From Rigs to Reefs

Two Scripps alumnae, Amber Jackson and Emily Callahan, aim to transform defunct oil rigs into man-made reefs. Their organization, Blue Latitudes, dives beneath the 27-plus oil rigs that line the California coast to determine the ‘afterlife’ of the structures. These structures support a vast array of marine life, and they want to keep it that way. SEE PG. 4 FOR FULL STORY.

PHOTO BY KYLE McBURNIE

Restaurant surcharges could violate state law

City attorney investigating claims

BY DAVE SCHWAB

New City Attorney Mara Elliott is alleging that several San Diego restaurants, including some in along the coast, are adding 3-percent surcharges to customers’ bills without proper notice to compensate for a minimum-wage pay increase that took effect Jan. 1. That practice may be illegal.

The Cohn Restaurant Group, which owns Draft Republic in UTC La Jolla, also operates several other successful restaurants throughout San Diego. These restaurants include: Bo Beau Kitchen + Bar in Ocean Beach, Coasterra on Harbor Island, and the Brigantine chain.

At a Jan. 5 press conference, Elliott said her office’s Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit has received information that “some San Diego restaurants are adding what they describe as a ‘mandated’ minimum-wage surcharge to customers’ bills, as much as 3.5 percent above and beyond what the prices on the menu indicate.

‘Many of these diners did not learn of this so-called surcharge – which is not mandated by any governmental entity – until they received their check,’ Elliott said at the conference. ‘This practice may violate California law, and specifically, its provisions against false advertising.

‘Citizens are entitled to know upfront the cost of their meals and the basis for each charge included in their bill. Those restaurants who do not adequately inform their customers may be receiving letters from our office indicating that we are investigating them for potential violations of the law,” Elliott said.

David Cohn, President of Cohn Restaurant Group, said “Every restaurant I know of that’s doing surcharges is properly noticing

SEE SURCHARGE >> PG. 7

Ronald McDonald Charity ‘Dream House Raffle’ boasts Bird Rock home

BY BLAKE BUNCH

San Diego possesses some of the finest coastal real estate in the country, epitomized in nearly every film depiction of coastal highway driving. The coast has become synonymous with promise, possibility and stories of personal success.

Most are familiar with the Ronald McDonald House, the national organization and charitable arm of the McDonald’s fast food chain. What some may not know, however, is the fashion in which the San Diego Chapter of the Ronald McDonald House has been fundraising over the past decade.

This year, and similar to years past, the Ronald McDonald House Charity is raffling off 1,700 prizes, as well as a $2.1 million oceanfront home located on the pristine cliffs in the Bird Rock community. Although they have been holding similar auctions for the last 13 years, this was the first year that the charity was able to secure a property on the coast.

“This has always been an innovative fundraising idea,” said Chuck Day, president and CEO of the San Diego Ronald McDonald House. “I came on about six years ago, and since then we have always aimed to make more of an impact. One way we achieve this is through finding bigger and more beautiful homes, which tends to make things a bit more attractive.”

Typically, the raffle prizes start off with small, consumer products, and escalate to anywhere from luxury cars to destination getaways.

See house >> PG. 6
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Transforming old oil rigs into habitable reefs

BY BRITTANY HOOK

The California coast is lined with 27 offshore oil and gas rigs that can be seen jutting out across the horizon—a reminder of humans’ dependence on fossil fuels. Below the surface, however, these platforms are home to some of the most dynamic ecosystems in the world, harboring everything from mussels and scallops to garibaldi and rockfish. As many of these enormous rigs are approaching the end of their viable production lives, scientists, environmental agencies, and oil companies are left wondering: should the rigs stay or should they go?

Emily Callahan and Amber Jackson, two alumnae of Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego, have made it their mission to dive below the surface of these oil and gas platforms to determine the best possible “afterlife” scenario for these complex structures. (Video and Photo Gallery.)

The two women met in 2013 while taking a scientific diving course at Scripps Oceanography, where both were pursuing Master of Advanced Studies degrees in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation. A conversation soon emerged about Rigs-to-Reefs, which is the name of a state law and associated program that essentially converts decommissioned oil and gas rigs into artificial reefs.

“What you’re focusing on with Rigs-to-Reefs is everything below the surface, like the tip of the iceberg. That’s where all the life is,” said Callahan, a marine biologist and PADI certified divemaster with expertise in environmental consulting.

When she first came to Scripps, Callahan had only recently learned about the success of the Rigs-to-Reefs program in the Gulf of Mexico, where 500-600 decommissioned oil platforms now serve as artificial reefs and provide abundant fishing opportunities, world-class diving and recreational activities, and an ecological hotbed of underwater activity.

Some environmental groups oppose the Rigs-to-Reefs program because it transfers liability of the structure from the oil companies to the state or the Department of Fish and Wildlife, scientists, environmental agencies, and oil companies are left wondering: should the rigs stay or should they go?

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“We really made it our mission in grad school and we’re still working on it—to combine science with powerful imagery and a meaningful message to change the tide of public perception around this program,” said Jackson, a fiery-haired oceanographer with a passion for science communication. “It’s been the cornerstone of what we do and it fuels our exploration and educational initiatives.”

Inspired by the possibilities of Rigs-to-Reefs implementation in California, Callahan and Jackson focused their joint thesis on the topic. Their innovative research led them up and down the coast of California where they dived numerous platforms, conducted ROV surveys, studied the biodiversity of marine life on and around the structures, and analyzed the legislation surrounding Rigs-to-Reefs.

They also documented their findings through video, photography, and social media—engaging visual mediums that have enabled them to show the public the beauty and importance of these thriving underwater regions.

Rigs-to-Reefs is a controversial law and program in which an oil company chooses to modify a platform so it can continue to support the valuable and fragile ecosystems that have formed on and around the structures.

The decommissioning process still holds platform operators responsible for removing drilling infrastructure and capping and sealing the well—they remain permanently liable for any damages coming from the well—but the upper portion of the rig (at least $5 feet for ship clearance) is cut and towed to an alternate location or the structure is toppled on its side.

Some environmental groups oppose the Rigs-to-Reefs program because it transfers liability of the structure from the oil companies to the state or the Department of Fish and Wildlife, which then manage it as an artificial reef. The program also saves the oil companies money, upwards of millions of dollars, but any savings are split 50/50 between the company’s stakeholders and the state, which is required to use that money for marine conservation and education—a silver lining according to Callahan and Jackson.

The women also argue that the removal and disposal of such enormous structures—some as tall as the Empire State Building—is costly and comes with a massive carbon footprint. California doesn’t have the infrastructure on land to recycle these structures, so the only viable option for complete removal is to cut the structures down, load them onto gigantic barges, and tow them to Southeast Asia where they can then be broken down and recycled. According to Jackson, the bunker fuel used by barges outside of state waters “makes gasoline look like champagne.”

After examining the Rigs-to-Reefs program from all angles, Callahan and Jackson determined that it would be a beneficial program for the state of California, providing an ecologically and environmentally friendly alternative to complete rig removal.

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government, you have to work with oil companies; you have to work with the ‘bad guys’ if you want to change what they’re doing and make a positive impact for the environment,” said Jackson. “Emily and I are not pro oil and gas development; we’re working on decommissioning the end-life stage of these platforms. But I just love the challenge of trying to communicate that there is an ecological, economic, and social benefit to repurposing these structures as reefs—not only in California but around the world.”

Upon graduation from Scripps in 2014, Callahan and Jackson decided to continue working together and co-founded Blue Latitudes, an organization that uses scientific research to form a comprehensive study of the ecological, socio-economic, and advocacy issues surrounding California’s Rigs-to-Reefs law and program. Blue Latitudes provides neutral and scientifically based consulting services to various clients, including gas and oil companies and environmental groups, to assess structures and determine whether they are good candidates for Rigs-to-Reefs.

Blue Latitudes also operates as a non-profit organization through a fiscal partnership with Mission Blue, a global initiative to protect the world’s oceans led by famed oceanographer Sylvia Earle. This wing of the company allows Callahan and Jackson to focus on education and outreach, and the two are currently forging relationships with teachers and schools across San Diego and Los Angeles and developing unique classroom curriculum about marine science for middle and high school students.

The duo continues to spread the word about their research through speaking engagements at aquariums, libraries, classrooms, and more. And they are digitally savvy—constantly updating their social media accounts with stunning images from their latest diving adventures and information about their latest projects.

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com
A group of friends detoxifying at iSweat Lodge.

iSweat Lodge: An alternative to strenuous exercise in Bird Rock

BY BLAKE BUNCH

With all of the health trends that either begin, or at least gain popularity around Southern California, it is often tough to keep up. People tend to be more active in this part of the country, and often these practices are geared towards those rehabilitating injuries, wanting to look better or simply wanting to be healthier.

Kat Pykta, owner of iSweat Lodge in Bird Rock, caters to all walks of life.

At her cozy “spa” off La Jolla Boulevard, a client reclines in an infrared heat bag. The customer begins to wiggle a bit. Pykta casually grabs a bottle of water, and brings it to him.

“Starting to get warm?” Pykta asks jestfully. “I can always tell when clients are beginning to really sweat – they begin to squirm around.”

iSweat Lodge has operated in the area for nearly three months now, and utilizes infrared radiation treatment (not as scary as it sounds) and vibration therapy to treat a myriad of ailments while detoxifying your body. From arthritis, high cholesterol, skin disorders, etc. to simply removing heavy metals from your body, Pykta highly recommends the treatments at least once, that, after the second time, one will experience the full range of results.

Aiming to expand iSweat Lodge throughout San Diego, she seems torn between adding three new locations in either the Banker’s Hill, Hillcrest or Downtown areas to opening up in North County.

Pykta offers her treatments for a cost well below competitors. She strongly believes in these benefits. iSweat Lodge is offering two treatments for $70, and monthly memberships (unlimited use) for $250.

SURCHARGE

CONT. FROM PG. 1

and labeling the surcharge.” Cohn said the notice of 3 percent surcharges are present in both the reception areas and every Cohn restaurant menu.

Cohn said, with any patron coming forward to complain they weren’t aware of the surcharge, that “we take it off the guest’s check. We can’t force anyone to pay if they did not see it.”

He added that in San Francisco, where minimum wages were already increased, “80 percent of restaurants have surcharges.”

“We have no problem with a minimum-wage increase, and are glad our employees are benefiting,” Cohn said. “These are unprecedented additional costs.”

Cohn added that, over the last 1 1/2 years, “Wages have gone up 44 percent. If every business paid that increase to its employees - a lot of them would have a hard time staying in business. We just want to be transparent with people, let them know that, at some point, we need to pass that along (costs).”

On its website, the Brigantine restaurant chain noted that, as of Jan. 1, 2017, a 3 percent surcharge was added to all guest checks at The Brigantine and Miguel’s.

“In restaurants, where employees earn tips, the increased minimum wage goes directly to the highest earners in the house,” said the posting on Brigantine’s website. “At the same time, the restaurant employees who would benefit most from an increase won’t see their pay go up much, if at all. The reason: California is one of the only states in the country that do not allow tips to count toward an employee’s income. “Rather than just raise prices and, in turn, raise the pay of the highest earners (tipped employees), we decided to add a surcharge so we can better compensate all our employees,” the Brigantine website continued. “Any restaurant opera-

“Fat becomes water soluble at a temperature of 60 degrees Celsius. Typically, sessions are 50 to 60 minutes, during which one can burn between 1,500 and 1,800 calories.”

Although it may seem uncomfortable to swaddle oneself in an infrared blanket, it actually seems quite the opposite. Each individual area consists of a bed, and issupplemented with Beats headphones and Netflix.

Pykta has seen plenty of return customers in her brief period – current and former athletes, moms in between errands, seniors with inflammation and plenty more. She believes that while it is nice to try out the treatments at least once, that, after the second time, one will experience the full range of results.

One can’t have a restaurant too clean, which is one reason La Jolla’s new Mendocino Farms works so well.

Mendocino Farms eatery is not blowing smoke

BY MARTIN JONES WESTLIN

Besides its quaint artist shops and galleries and its million-dollar oceanside landscapes, Mendocino has a standout feature that’s lost a little luster of late. The Emerald Triangle is a series of Mendocino pot farms located about three hours north of San Francisco, and the harvest there made marijuana one of the major cash crops in Mendocino County the last 10 years despite the authorities’ constant carping.

The recent statewide OK on pot has maybe dulled the romance behind farming there. No fun anymore if your merchandise isn’t against the law.
Dane Capo: Artist with autism aims for sustainability in his career

Dane Capo loves the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and the King himself. At age 10 months old, Capo was diagnosed with epilepsy, and as further discovered to have autism at age 5. He has not let this set him back one bit, however. It was a tough adjustment, but he has found solace in creating technicolor paintings of some of the most iconic figures in history.

His art is inspired by the French Impressionist painter, Henry Matisse, of whom Capo has depicted in acrylic along with: Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln, David Bowie, Elvis, all four Beatles, and countless other personalities. Fortunately enough to have met Ringo Starr during a trip to Hawaii, Capo was actually able to present the former Beatle with his own rendering of himself.

That alone is an accomplishment most will never know.

He not only inherited his initial painting supplies, but also his artistic talent from his late grandmother, who was also a prolific artist. After her passing, Capo began to paint, and possessed an obvious, raw talent for the visual arts.

“Ninety percent of people with disabilities are unemployed,” says his mother, Krista. “We’ve been working for the past two years or so to truly make his art a sustainable factor in his life. He’s already sold many works, and people’s overall response has been truly remarkable.

Dane says that he currently paints sporadically, but when he does, it is difficult to stop. Bright, almost neon acrylic seems to be his favorite medium, although he has recently applied to film school and has aspirations of being a director.

Having commenced his craft about five years ago, the artist (like most reasonable ones) is currently on the job hunt. His job coach, Nick Meyers, visits Capo in his South Bay residence at least three to four times per week to gear his direction and aid with filing applications.

“I’d really like to work as a bank teller, customer service representative, art director, or film director,” Dane said. “Any job where I can work with people would be terrific.

Also, if I were a director I would definitely join the Director’s Guild of America.”

With an impressive collection of work, Capo, along with his mother, Krista, are looking to expand his online store. This would present a sole stream of revenue, the forum complete with signature bags, stickers, original artwork, etc. Like most artists stuck on the cusps of the monetized Internet, things will soon take off for this young artist.

In fact, Capo has already held several shows throughout the LA beach areas, and most recently brokered a deal to show 10 of his pieces across many Arclights in Southern California. His first installation is currently on display at the La Jolla Arclight, where his pieces will remain there until March 27. The works will also be exhibited in Arclight locations in Sherman Oaks, Culver City, and the beach areas – nearly covering all of Southern California.

Krista Capo says that they are also currently awaiting information regarding showing his pieces at Arclights in Chicago and Maryland. While Capo continues to strive for a successful career in many of the fields he is interested in, his art represents an honest manifestation of his personality – vibrant and optimistic with a great deal of integrity and originality.

For more information on Capo, visit www.daneecapoart.com.
letter was the result of anger expressed openly in the group. He sided with the victim of the outburst, but was reprimanded for being overprotective. Rahim explained that confrontation is a sign of ill breeding, a concept foreign to the rest of the group. In fact, Rahim stated that to react too quickly is dangerous, emphasizing that one must reflect about an event before responding to it. The value of spontaneity is not a value shared by all cultures. One must turn one’s tongue seven times in one’s mouth before answering.

Rahim believed in waiting, in being able to be passive. When my authority as trainer was challenged, Rahim expressed with enormous pain that to lose respect for authority is unacceptable; trainers and members one does not challenge. He added that there was great dignity in being a good follower—as much as a leader. The non-competitive, non-challenging, non-active mode of responding is so foreign to American culture that we see it as deviant behavior from the norm—the only one we have been exposed to.

Asians give negative feedback indirectly allowing the receiver to save face by ignoring it publicly. They also do not make demands directly or publicly, seeking to influence covertly. The cues are subtle, but recognizable to Asians. The indirectness permits the demand to not be acknowledged publicly and, if refused, to save the demander from shame. We call it cowardly. We call them deceitful and manipulative. They call us insulting and humiliating.

The global climate has changed since 1978. Since then we have had more opportunities of contact with Muslims and other cultures—some of it positive, some negative. What is important today is to be aware of the different, subtle cultural signals that are sent, but don’t know how to interpret, denying the validity of those signals. We don’t turn our tongues seven times before responding, but we do say “count to 10 before uttering an angry word” (although we seldom do so). Other concepts are harder to bridge such as our Western openness and face-to-face conflict resolution, which is foreign in many other cultures.

Almost 40 years later, the same lessons need to be continuously relearned as our exposure to other cultures keeps increasing. Identifying our values in order to explain our behaviors to each other is a necessary ingredient to be able to get along.

Natasha Josefowitz is the author of more than 20 books and resides at White Sands Retirement Community. Copyright © 2017, Natasha Josefowitz. All rights reserved.
San Diego theatre review: ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ ‘Jersey Boys,’ and more

BY CHARLENE BALDRIDGE

Opera tenor Stephen Costello takes his Romeo (by Charles Gounod) to the Metropolitan Opera March 3–18, in a popular new production of the Gounod opera directed by Bartlett Sher. Costello’s Juliet will be reprised by soprano Pretty Yende. San Diegans heard Costello at San Diego Opera in “Romeo and Juliet” (2010) playing opposite his then-wife, Ailyn Perez, with whom he also performed with in “Faust” (2011) and with whom he presented a 2014 recital at the Balboa Theatre. Costello created the role of Greenhorn in the world premiere production of Jake Heggie’s “Moby Dick,” at Dallas Opera in 2010.

Plan ahead: The U.K. premiere of Heggie’s exceptionally popular 2000 opera, “Dead Man Walking,” will be presented with an all-American company (headed by Joyce di Donato as Sister Helen) in a semi-staged performance Feb. 20, 2018 at The Barbican. Mark Wigglesworth conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Following an 11-year run, the Tony Award-winning La Jolla Playhouse production of “Jersey Boys” ended its Broadway engagement on Jan. 15, having played 4,642 performances.

On its heels, the Playhouse-sprung “Come From Away” opens in previews Feb. 18 at the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre. See stories about the show, the artists and director, Christopher Ashley, at www.comefromaway.com. Meanwhile, opening Feb. 9 (through March 1) at the Old Globe, the young Pablo Picasso and the young Albert Einstein, aged 23 and 25, respectively, argue genius, art and science in Steve Martin’s hilarious comedy “Picasso at the Lapin Agile.” Artistic director Barry Edelstein directs. The award-winning play originated at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre, eventually making its way off-Broadway in 1995. In the Globe production, Hal Linden plays an old Frenchman with a penchant for sex and drink.

Now an area resident, Broadway veteran Mary Munger Taylor, who starred with Joel Grey in Hal Prince’s 20th anniversary production of “Cabaret,” presents “Old Friends and New,” a cabaret of Broadway songs by Gershwin, Porter and Berlin at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, at La Jolla Community Center, 6811 La Jolla Blvd. Presented under the auspices of the charitable Bodhi Tree Concerts, proceeds benefit Ric Paredes’ Save a Life Foundation.

Tickets are $20 ($10 military) and there is free valet parking, www.bodhitreeconcerts.org or 619-596-9359.

Effective Feb. 8, Vista native and actor/director/choreographer Colleen Kollar Smith is the new executive producer at Moonlight Stage Productions. It’s indeed a fitting appointment, because she received her early theater experience as Sister Helen in 2018 at The Barbican. Mark Wigglesworth conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Following an 11-year run, the Tony Award-winning La Jolla Playhouse production of “Jersey Boys” ended its Broadway engagement on Jan. 15, having played 4,642 performances.

San Diego theatre review: ‘Romeo and Juliet,’ ‘Jersey Boys,’ and more

BY CHARLENE BALDRIDGE

Opera tenor Stephen Costello (seated, center) as Romeo. ‘Romeo and Juliet’ will be at the Metropolitan Opera from March 3 to 18. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

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PETHEALTHCENTERLAJOLLA.COM
Surf Diva is a unique shop and surf school operated by twin sisters, Izzy and Coco Tihyani, in La Jolla Shores. They have turned their passion for fashion and surfing into a two-decade bustling business. Both graduated from UCSD with communication majors. Izzy is a professional surfer who was on the collegiate surf team at UCSD and then she travelled with the national champions to many places all over the world such as Hawaii, Mexico, France and Haiti. Coco always had a love for fashion and wanted to design comfortable clothes that look good. Combining their love for fashion and surfing, Izzy and Coco created “Surf Diva.”

This store carries unique brands for surf enthusiasts, with an array of surf merchandise, including wetsuits, beachwear, children’s wear and really fun gift items. Some of the trendy brands offered in the store are Desigual, Hurley, Sanuk, Quiksilver, and Tom’s. Surf Diva is the bestselling brand in the store and the best selling items are the rash guards with SPF. In addition, they carry local jewelry designers such as Pura Vida. Set in Stone, Sulti Kuli and Mantra Band—for men and women with inspirational sayings. Coco buys all of the merchandise and products for the store. Also, she is a personal shopper for those who need assistance on bringing out their inner Diva or Divo.

Complementing their surf school, Izzy hires and then diligently trains instructors. These instructors run camps, hold group classes, or private lessons for the whole family. They have 12 to 17-year-old girls that come from all over the US to learn how to surf. In addition, they take groups down to Costa Rica once a year and currently are gearing up for spring break. They even trained the famous dog, Ricochet, to surf.

I asked them what their future held in store. They said, “a new online store to complement their brick and mortar store. It will include only their Surf Diva brands.” These exciting clothes are made in Southern California. This is such a plus now that people are more aware of buying clothes made in the U.S.

This dynamic duo has big hearts and give back to the community in many different ways. One of which is Surf Science, a 30-minute multimedia presentation. This educational outreach program teaches sun safety and ocean safety to children of all age groups. They also have private shopping parties where the store is closed and 20 percent of the sales go to charity. In 2013, they received the No.1 Surf Shop award in the U.S. The Surfing Industry Manufacturing Association named Surf Diva the Retailer of the Year. This award was a prestigious honor.

They are celebrating their 20th anniversary from May 2016 to May 2017 beginning with a reception at Duke’s La Jolla. In celebration to this momentous occasion, Izzy commissioned a Japanese artist, Kouchi Asakura, to create a piece of art that included the Surf Diva bus and showed Coco paddle boarding, Izzy surfing, surrounded by their children and husbands. Izzy surprised Coco with this colorful and fun piece of artwork.

Stop by and visit this awesome store at 2160 Avenida De La Playa, open every day from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**TEATRE**

and training on the Moonlight stage at the outdoor theater at Brengle Terrace Amphitheatre. Moonlight Stage Productions is noted for their annual series of summer musicals. Kollar Smith will collaborate with artistic director Steven Glaudini in planning and implementation of the season as well as additional programs supported by the City of Vista, Smith, currently executive director of San Diego Musical Theatre, is married and training on the Moonlight stage at the outdoor theater at Brengle Terrace Amphitheatre.
From my garden: Getting your garden prepared for this spring

BY LINDA MARRONE

With all the wonderful rain we've received in recent weeks, I am eagerly planning my spring garden and dreaming about tall spikes of foxgloves, delphiniums and Shasta daisies. Now is a great time to clean garden beds and prepare your soil for planting. Each year I take out my rusty red wheel barrel and fill it with organic products, such as blood meal, bone meal, earthworm castings and kelp meal and work it into the soil, all with the help of my trusty gardeners.

Earthworm castings are one of my favorite natural fertilizers, since it helps stimulate plant growth, increases your plant's ability to retain water and makes them strong and healthy, so that they can ward off insect infestations, diseases and fungal infections. The castings are filled with natural nitrates, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium and calcium, as well as a multitude of other minerals, and since they are naturally occurring elements, they will not burn your plants.

When you purchase a bag of earthworm castings, the castings may also include earthworm eggs that will later hatch in your soil and add more worms to your garden, which will in turn add more castings to your soil and also aerate it. If you feel your garden is lacking from earthwork activity, there are many local sources that you can find online that sell earthworms to add to your garden soil.

Blood and bone meal or any organic animal product fertilizers can burn plants, so read the packages and add the appropriate amounts for the size of your garden beds. Any organic ingredients you add to your soil will feed the earthworms that are already working there.

By the middle to the end of February, it is time to feed your roses. For each rose, I use a cup of Aida Perry Mix that I purchase at Walter Spreckels Elementary, a local plant nursery, with a cup of Epsom salt around the base of your plants, which will in turn add more castings to your soil and also aerate it. If you feel your garden is lacking from earthwork activity, there are many local sources that you can find online that sell earthworms to add to your garden soil. The castings are filled with natural nitrates, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium and calcium, as well as a multitude of other minerals, and since they are naturally occurring elements, they will not burn your plants.

In the next few weeks, we are going to remove as much grass as possible and plant all micro clover. Grass, stays a beautiful shade of green year-round and produces tiny white flowers. With all of the recent precipitation, home gardens are becoming much more verdant this time of year.

GREEN LANE FILLS UP HER CAR TO DELIVER FOOD TO FEEDING AMERICA COLLECTOR (PHOTO BY JENNA SAMALA)

University City updates: UCCA meeting highlights, US Constitution classes

BY JENNA SAMALA

University City Community Association Meeting Highlights

Some highlights from the January meeting included:

San Diego Water Authority
Pure Water Update

The Pure Water program plans to provide one-third of San Diego's water supply locally by 2035. The program involves a system of treatment facilities, pump stations and pipelines to use technology to clean recycled water to produce safe, high-quality drinking water; provide a reliable, sustainable, water supply; and offer a cost-effective investment for local needs. Phase I includes the North City Water Plant (NCWPR) Expansion, pure water facility, pump station and pipeline, located at the Eastgate Mall and Miramar area.

Phase I also includes a Morena Station and pipeline that will eventually continue through University City to the NCWPR. The public is welcome to take a guided tour of the water purification testing facility and find out how wastewater becomes purified water, the project will decrease reliance on imported water, and the comparison of purified, filtered, drinking, and recycled water samples. For more info, go to www.purewatersd.org.

Miramar MCAS Communications

UC resident Stephanie Jed brought up concerns about communicating with Miramar MCAS in comment- ing about low-flying violations over the neighborhood. Recent incidents have brought back unpleasant memories of the unfortunate crash of 2008, which destroyed two homes resulting in unnecessary deaths. It was agreed that open dialogue was needed, and residents should continue to file warranted complaints.

Community grant requests

UCCA granted UC Little League their request for $1,000 to help pay for new fencing. Additional requests were presented by: UCHS music boosters, and the UCHS boys water polo, girls water polo, and swim team boosters for aquatics parkas which are good for 10 years. The aquatics programs must spend funds to rent pool time at UCSD. The groups requested grants of $2,500, which will be decided at the next UCCA meeting.

Next UCCA meeting: Feb. 8, 6 p.m. at the UC Library

BUY A BRICK AND BE A PART OF UCHS HISTORY

The UCHS stadium renovations are expected to be completed this year, including the new tower entrance. Everyone -- current families, future families, alumni - are invited to be a part of the school's history by participating in the Memorial Brick Campaign, and purchasing a brick to be prominently displayed on the new tower. Donation is $100 for a 4-by-8-inch brick (three lines), or $250 for a 8-by-8-inch brick (six lines). Proceeds benefit the Centurion Foundation. For more info and to place an order, www.bricksrus.com/order/uchscf/

U.S. Constitution classes offered

UC resident Peter Knobloch is teaching a free weekly U.S. Constitution class, Tuesdays, from 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at 2880 Governor Drive.

The classes, sponsored by the Liberty Project, started in January and run through April. The classes are non-partisan, non-political, and non-denominational. All community members, ages 14 and above, are encouraged to attend any or all classes. (No childcare available.) The classes hope to help attendees answer the question “Could you defend the Constitution?” For more info, contact Peter knobloch, 858-220-0210. The remaining class schedule is:

Feb. 7: Continental Congress Stimulation;
Feb. 14: Forms of Government – Are We a Democracy or Republic?; Feb. 21: Order & Cycles of History – Power Structure of America; March 7: The Legislative Branch; March 14: The Judicial Branch; March 21: The Executive Branch; March 28: No class – spring break;
April 4: The Bill of Rights; April 11: Unintended Consequences: Cause and Effect; April 18: Our Sacred Honor – Private & Public Virtue; Friends of the Library book sale

The popular book sale will run from Feb. 2 - 4, and hours are: Thursday, 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Stock up on great fiction for all ages, pick up a great cookbook or find some music you’ve never tried before—all at great prices. Proceeds benefit the UC Library, located at 4155 Governor Drive.

St. Jude’s Hospital is holding a blood drive from February 2 - 4 and March 2 - 4.

Greice Lane fills up her car to deliver food to Feeding America collector (PHOTO BY JENNA SAMALA)
Right Choice Senior Living

Established in early 2008, Jean Brooks (UCSD Graduate) and Todd Brooks (Air Force Veteran, US Air Force Academy Graduate) had the desire to develop Assisted Living Care Homes and Services for seniors that are a cut above the rest at fair & competitive rates. Right Choice Senior Living has Residential Care Homes located in highly desirable neighborhoods close to UCSD, La Jolla, Pacific Beach, Clairemont (Mount Street Area) medical facilities and the beach. Come see us today before making your final choice. Make the Right Choice Today. For more information call (619) 246-2003 or go to the website at rightchoiceseniorliving.org.

CALL TODAY TO RECEIVE FREE AND COST SAVING INFORMATION

Full Service Assisted Living and Care Home Communities
• Respite/Short Term Stays at Reasonable Rates
• Secure VA Benefits for Veterans & Spouses to Help Pay for Care Costs
• Recieve $500 Gift Card when call today

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Salk scientists’ breakthrough in understanding HIV genetic structure

BY BLAKE BUNCH

Dmitry Lyumkis and his lab at the Salk Institute serve numerous purposes, but overall, one of their main goals is to determine the structure and genetic makeup of complex viruses. Recently, advances in technology, especially molecular 3D imaging, have allowed Lyumkis and his team to reconstruct the composition and density of HIV cells. Although the team published their findings in early January, this information required years of research at Salk, as well as other institutions, to achieve this breakthrough.

The main issue at hand was the building up of intasomes, which are the molecular machinery that enables HIV to irreversibly integrate its genetic material into host immune cells in the body. Salk researchers captured the structure of the complex intasome that lets HIV and similar viruses establish permanent infection in their hosts. The intasome hijacks host genetic material, and irreversibly inserts viral DNA. While other researchers have come close to mapping these structures before, it took significant increases in biochemistry and technology to be able to view these molecular compositions in the third dimension.

“This is truly the first atomic-level blueprint for understanding how intasomes target host cells,” said Lyumkis, a Helmsley Fellow at the Salk Institute. “Furthermore, this allows us to modify treatments or understand how the HIV virus learns to evade current therapies.”

Lyumkis explains that prior to the breakthrough, their working understanding of HIV was derived from another retrovirus, the prototype foamy virus (PFV).

“In solving the HIV intasome, essentially we are completing the atomic blueprint of the viral machinery,” Lyumkis said. “What we need to do, is understand this structure at the molecular level. Now, with our data, we can better understand how drugs that target intasomes work. This way, we can create new drugs, or improve existing ones.”

Currently, there are existing treatments on the market, as seen in a class of drugs called integrase strand transfer inhibitors (INSTIs). This drug targets the intasome, and has already been approved to treat HIV in the U.S. and Europe. Although these drugs work, scientists have only been able to gain a limited understanding of exactly why the mechanism of action of INSTIs, and how the virus mounts resistance by the interference of structures of the similar retrovirus, PFV.

In their most recent study, the Lyumkis team utilized a cutting-edge imaging technique called single-particle cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM). “This technology has allowed scientists to create images of large, complex, and dynamic molecules.”

In their comparison of HIV with PFV enzyme cores, the original author and senior researcher, Dario Passos, commented: “Although these molecular variations are minor, they could be a big deal for drug development and understanding drug resistance.”

Lyumkis further notes that while there are some effective drugs already on the market, they aim to find those with very low-resistance profiles, of which he says a number of compounds are already under development in collaborating labs. When it comes to third-dimensional characterization of the molecular machinery within the HIV-1 virus, Lyumkis says that his team uses “many different programs, which can be divided into two general classes. These classes are comprised of programs that recover the 3D density of the molecular complexes and those that build and refine atomic coordinates into the density.”

Once they have all of this data mapped out in a high-definition model, they are able to view the molecular components of the virus in their natural state. Much to the group’s surprise, they discovered that HIV intasomes are much more intricate and complex than other retroviruses. Lyumkis notes that the HIV intasome’s complexity hints at how nature shaped its evolution from simpler retroviruses. Although HIV intasomes are a great deal larger, they all use core pieces of a similar enzyme.

“HIV is like the luxury car, whereas other retroviruses are the economy models,” said Lyumkis.

“They’re both cars, but the HIV intasome contains important upgrades to do different jobs.”

Taking the car analogy further, if you really want to understand how the car works in order to modify its performance, you can’t just look at a whole engine. You have to take it apart and dig inside to really understand it inside out,” Lyumkis says.

Warwick’s author series: Dr. Ronald Epstein to speak on Feb. 1

BY LUCIA VITI

Warwick’s will host Dr. Ronald Epstein, author of “Attending: Medicine, Mindfulness and Humanity,” on Wednesday, Feb. 1 at 7:30 p.m. Chock-full of fascinating clinical stories, Epstein presents a model for the optimum delivery of care. Epstein is a practicing family physician, a professor of medicine, psychiatry and oncology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry where he serves as the Director for the Center of Communication and Disparities Research and codirects Mindful Practice Programs. Accomplishments include being named as one of America’s Best Doctors yearly since 1998 by the U.S. News & World Report.
CIRCUS VARGAS - STEAM CIRQUE!

Where: Del Mar Fairgrounds and Mission Bay
When: Through March 13, special matinee and evening show on Feb. 20.
Web: www.circusvargas.com,

The storyline
An eccentric group of adventure seekers stumble upon a traveling circus in an imaginary Victorian city, far, far-away. Steam Cirque’s peculiar protagonist, part magician-part inventor, attempts to industrialize the circus by incorporating his steam-powered mechanical contraptions into the ordinary, typical circus rigging, filling the big top with new, imaginative acrobatic apparatus for the artists to perform their acts.

Creative inspiration
Husband-and-wife team Nelson and Katya Quiroga’s inspiration for this year’s production came to them over a casual dinner with friends. While reminiscing of traveling, their many adventures and how fast time has passed, Nelson remarked suddenly that he’d felt as if he’d been “Around the World in 80 days!” referring to a novel from French author Jules Verne’s collection, “Voyages Extraordinaires.”

That comment and the subsequent conversation that followed morphed into hours of story telling. “It’s been quite the journey,” says Katya. “Sometimes we don’t even believe it ourselves.” Steam Cirque is inspired by adventure, colored by imagination and brought to life by the cast of Circus Vargas.

Circus Vargas embarks on a brand new epic adventure under the big top. Debuting their innovative new production at Del Mar Fairgrounds before moving on to Mission Bay, National City and Escondido, Circus Vargas will divide performances between the four San Diego locations from Jan. 19 through March 13, with a special matinee and evening show added on Monday, Feb. 20 for President’s Day.

Some of this year’s Circus Vargas - Steam Cirque cast members.

Tour
CONT. FROM PG. 9

train classroom teachers in the Next Generation Science Standards and implement STEAM lessons.”

Piller noted STEAM “is an inter-disciplinary, hands-on, approach to solving real-world problems.”

Brichtson said there are “A range of six houses on the tour showing both historical and progressive Bird Rock homes.”

“We have a formal coastal cottage chic house that’s been totally updated,” Brichtson said. “Another house is a modern, Southern California Craftsman. We have a house that we’re calling a designer’s spa retreat, built by local builder Louis Beacham in 1974. We also have a Bird Rock cottage built in 1952, which was actually brought into Bird Rock by railcar from a prefabricated kit.”

Brichtson said the tour culminates at “one of the original 10 homes in Bird Rock built in 1921.”

To purchase tickets, go to www.birdrockfoundation.com/product/bird-rock-tour-of-homes. For more information, email Timothy@BrichtsonRealEstate. Also, contact HomesofBirdRock@gmail.com.
La Jolla & University City Real Estate

**La Jolla** | **$1,975,000**
---
7721 Ivanhoe East Ave  | 3BR/2.5BA  
ဿuous & spacious, single story La Jolla home located in the very desirable "west-end". Features include: 4 bedrooms, 2 beautifully remodeled bathrooms, 1.5 car garage, open floor plan, large bedrooms, and a large back yard with an outdoor oven and mature landscaping. Walking distance to stores, restaurants, park & services. Excellent schools. MUST SEE

**La Jolla** | **$2,495,000**
---
8001 Paseo del Ocaso  | 4BR/3BA  
In the heart of La Jolla Shores! Serene and tranquil. Relax and experience casual living in this unparalleled coastal community! Enjoy the mid century vibe with indoor outdoor living boasting floor to ceiling sliders opening to spacious curvy patios. Price reduced $100,000!

**University City** | **$850,000**
---
3064 Ducommun Ave.  | 4BR/2BA  | 1,900 sqft  
**Newly remodeled**  
Sizable and spacious, single story University City home located in the very desirable "village"! Features include: 4 bedrooms, 2 beautifully remodeled bathrooms, hardwood floors, newly updated kitchen, open floor plan, large bedrooms, and a large back yard. Walking distance to stores, restaurants, park & services. Excellent schools. MUST SEE

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Autonomous vehicles come to SD

The U.S. Department of Transportation has designated the San Diego region as one of ten proving grounds for autonomous vehicles in the nation. The region has advanced features in its local transportation network and a global reputation as a high-tech hub for research and wireless innovations.

“This is great news for the San Diego region,” SANDAG Chair and County Supervisor Ron Roberts said. “We are at the start of a new transportation era, and it’s tremendously exciting for our region to be part of a national initiative to foster innovations and best practices that will enable the safe deployment of driverless vehicles.”

SANDAG, Caltrans, and the City of Chula Vista jointly submitted the application to the federal government for the designation. The application garnered support from major auto manufacturers and technology companies, including Toyota, Qualcomm, Teradata, and DENSIO International America Inc. To see the list of supporters and other background materials related to this initiative, visit www.sandag.org.

“We designate proving grounds to collectively form a Community of Practice around safe testing and deployment,” U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox said. “This group will openly share best practices for the safe conduct of testing and operations as they are developed, enabling the participants and the general public to learn at a faster rate and accelerating the pace of safe deployment.”

As part of the nationwide pilot, proving ground sites will bring together auto manufacturers, local cities, public agencies and private companies to test autonomous vehicles on designated facilities. The test sites will share information and work together to develop best practices.

“Caltrans is proud to join with SANDAG, the City of Chula Vista, and the community to establish the San Diego region as one of ten national proving grounds for autonomous vehicles,” said SANDAG Chair and County Supervisor Ron Roberts.

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Get to know Barry & Betty Tashakorian

Led by Barry Tashakorian and Betty Torzyan, The Tash Team offers personalized and thorough representation for clients with a wide array of needs. Specializing in the marketing and sale of luxury homes and coastal properties in La Jolla and San Diego, they offer professional assistance in French, Spanish or English.

With extensive market knowledge, a talent for home staging and superior negotiating skills, The Tash Team has consistently ranked in the Top 25 for Berkshire Hathaway agents in San Diego County, and ranked in the Top 1/2% for their sales production, out of more than 50,000 agents for Berkshire Hathaway nationwide.

Barry Tashakorian is widely known for his proficiency with a vast network of professional connections, and Betty Torzyan brings more than 18 years of experience in residential sales to the team. Guided by a sense of responsibility to her clients, Betty leverages her tireless work ethic, marketing skills and knowledge of interior design to provide her buyers and sellers with a superior standard of support and service.

A lifelong fascination with home decor and interior design motivated Betty to pursue a career in real estate. Drawing from the time she spent working with top designers such as Gianni Versace and Tom Ford, she helps her sellers maximize their homes’ aesthetic appeal and helps her buyers visualize the potential of specific properties.

The Tash Team is committed to helping you find your own slice of paradise in the La Jolla market. A resident of La Jolla for more than 30 years, Barry offers an insider’s perspective about local school districts, property values and social structures.

As announced in March 2016, SeaWorld is transitioning from the orca show to a theatrical orca show to a more educational presentation reflecting the natural behaviors of the whales. The first of these “live documentary” presentations, called “Orca Encounter,” will debut at SeaWorld San Diego this summer. SeaWorld Orlando and SeaWorld San Antonio will follow suit in 2019.

The final “One Ocean Shamu” show was conducted at SeaWorld San Diego on Sunday, Jan. 8. Their interim education-based Orca Encounter to start in the main pool. Guests to SeaWorld San Diego will continue to experience live orca presentations, as they make preparations for the new education-based Orca Encounter to debut this summer.

Please see the list of supporters and other background materials related to this initiative, visit www.sandag.org.
My Dad Knows La Jolla! Call Him Today to Buy or Sell Your Home

David Schroedl  858-353-5300
Pacific Sothebys
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

La Jolla Shores Heights

8714 Caminito Sueno
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Magnificent Muirlands Estate

6405 Muirlands Drive
Was Offered at $4,995,000

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Friendly faces. Delicious food. Fueling work and play.

Occupying the vibrant lobby of the landmark Aventine building, we provide amazing craft coffee, cold pressed juice and a diverse seasonal menu with healthy and traditional choices.

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