain waters shoot higher the less windy it is but are glorious any day.



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The Timken Building on the corner of Fifth and Market streets. (Photos by Tim Trevaskis)



Carrie De Frantz, a Black woman, managed this former hotel for 20 years starting in or around 1925.

The Timken and the Yuma revisited

Gaslamp Landmarks
By SANDEE WILHOIT

In honor of both Black History month (February) and Women's History month (March), it is most appropriate to revisit two of the Gaslamp's iconic structures, which impacted both women and Black history. Although they are widely known for not only their architecture, but for the early San Diego businessmen who built them, these buildings played an important part in other areas of the business community.

THE TIMKEN BUILDING

Realtors will tell you that "location, location, location" is everything, but this prime piece of corner real estate had a rather inauspicious beginning. In its early years, after its initial sale in 1870 by Alonzo Horton for \$1,500, the property changed hands on a regular basis. Each time it sold, the property increased in price. By the time Henry Timken purchased the parcel in 1887, the price had risen to \$50,000!

Timken acquired his great wealth from his inventions of the

Timken spring, which is used in various types of vehicles, and the Timken roller bearing, which enabled larger loads to be hauled by horses. Both were essential to San Diego's growing economy. He was referred to as an "Eastern capitalist," as he moved his family from Missouri in 1887, and promptly invested \$2,000,000 in local real estate. He was not only a capitalist, but also a philanthropist. Through the Timken Foundation, we have the Balboa Fine Arts Museum, the Timken Gallery, areas of Pomona College and three million dollars towards the Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation.

When Timken purchased the property, it had four framed, one-story structures housing the Pioneer Saddle Shop, a mattress factory, a fruit store and dwelling, and a coffee house. All of the businesses faced Fifth Avenue. Storefronts facing H St. (now Market St.) did not appear until after the Timken Building was erected.

After 1894, there were three business locations on the H St. side. The businesses included second-story furnished rooms, a restaurant, a billiard hall, a tailor shop and a men's clothing store. In 1915, the furnished rooms, formerly called "The Seattle," was changed to "The Brighton" in 1916.

The Brighton once housed, and was run by, Mrs. Anna Brown, a well-known African American businesswoman. Brown served as Brighton's proprietor between 1924 and 1927. Prior to her

tenure at the Brighton, Brown was a business partner of George Ramsey at the Yesmar Hotel (later the Anita Hotel). Ramsey was considered the unofficial mayor of the African American community and was best known as the owner of the Douglas Hotel and the Creole Palace. Brown served as manager of the Yesmar until 1923. Additionally, Brown owned several boarding houses of her own. She was one of the most visible African American businesswomen in early San Diego.

Currently, the San Diego Trading Company occupies the street level of the Timken Building, and the upstairs is devoted to seven studio apartments and four one-bedroom apartments.

THE YUMA BUILDING

The stately building with the twin spires that graces Fifth Avenue is said to be the first structure in the Gaslamp to be made entirely of brick. This impressive building was called the Yuma because of its owner's previous business association. That owner, Captain Alfred Henry Wilcox, had been involved with the Colorado Steam Navigation Company, and the first and last stop on their river excursions was Yuma. It was also Captain Wilcox's base of operations.

He originally came to San Diego as a mate on the USS Invincible, and later returned as the ship's captain. He was charged with the task of

SEE GASLAMP LANDMARKS, Page 6

Home & Garden

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The delicate balance of HOA assessments

Real Estate Whisperer
By GREGG NEUMAN



Hello, dear readers, and welcome to the Real Estate Whisperer, where I tackle the ins and outs of 92101 living with a pinch of humor and a dash of reality. Today's hot topic? The ever-dreaded HOA assessment increases. Yes, I can almost hear the collective groans from here. But before we hoist the pitchforks and light the torches, let's dive a little deeper into what's really going on behind those notices that make our wallets tremble. Now, I've been around the block a few times—43 years in real estate, to be exact and I've sold over 7300 houses, an average of 170 houses per year—and I've heard all manner of tales about HOA dues, from the boastful ("My dues haven't gone up in 5 years!") to the downright terrifying ("Our special assessment was how much?!"). But here's the rub: steady dues might sound great, but they're often the ominous calm before a financial storm. You see, our HOA Boards aren't just sitting atop a pile of our hard-earned cash, cackling maniacally. They're actually quite busy bees, juggling the ever-increasing costs of water, electricity, insurance, and wages—remember when minimum wage in California was a mere \$8 an hour? Feels like a lifetime ago, doesn't it? Now, we're looking at \$16, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. So, what's the magic number for a healthy HOA reserve, you ask? Experts suggest somewhere between 35% to 70%. Anything less should have us all biting our nails. Without a decent cushion, our communities can't handle the unexpected twists and turns

of homeownership, from emergency repairs to the normal wear and tear that comes with time. And let's not even talk about those special assessments that can pop up like unwelcome guests, demanding anywhere from \$25,000 to \$125,000 per unit—or more. It's enough to make your bank account weep, especially for our neighbors on fixed incomes or just starting their journeys. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not a fan of shelling out more each month any more than the next person. But between you and me, I'd much rather stomach a small, steady increase than get blindsided by a financial heavyweight. As our beloved communities age, so do their needs. Everything from the paint on our walls to the pipes under our feet calls for attention and, yes, money. Maintenance is the name of the game if we want to keep our little slices of paradise, well, paradisiacal. Just like we do as we age it cost more to maintain. And for those of you thinking about selling, take heed: underfunded reserves are about as appealing to lenders as a termite infestation. It could mean the difference between a "Sold!" sign and a "Sorry, try again." So, what's the moral of our story today? It's time to give our HOA Boards a bit of grace. They're making the tough calls to protect our homes and our investments. And perhaps, just perhaps, it's better to face a small increase today than a financial tsunami tomorrow. Until next time, keep those community spirits high and those assessments in perspective. After all, it's not just about the numbers; it's about ensuring our homes remain the havens they're meant to be.

Gaslamp Landmarks

CONTINUED FROM Page 5

surveying and mapping the San Diego River as well as ultimately constructing a dam to turn part of the river into a "false bay." We now call this Mission Bay. He married Maria Antonia Arguello, daughter of a wealthy landowner, and became involved in numerous successful commercial enterprises. Captain Wilcox acquired several real estate properties, including a ranch in Santa Ysabel, a mansion on Second Avenue, and property on La Punta, the southeast corner of San Diego Bay. He additionally had banking interests in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Captain Wilcox acquired the lot on Fifth Avenue from E.W. Tebbutt and began construction on the Yuma in 1882. Sadly, he died the following year and his wife finished the construction upon the settlement of his complicated estate. The completed structure is as it stands today. Mrs. Wilcox occupied the premises for a time, but then retired to the ranch. The Yuma Building, a classic example of Victorian architecture, is three stories high with a basement. The street level walls are 16" thick and the walls on the second and third floors are 12" thick. The front was iron-clad and featured bay windows. A large skylight lit the upper

two stories. The structure contained 16 rooms and a store on the ground level. A lovely stairway graced the northwest corner. The basement was used for storage and cellars. Throughout the years, a variety of businesses occupied the building including a Japanese Bazaar, medical offices, an insurance broker and a dry goods store. In 1901, the upper floors were converted to furnished rooms, and were operated as the "Santa Ysabel." In 1910, the rooms became known as "The Grant." On Nov. 11, 1912, the Grant gained notoriety for becoming the ultimate stop of the Great Raid of 1912. As the California-Panama Exposition was coming to San Diego in 1915, Police Chief Keno Wilson was receiving increasing pressure from several civic minded organizations, including the Ladies' Purity League, to clean up the Stingaree, as the area was called. Due to the transient nature of much of the clientele, many who were sailors on ships stopping at the foot of Fifth Avenue, the Stingaree had become famous for its numerous saloons and accompanying brothels. Early on a Sunday morning, the raid began, and by the end of the day, Keno Wilson had rounded up 138 ladies of the evening. The women were gathered in front of the Grant, and Chief Wilson gave them a choice—either reform or get out of town. The city would pay for their train ticket. Only two decided to reform. One became a telegraph operator and the other went mad, likely because of a social disease. The other sex workers were then marched up Fifth Avenue to the Santa Fe Depot, where they were

THE YUMA BUILDING
(1882-1888)
631 Fifth Avenue
Architects: Armitage and Wilson
Architectural Style: Italianate Baroque Revival

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Our favorite outdoor spaces in Little Italy

Little Italy News
By **CHRISTOPHER GOMEZ**

Spring has arrived, bringing back San Diego's signature sunshine and making it the ideal time to bask in the picturesque charm of one of the city's beloved neighborhoods: Little Italy. While it's fun to explore the variety of local boutiques and shops around the neighborhood, it's equally as exciting to discover scenic views and outdoor establishments that remind visitors of the irresistible charm of Little Italy San Diego.



The Plaza de Famiglia is a popular place to enjoy the outdoors in Little Italy. (Photo courtesy Little Italy Association)

EXPLORING THE PIAZZAS

Little Italy is one of those neighborhoods that can truly transport you to the other side of the world. Embracing its rich heritage and historical roots, the neighborhood effortlessly echoes the relaxed character of small Italian towns. This ambiance is beautifully encapsulated by its inviting piazzas – scattered throughout the area – inviting visitors to pause and savor the moments of quiet amid the bustling urban landscape.

At the heart of Little Italy lies the illustrious Piazza della Famiglia, celebrated as a symbol of embracing life's simple joys – a sentiment similar to the beloved town squares in Italy. This spacious piazza is a central hub for community celebrations, a spot for social gatherings, and a place to enjoy one's solitude with a bite or sip from surrounding eateries. Beyond its intrinsic beauty, the Piazza della Famiglia offers a breathtaking view of the San Diego Bay, where one can bask in the captivating sight of gently rolling waves, boats swaying in the water, and the sun setting across the bay – an unrivaled experience in one of San Diego's most picturesque locations.

While the Piazza della Famiglia receives the most attention, Little Italy boasts an array of five other charming piazzas: namely, Piazza Basilone, Piazza Pescatore, Piazza Giannini, Piazza Villaggio, and its most recent addition, Piazza Costanza. These delightful piazzas

make it so that wherever you wander in the neighborhood, a tranquil haven awaits, inviting you to unwind and soak in the neighborhood's essence. Each square holds its unique significance, weaving its own narrative into the fabric of this vibrant community.

A STROLL BY THE WATER

One of the best ways to soak in the sunbeams of San Diego is with a delightful stroll along the water. Located beside the harbor, Waterfront Park is a mesmerizing waterfront promenade offering panoramic sights of the Pacific Ocean, large grassy areas, an interactive fountain for kids to splash around in, intimate garden rooms with distinct themes, jungle gyms and several picnic spots.

ACTIVITIES FOR OUR FURRY FRIENDS

Our furry friends also deserve to enjoy the outdoors! Make your way to the Little Italy Dog Park where you'll always find a bunch of doggies roaming free in the safe and enclosed space.

Perfect for your four-legged companions, the dog park includes K9Grass by ForeverLawn, the Batta | Fulkerson Small Dog Park, the TrustedHousesitters Shade Structure, and a water fountain for thirsty pups.

There's no better time than today to enjoy all the beautiful wonders of Little Italy!

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Swing into baseball season at the 12th Annual East Village Block Party

East Village News
By **ETHAN OLSEN**

Play Ball! San Diegans are getting their favorite baseball jerseys and caps ready for the 12th Annual East Village Block Party on Opening Weekend taking place on Saturday, March 30 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Happening on J Street from 7th to 10th Avenues in front of Petco Park, crowds in brown, gold, and white will fill the streets with their Padres pride to celebrate the return of baseball in the heart of the East Village neighborhood.

The family-friendly event promises a fun-filled day featuring local small businesses, live music and entertainment, tasty bites, beer and cocktails, retail vendors, photo opportunities and a variety of interactive activities for kids of all ages.

FUEL UP BEFORE THE GAME

From your stadium favorites to mouthwatering meals, the East Village Block Party will offer an array of bites that are sure to be a home run! Vendors like El Rey Tacos a Vapor and Fuego Me Up will be serving up tacos, burritos, and more that truly highlight the rich flavors of San Diego. Attendees can also feast on Ballpark classics like hot dogs, fries, and Texas style brisket from Golden Bear Barbeque and Doggos Gus, as well as Michelin guide Thai favorites from local East Village gem, Sovereign Modern Thai Cuisine.

The event will also feature a variety of vendors offering refreshing drinks to keep you hydrated throughout the lively celebration.

For a drink that is both energizing and healthy, stop by Jai Jus! A local East Village business, Jai Jus provides an assortment of plant-based options that are perfect for your adventures throughout the Block Party. You'll also be able to find premium bubble tea blends, freshly made tapioca pearls, and signature drinks at Teaspoon Boba. Those over 21 can enjoy ice cold beer, wine, seltzers and cocktails from a variety of local breweries and bars; just pick up a 21+ wristband at the entrance and drink up!

GOODIES GALORE

Whether you're looking to expand your Padres gear collection or on the hunt for some last-minute merchandise to rep your favorite team, Parks and Normal has all the baseball attire you can dream of. From hats to shirts and other accessories, Parks and Normal blends sports and style seamlessly. Others can stop by Apollo + Luna for some fun, colorful, and unique jewelry pieces made to make you feel confident and beautiful. With a selection of earrings, necklaces, rings and more, Apollo + Luna hand crafts each piece of jewelry that are truly one-of-a-kind.

HERE'S THE LINE UP

Throughout the event, attendees can dance along to musical performances from Latin bands and local DJs at three different vignettes of entertainment staged throughout the festival, including the California Love stage hosted by East Village's own DJ Artistic, DJ Boogie Blanco, and more, featuring '90s throwbacks and classics. Listen and get your groove on as San Diego's beloved talent,



Padres fans are invited to the 12th Annual East Village Block Party (Photo courtesy East Village Association)

including Israel Maldonado, DJ Kid Wonder, Mariachi Dinastia and more awesome performers, take center stage!

ACTIVATIONS FOR ALL

In addition to live music, local bites and shops, the streets outside of Petco Park will be filled with a variety of thrilling activations and competitions. There will be a walk-through car show, local sports teams including San Diego Legion, fitness activations from local East Village gyms including Yoga Box, Orangetheory Fitness and The BXNG Club, and so much more. Make sure to treasure all the unforgettable memories in a fun and innovative way at a 360 photobooth hosted by Mobius Pix.

There is something for everyone at the 12th Annual East Village Block Party on Opening Weekend, so be sure to stop and catch the fun!

For the latest updates on East Village Association, please visit us at eastvillagesandiego.com and follow us on Instagram @EastVillageSD, TikTok @EastVillageSD and Twitter @EastVillageSD

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Jeri Dilno, LGBTQ+ trailblazer who organized SD’s first Pride, dies at 87

By DREW SITTON

Local LGBTQ+ trailblazer Jeri Dilno died on Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024 at the age of 87. She was a veteran, Pride organizer and lesbian activist who was critical in the advancement of San Diego’s LGBTQ+ community.



Jeri Dilno (left) with then-City Councilman Chris Ward at the christening of Jeri Dilno Way in Hillcrest in 2019. (Photo by Albert Fulcher)

“The San Diego community lost one of its pillars with the passing of Jeri Dilno. For a half century, Jeri was an outspoken advocate and trailblazer for LGBTQ+ equality and women’s rights, serving in top leadership roles with organizations such as San Diego Pride, San Diego Democrats for Equality, and the San Diego LGBT Community Center. She will be remembered for her dedication and indomitable spirit, as well as her wit and wisdom. I will miss my dear friend, Jeri,” said State Senator Toni Atkins.

Dilno went to Point Loma High School then San Diego State College before joining the Air Force. When she was discharged over being gay, she was the only person targeted by the

investigation to fight the charges and request a hearing.

After moving to Philadelphia, she played a pivotal role in organizing the city’s first Pride march in 1972 – experience she used in 1975 after returning home to San Diego to organize this city’s first Pride celebration.

Dilno served as the first Executive Director of the San Diego LGBT Community Center from 1975-1977. She remained involved with Pride, including serving on its board for several years, in the decades to come. In addition, she worked as a journalist, editor and political activist.

“I am heartbroken to learn of the passing of Jeri Dilno... Jeri was a trailblazer, and San Diego Pride wouldn’t be

what it is today without her contributions in those early days. She will always be remembered for her leadership, which paved the way for all of us who follow in her footsteps today,” said Assembly member Chris Ward.

“Aside from her accomplishments in service of the LGBTQ+ community and her passionate involvement in local political activism, Jeri was known and loved for her sense of humor, her ability to enthrall people with storytelling, and for enjoying the occasional vodka gimlet,” said Nicole Verdes, Managing Director of Lambda Archives, another LGBTQ+ organization Dilno volunteered for.

San Diego Pride and the Center put out a joint statement regarding her passing, saying: “Rarely

does one person so profoundly impact the foundation, growth, and sustained progress of a movement the way that Jeri Dilno did. Her presence and influence are irreplaceable for not only the San Diego LGBT Community Center but San Diego Pride.”

The organizations urged people to honor the storyteller by taking to social media to share stories about her.

Dilno is part of the San Diego’s Women Hall of Fame and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from San Diego Pride in

1999. Dilno had a street, Jeri Dilno Way, in front of the Center named after her in 2019 by then City Council member Chris Ward.

Learn more about her at <https://sdnews.com/jeri-dilno-lgbt-trailblazer/>.

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News briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

2025 is part of the last phase of Blackstone’s more than \$550 million restoration and revitalization of The Del.

Lala debuts in Little Italy

After much anticipation, cocktail bar and restaurant Lala is now open for business at 1919 India Street. Situated just one door north from its acclaimed sibling, Barbusa restaurant, the launch of Lala simultaneously marks a milestone for Busalacchi Restaurants, as 2024 commemorates their 40th year serving the San Diego community.

Executive Chef Nino Zizzo’s menu mirrors modernized Italian classics and comfort foods



served up at the family’s preceding concepts and own dinner table. The bar program created by Busalacchi Restaurants’ Antonio Gonzales (Juniper & Ivy, Stake Chophouse & Bar) is intended to show the versatility and range of Italian spirits alongside a bar-rel-aged cocktail program.

Padres specials at Margaritaville

Margaritaville will offer specials and live entertainment for the San Diego Padres home opener. Guests can swing by LandShark Bar & Grill for live entertainment, chicken wing roulette, and drink specials like the Pina Machado, Fernando Tatini, or Joe Musgarita, all inspired by favorite Padres players. At rooftop bar 5 o’Clock Somewhere overlooking Petco Park, step up to the plate for DJ spins, beer pong, a Sonoran hot dog cart and more. For post-game, score a free margarita with your Padres ticket stub at Margaritaville after the game (while supplies last). These offerings kick-off on March 28 from 10:30 a.m.-6 p.m. and

A treasure chest of international flavors at Artifact

Restaurant Review

By FRANK SABATINI JR.



When renovations to the Mingei International Museum in Balboa Park were unveiled a few years ago, so was Artifact, the museum's first sit-down restaurant that has since earned a listing in the California Michelin Guide.

Its ambitious menu, which trots the globe, seemed daring for a location that attracts loads of mainstream visitors year-round. But restaurateur Tracy Borkum of the well-established Urban Kitchen Group and her dynamic executive chef, Tim Kolanko, took the gamble.

"We were nervous at first on how all these different, bold flavors would go over with the Balboa Park crowd," said Kolanko, referring to unexpected finds such as a half chicken enhanced by West African suya spice and served in curried peanut broth, or caraway-kissed pierogi drawn from Kolanko's Polish ancestry.

Based on the bustling midday patronage we witnessed, nobody is running away.

The pierogi were one of our starters, a foursome of scratch-made dumplings filled with

mashed potato and tangy farmer's cheese. Instead of the traditional draping of melted butter and wilted onions, Kolanko gives the pierogi a trance-like quality by bathing them in cream and cremini mushrooms. The Eastern European flair is upped further by dill, chive and caraway.



Beef short rib with noodles

A starter of pakora green beans offering hints of garam masala sent us to India. We were particularly enamored over the bright tasting cilantro-mint chutney served alongside. Borkum should really consider selling it at her adjoining grab-and-go Craft Cafe.

From a choice of three salads: roasted beet complemented by whipped feta, pistachio and orange blossom; or buckwheat noodles with Asian mushrooms, collard greens and miso mayo—we instead chose the "little gem."

It incorporates tender lettuce, ko-sho cucumber, avocado, radishes and toasted sesame vinaigrette. The medley carried just the right amount of complexity that even Aunt Mabel from rural Oklahoma would embrace.

A chunk of tender short-rib meat served in a pond of appealing braising liquid was off to a ravishing start until biting into one of the pickled mustard greens surrounding it. The braise is flavored delightfully with lu li-ao bao, a Chinese spice blend comprising ginger, star anise, cardamom, orange peel and more. But the brine of the mustard greens was aggressive, thus interfering with the comforting essence of the beef and the soothing texture of the thin egg noodles served with it.

My companion's lamb burger featured an array of ingredients that jived surprisingly well to the char-grilled patty. We're talking chili-mango chutney, sumac red onions, tzatziki, tomato, cabbage and shredded lettuce—all adding heft to the sesame seed bun. The burger came with the same za'atar-seasoned french fries that I recently savored at Borkum's other museum restaurant, which is The Kitchen at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in La Jolla. The



Artifact resides just inside the museum's main entrance. (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)



The "little gem" salad

earthy spice further advances the meal's Persian spin.

Artifact also shares with The Kitchen a focused wine list, local craft beers, inventive cocktails and several non-alcoholic concoctions. From the latter, the ultra-refreshing "ginger crisp" made with cider, ginger beer and lime is the perfect elixir if arriving hungover or sluggish for any reason. Or for something more subtle, the "Mingei blend" is an unsweetened combination of hibiscus tea and lemongrass.

The atmosphere at Artifact resembles a stylish cafeteria, even though it is a full-service restaurant flaunting an efficient wait staff. It occupies an open space with

ARTIFACT

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table seating placed between an inviting bar and the museum's gift shop. A few exhibits are in eye shot, which serve as a prelude to the Mingei's impressive collection of handmade crafts and objects hailing from different civilizations around the world.

And therein lies the gist and beauty of Kolanko's multi-national menu—one that is generally adventurous and a little less expensive than what you might expect for a museum restaurant situated in the cultural nucleus of Balboa Park.

Artifact is open for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, and for dinner from 5 to 8:30 p.m. on Fridays. In addition, the restaurant holds dinners specific to a different country or region of the world on the third Thursday of every month. Each features four to five courses for around \$90 per person. Visit mingei.org/visit/artifact for more information.



The "ginger crisp" drink (left) and house ice tea



Pakora green beans



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In the “Shahnameh,” women served as decision makers, politicians and leaders, as highlighted in calligraphy art from Yasaman Mostajeran.”



Shirin Aghdaie hangs on of her mirror pieces in the exhibit.



Sasha Furlan painted golden clouds on the glass window into the exhibit.



Local artist Marty Ornish created an outfit inspired by 18th century tunic and trousers worn by Zoroastrians.

Female Persian artists highlighted at Mingei exhibit

Fashion Files
By **DIANA CAVAGNARO**

Unique Persian art by women artists currently fills an exhibition at Mingei International Museum in Balboa Park. “Persian Place Epic Expressions: Shahnameh by Seven Female Artists” displays special objects selected by Persian Place, a nonprofit organization highlighting Persian art. The organization commissioned seven international female artists to create work inspired by the “Shahnameh,” a 10th or 11th-century epic poem by Abul Qasem Ferdowsi depicting the heroic tales of Persian kings. This historic poem recognizes the pivotal role of Iranian women as influential nurturers and warriors in their communities.

The seven artists featured are Shirin Aghdaie, Sasha Furlan, Melissa Meier, Yasaman Mostajeran, Marty Ornish, Sara Soleimani Qashqai, and Soroor Sharifi. Each used their own medium to bring the insight and beauty of “Shahnameh” to local viewers.



Jewelry designer Soroor Sharifi created a hanging phoenix for the exhibition.



Soroor Sharifi created a phoenix for the exhibit, a mythical creature featured in the “Shahnameh.”

Sara Soleimani Qashqai is an Iranian Pateh (traditional needlework art) embroidery artist. She wove the role of women into two curtains hung in the installation. The curtain on the right demonstrates the stories of women in “Shahnameh”

and compares them with modern women of today in Iranian society. The curtain on the left depicts mythical events as well as historical events from the “Shahnameh.”

SEE **MINGEI EXHIBIT**, Page 15



The curtain, calligraphy and hanging phoenix are part of the Mingei exhibit. (Photos courtesy of Sadry Hedayat)

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Splendid Decennium: Victorian to Vanguard

An exhibit featuring the art of fiber artist Mary Ornish at the Gaslamp Museum at the Davis-Horton House(gaslampfoundation.org/visit) and the Villa Montezuma Museum (villamontezumamuseum.org) through April 27. Check websites for days and hours.

“Live your Dream” awards Soroptimist International of San Diego is hosting a fashion show by Gretchen Productions at Sycuan Casino on Saturday, March 9. For information: 619-670-9880.

Sip and Style Secondhand Embrace sustainability and come and fill a bag with clothes while you sip an alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage at the Kairoa Brewing Company on 4601 Park Blvd starting at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, March 10. For tickets: bit.ly/3SQm1D3

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Futuro Space

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

Although architecture and planning firm RDC, landscape architecture firm McCullough Landscape Architecture and property owner Graham Hollis of Blue Sapphire Holdings are currently sponsoring Futuro Space as a community resource, they are careful to keep what they hope will eventually become a self-sustaining nonprofit or even think tank separate from their business. RDC has a similar community space at its main office in Long Beach and bookings for the San Diego meeting rooms and workspace is conducted through a

staff member located there, away from local interests.

Right now, the biggest conversation occurring in Futuro Space is about the redevelopment of the Civic Center. Sean Slater, AIA, Senior Principal at RDC, hopes Futuro Space becomes the headquarters for dreaming about all the Civic Center could be.

“The city doesn't have a space for creative discussions and for creativity to flourish. That's not what the city is for, and they're not very good at it. Individual firms are trying to get the work; it's a weird conflict of interest also to have a very general conversation [at individual firms' offices],” Slater said. “So we're [Futuro Space] actually going for a World



Futuro Space occupies the ground level, but top story of the main office building at the San Diego Design Center complex. (Photos by Rick Burritt)

Design Capital grant to study the Civic Center.”

Slater hopes Futuro Space is the hub of conversation around the Civic Center as well as any other upcoming major projects so design is at the forefront of San Diego's future.

“How do we foster this citywide attitude about raising design, especially urban design? San Diego's a great city, but nobody, nobody calls Downtown the center of their lives,” he said.

Ruocco once used the San Diego Design Center complex as a place to shape the city's arts community alongside his wife, interior designer and professor Ilse Hamann Ruocco. The couple worked on the property, with showrooms and studios in which they invited cultural creatives to collaborate on San Diego's future.

Futuro Space is named after the plastic, prefabricated house

shaped like a UFO on stilts that sat in the design center's parking lot from 1969 until 2002 when it was rescued from demolition by being moved to Idyllwild, according to CNN. The house's flying saucer shape is now the logo for Futuro Space.

Since the design center is built on a hill, the top story in which Futuro Space sits is actually at street level. The two stories below comprise offices for RDC, McCullough Landscape Architecture and a few legal firms. According to Slater, as the legal firms filter out, property owner Hollis plans to lease to other design-related companies to restore the collaborative purpose of the iconic building.

Hollis commented, “We had a vision to return this space to its original purpose, serving as a center where design and ideas flourish. We are pleased to be taking

that idea to the next level with Futuro Space.”

Since opening in late 2023, Urban Land Institute (ULI San Diego-Tijuana), the American Institute of Architects (AIA San Diego), the San Diego Architectural Foundation, and Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (C-3) have all held meeting or events in the space. For C-3, it was an historic return since Ruocco co-founded the organization to oppose a state plan to widen Highway 163 through Balboa Park.

Made primarily of redwood and glass, the rectangular building with open floor plans epitomizes the California Modern architectural style Ruocco partially pioneered. With a wide glass wall looking out onto a senior housing building and beyond that the eucalyptus trees of Balboa Park, the tables making up a co-working area inside Futuro Space have a natural landscape in the background while still in the climate-controlled office.

Eventually, Slater believes Futuro Space will outgrow the top story, but for now a large conference room, smaller meeting area, catering kitchen, small office, workspace and a patio for events can all be rented for free.

Community and arts organizations interested in using the space should contact Dalane Nash, Senior Community Experience Manager for RDC at dalane.nash@rdc-s111.com. For more information, visit rdcollaborative.com/futurosace.



The building is constructed of primarily redwood and glass, with the addition of a neon sign shaped like the Futuro House once residing in the parking lot.

Gaslamp Landmarks

CONTINUED FROM Page 6

instructed to purchase tickets. They did not receive specific instructions, as most of them purchased round-trip tickets and returned the next day!

City directories indicate that the Grant lasted well into the 1950s, not as a brothel but as furnished rooms. At times it was listed under the proprietor's name. African Americans were listed as lodgers in the 1930 census and in the 1936 Black Directory. More notably, in 1925, Mrs. Carrie De Frantz is listed as the proprietor.

The 1930 census lists De Frantz as 42 years old, African

American, originally from Maryland, and in ensuing censuses lists her as manager of the Grant for 20 years. This, along with documented Black renters, establishes the presence of the African American community in the central Gaslamp, as well as the role of African American women in managerial positions.

The property remained a single room occupancy hotel until 1989 when it came on the market. It was purchased by Marsha Sewell, an interior designer, and her late husband, Mike Shea, an airlines pilot, who both had a passion for real estate. The building was in poor condition, and a major restoration effort was in order.

The upper two floors, a two-story showplace townhouse, were completed in 1992. Sewell lived in

the house until 2003, after Shea's passing in 2001. This exquisitely restored home, complete with four fireplaces, has been the site of many cultural and civic events, and has hosted numerous dignitaries. Although Sewell no longer owns the property, its stately presence continues to grace the Gaslamp.

The highlighting of Mrs. Brown's and Mrs. De Frantz's accomplishments casts a more complete view of Downtown San Diego's development and the contributions of our diverse population.

—Sandee Wilhoit is the Historian/Lead Tour Guide at the Gaslamp Quarter Historical Foundation. She can be reached at swilhoit@gaslampfoundation.org.

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News briefs

CONTINUED FROM Page 9

will run all season long, ensuring every Padres home game is a homerun.

North Park author to launch "The Harvesting of Haystacks Kane"

North Park author Steve Schlamm's debut novel, "The Harvesting of Haystacks Kane," is set to launch on March 4. This powerful and poignant work of fiction explores the life and tragic times of Haystacks Kane, a 607-pound professional wrestler and dedicated butterfly collector born Herschel Cain in Brooklyn, New York, who has been gravely injured in a match with his archrival and long-time nemesis. The match left him lying in his



hospital bed (actually two hospital beds, lashed together) immobilized and unable to speak, attempting to figure out what's happened, both in the immediate sense and over the longer course of his life—and what can be done about it. Visitors from his past and present enter the room—or perhaps only his disordered inner world—offering up counterpoint to his own silent musings and ruminations as he drifts in and out of consciousness seeking to uncover, and make sense of, his history. All the while, he wishes to transport himself to the Valley of the Butterflies known as Petaloudes on the island of Rhodes in Greece, the Eden he dreams of, where he can live as his authentic self in peace and tranquility amidst "the sound of butterflies," his soul freed at last. "The Harvesting of Haystacks Kane" can be purchased through

local and national booksellers and on Amazon. To learn more about this special novel and its author, please visit <http://www.steveschlam.com> and <http://www.8thHousePublishing.com>.

Whole Foods Market to open in Downtown skyscraper

Upscale supermarket chain Whole Foods Market will open a location in Downtown San Diego at the Front & A project at 201 West A St., project developer Holland Partner Group confirmed to the Union-Tribune. The high-end grocery tenant is set to take over roughly 50,000 square feet of ground-floor and mezzanine space at the base of the 34-story, residential tower, according to a permit application submitted to the city of San Diego in December.



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1				3			6	
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Fill in the blank cells using number 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row column and 3x3 block. Use logic and process elimination to solve the puzzle.

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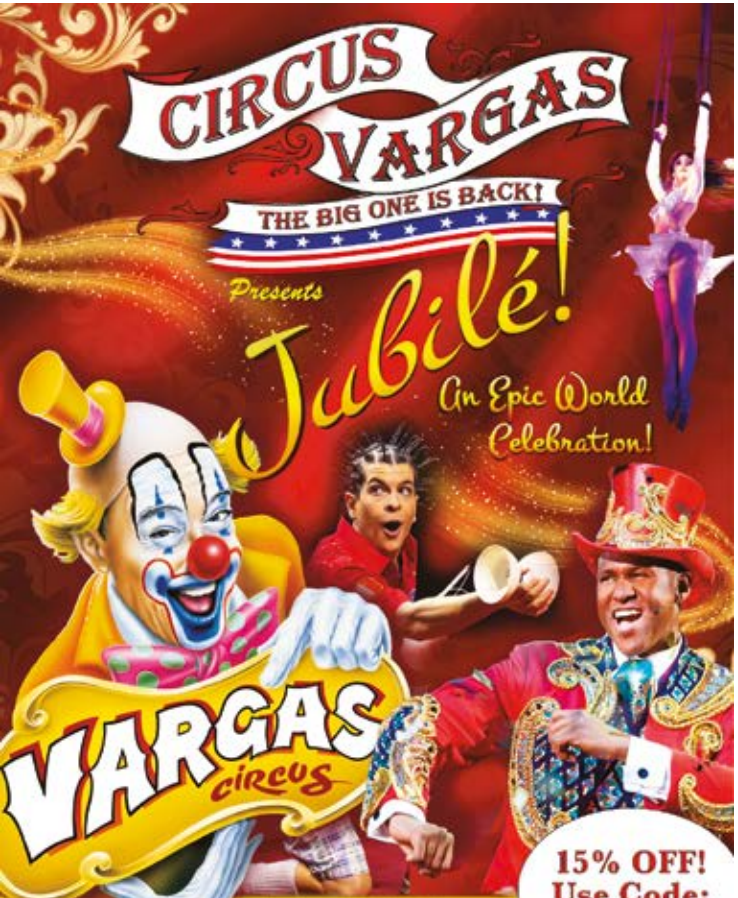
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9	8	2	3	9	7	1	6	7
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4	9	7	2	3	6	8	9	1
8	2	3	1	4	9	6	7	9



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EL NIÑO
ALERT

InvenTeam

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

what we're working on could help ... prevent drink spiking and what comes along with that, like sexual assault," said JoAnna Castro Liggins, the team's communications lead who grew up in Oak Park. "Not everybody has the opportunity to do this and to put something like this out into the world."

The girls took on the project as a way to make youth safer in social settings after learning about a survey from the American Addiction Center showing that 44% of men and 56% of women have unknowingly had their drinks spiked.

"Half of those took place while people were in college and then 19% of respondents were in high school," said Shlessly Gonzalez of Logan Heights.

In its final form, the Guard D-rink (pronounced guard de-drink) will be shaped like a watch with a circular test strip with 12 places to test a drop of a drink. The watch will include a reusable dropper as well. The test strip can be replaced so the watch will be a functional spiked-drink detector on more than just one occasion.

Of the eight national teams selected as grant recipients in a competitive process last year, e3 Civic High has the smallest team and the only all girls team. They are actually one of the smallest teams ever selected for the grant since its inception 20 years ago, a reason cited for their rejection the first time they applied. When they applied a second time last summer, they were selected, but quickly saw why a larger team was preferred. Each took on huge tasks that would normally be split between two or three students.

"We all tackle our own things, but we also help each other out," said Desiree Chavez-Lopez, a Sherman Heights resident and the finance lead for the group. At a mid-grant technical review on Friday, Feb. 23, representatives of the Lemelson-MIT Program praised the team for its cohesion and commitment despite difficulties.

"It was just a lot of mentally and emotional toll to be honest," said



(L-R) JoAnna Castro Liggins, Shlessly Gonzalez, Desiree Chavez-Lopez, advisor Melissa Woods and Shania Chelsea Mancol hold up a banner celebrating e3 Civic High as a Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam. (Photo courtesy e3 Civic High)

Mancol, who has been named one of the 25 Most Remarkable Teens of San Diego for her innovative work.

e3 Civic High started Design Thinking classes in 2019, in the style of invention education, that teaches independent thinking, research and collaboration skills. Design Thinking (DT) groups are only three to five students. The InvenTeam dedicated their twice weekly DT classes to the grant program but also met after school and occasionally stepped out of non-core classes for chemistry experiments.

"It is a lot of work. But I just knew that we had it," said Melissa Woods, the team's advisor and the Dean of Instruction, DT, and Workforce. "I just knew that this team would actually go far."

The team has a second advisor, Mikaela Buesusescos, an e3 Civic High alum and current freshman at University of California Los Angeles who was part of the first grant proposal before graduating. Buesusescos and Woods can only oversee the girls though – not even help type the application.

The mid-grant review was a moment of triumph for the team, with each stating they felt proud of how far they had come.

"We've all had our moments where we struggled with the project and we were very apprehensive about it. Friday was a

moment where all of our hard work paid off," Castro Liggins said. "We're glad to see the reward that working hard has shown us and we know there'll be more in the future. We're just preparing for that."

None imagined when they initially applied that this could land them with a patent or even the start of a tech company before graduation.

"I just thought it was a silly [Design Thinking] project. It's way more now," Chavez-Lopez said.

In addition to making the prototype smaller so each member can wear it to Boston and preparing a 20-minute presentation, the group is fundraising for the trip itself. The \$7,500 grant only covered expenses related to the invention. As the June festival approaches, pressure is higher than ever on the students.

"A lot of people are more interested and watching our progress and where this is gonna go. So now it's like, we really got to do this," Mancol said.

Still, the technical review presentation in the Neil Morgan auditorium reassured the group that they are capable of success.

"We're gonna do great," Gonzalez said. "We've all worked really hard and we should be proud of ourselves."

To donate to the team's trip to Boston, visit e3civichigh.com.

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Mingei exhibit

CONTINUED FROM Page 11

Included in the lineup is local textile designer Marty Ornish, who uses her voice on political, environmental and feminist issues. She designed and sewed a dress inspired by 18th century Zoroastrian fashion from Kerman and Yazd provinces. During that time period, the Zoroastrian Community was barred from buying long lengths of cloth. Consequently, they sewed remnants together to make garments. Ornish's modern garment features embroidered fabric strips with zigzag patterns symbolizing the harmony between sky and earth.

Tehran University graduate Shirin Aghdaie captured the essence of "Shahnameh" with more than 15 mirror works hanging from the ceiling in the exhibition. Sasha Furlan, a Croatian immigrant, created Persian miniature and glass paintings inspired by Shahnameh. A Newport Beach psychotherapist, Yasaman Mostajeran, created calligraphy art using passages from "Shahnameh" emphasizing the role of women. Iranian jewelry designer



A model will wear the rosebud outfit at the public reception on March 18.



Melissa Meier with the crown, dress and shoes she made of rosebuds from Iran. (Photos courtesy of Sadry Hedayat)

Soroor Sharifi created a phoenix-themed piece for this installation. Her phoenix pays homage to the mythical creatures on the pages of "Shahnameh" which symbolize resilience and rebirth.

Using rosebuds from Kashan in the Isfahan province of central Iran gifted to her by Persian Place, Brazilian artist Melissa Meier, who is known for her 3D installations, constructed a rosebud outfit which gives off a wonderful fragrance. During the upcoming reception, a model will wear and walk in this incredible outfit. It is designed for women to walk in love and courage in their hearts.

The display will be at the Mingei until May 31. The museum is hosting an installation reception on Monday, March 18 from 5-7 p.m. that is free and open to the public. Registration is at the door. The exhibition coincides with the Persian New Year, Nowruz. March is also the month of women and the seven female artists will talk about each of their pieces at the reception. For more information visit: <https://mingei.org>.

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Uptown // Downtown Calendar

Picnic at the Park

The San Diego Symphony will present its annual free Picnic at the Park at The Rady Shell on Sunday, March 3, 2024 from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The day will include an array of family-friendly activities and performances, including an exclusive look at the concert lineup for The Rady Shell 2024 Summer Season. Event entry begins at 10:30 a.m.

San Diego Restaurant Week

San Diego Restaurant Week invites diners to "Spring into Flavor" this season with diverse and specially curated multi-course menus that highlight the gastronomic offerings of San Diego's top restaurants from March 3-10. Pricing starts at \$20. Visit sandiegorestaurant-week.com to find participating restaurants and see meal options.

10th annual Women's Symposium

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP) will present its 10th annual Women's Symposium on March 8, continuing its commitment to the advancement of young women in academia and leadership.

This year the theme is Together We Rise, and the stage will be shared by a

multitude of speakers with panel discussions covering topics like public policy, health care and fashion.

Oxford Social Club celebrates seven years



Gaslamp nightclub Oxford Social Club located inside Pendry San Diego is celebrating seven years with an anniversary bash on Friday, March 15 starting at 10:30 p.m. with dance tunes spun by DJ Crooked and a live performance from a surprise major music star. General admission is \$20.

ShamROCK St. Paddy's Day Music + Beer Festival



Enjoy live Celtic music and a pub crawl focusing on beer and whiskey through the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter from

2-11 p.m. on March 16. Tickets start at \$39.

"An American in Paris"



City Ballet of San Diego presents a new work, "An American in Paris," from resident choreographers Elizabeth Wistrich and Geoffrey Gonzalez on Saturday, March 16 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, March 17 at 2 p.m. at Balboa Theatre.

Easter Egg Hunt and "Wonka" screening

Rooftop Cinema Club Embarcadero at the Manchester Grand Hyatt is the place to get a head start on Easter as it hosts an all-ages Easter Egg Hunt followed by a screening of the hit film "Wonka" on Saturday, March 30, the day before Easter. It's a chance to kick off the chocolate-filled holiday weekend with a special screening of the musical origin story of the fabled candy maker. Purchase tickets at rooftopcinemaclub.com/embarcadero.

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Brewery	Donut Shop	Pet Friendly Dining
Billiards	Farmers Market	Pizza
Breakfast	Fine Dining	Seafood
Brunch	Greek Cuisine	Sports Bar
Burger	Happy Hour	Steakhouse
Business Lunch	Health Food Store	Sushi
Cafe	Indian Cuisine	Thai Cuisine
Casino	Irish Pub	Vegetarian/Vegan
Catering	Italian Cuisine	Wine Bar
Chinese Cuisine	Juice/Smoothies	
Cocktail	Lunch	

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