Conscientious cookies

Vegan cookie entrepreneur opens shop in Grantville. Page 9

Eclectic offerings

Centifonti’s serves everything from traditional Italian to house-made chocolates. Page 15

MISSION TRAILS

Park people

Mission Trails Regional Park users share their stories. Page 17

Author ponders possible COVID murder plot

No one wants to get sick with COVID-19. No one wants to get a loved one sick either. But what if someone did? That is the premise of a new book titled “Novel Coronavirus” by Allied Gardens author Kyle G. Roesler.

The book is a modern twist of a whodunit about a young man who still lives at home with his father. When the pandemic begins, the son comes up with a convenient murder plan to rid himself of his overbearing father, who has pre-existing medical conditions by purposefully infecting himself with the virus “assuming he would survive and dad wouldn’t,” Roesler said.

To soften the murderer’s persona in the story, Roesler made Kevin, the son, someone who has a slight degree of mental illness. “He isn’t looking at the world with the same moral compass as the rest of humanity is,” Roesler explained.

Roesler came up with the idea for his book while washing his hands as prescribed by health officials after an evening walk with his wife.

“While I was doing that this particular evening, it sort of occurred to me, ‘What if I forgot sometime?’ It would be so easy to touch something else first and if I was carrying COVID on my fingertips, I could infect the people in some cases, new opportunities — in closing school funding gaps.

SEE SCHOOL FUNDRAISING, Page 3

I’m living with. And that thought quickly changed to, ‘What if someone wanted to do that?’” It

SEE COVID MURDER, Page 19

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 8

COVID murder

By JEFF CLEMETSON | Mission Times Courier

 Kyle G. Roesler

San Diego Blood Bank is seeing a sharp increase in hospital orders for COVID-19 convalescent plasma. Orders have more than tripled in the last month. On top of local demand, San Diego Blood Bank is being called upon to help supply national surge centers in anticipation of a spike in usage across the country. San Diego Blood Bank was one of the first blood banks in the country to begin collecting COVID-19 convalescent plasma. In addition to supplying local hospitals, San Diego Blood Bank has supported surge centers and other blood banks across the country.

Plasma donations from those who have recovered from COVID-19 are needed to help others who are currently fighting the virus. This is because their plasma has developed antibodies against a virus.

Anyone previously diagnosed with COVID-19 can sign up at sandiegobloodbank.org/donateplasma.

To support the efforts, all blood donations are being tested for antibodies as part of SDBB’s standard testing panel in order to qualify donations for COVID-19 convalescent plasma. If a donation tests positive, the plasma in the donated blood may be used to help hospital patients fighting COVID-19.

Historically, convalescent plasma (CCP) has been successfully used to treat SARS, MERS and the Spanish flu, so there is evidence that CCP may help people suffering from certain infectious diseases like COVID-19.

“We need anyone who has recovered from COVID-19 to contact us to see if they are eligible to donate their plasma,”
COMMUNITY BRIEFS

ALLIED GARDENS GRANTVILLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

The pandemic has slowed us down but many of our activities in the Navajo neighborhoods continue. The Allied Gardens Grantville Community Council (AGGCC) had to cancel the annual Holiday Festival at Lewis Middle School and the Children’s Tree Lighting Ceremony. But we still got the holiday lights up over the bridge and at the Waring Road-Zion Avenue triangle.

At the time of this drafting, the AGG Beautiful Project during the week of Nov. 28 and the work at the Navajo Canyon trail head on Dec. 5 promise to be a great success. We are so very proud of the event organizers Kim Morris and Sophia Frost for their work in putting it all together and so thankful for the many neighbors who participated. Go to our website at aggbeaucouncil.org/aggbeautiful for pictures of all of us hard at work.

The Navajo Community Planners, Inc. (NCPI) has not been idle. Consideration of a proposed development of the vacant property bordered by Del Cerro Boulevard (the Chevron gas station) and the freeway, and between College Avenue and the residences on Marne Avenue has been before the community planning group for the past year. This property has been vacant and in private ownership since the Del Cerro development was completed.

There have been several attempts to develop it under the current RS-1-7 zoning, most recently with approval for 24 single-family dwellings. That developer did not proceed with project. All Peoples Church currently located at 5500 University Ave. — obtained ownership rights and filed its application to build its new church on the location.

Because the All Peoples Church uses will not conform to the current zoning, an application for a Planned Development Permit must go through the planning process with final consideration by the City Council. On its way to that final authority, the development application passes through NCPI for a vote on whether or not to recommend the project. There have been several hearings, most recently on Nov. 5 by an NCPI subcommittee and on Nov. 11 by the NCPI board.

The next occasions for continued public comment and input on the development have not been set. Those dates will be found in the meeting agendas. The agendas and Zoom access instructions will be sent to the AGGCC mailing lists and will be found at navajoplanners.org during the week before that meeting.

Folks in Allied Gardens may feel that this development is too far from our area of interest to raise our concerns. However, the property in question is remarkably similar in size, configuration, and private ownership to the canyon west of Waring Road — the area that runs from behind the houses on Orcutt Avenue south to the condominums at the intersection of Waring Road and Adobe Falls Road. What happens in Del Cerro might well predict what can happen in Allied Gardens.

At monthly meetings of the AGGCC Board of Directors, the community designs and implements important projects. Use the “Contact Us” page at aggbeaucouncil.org to let us know how we can help you support our neighborhood and to get on our email contact list. The board will not meet in December. Our next board meeting will be on Jan. 5.

—By Allied Gardens Grantville Community Council president Shain Hang

DEL CERRO ACTION COUNCIL NEWS

As we approach the holiday season, the number one topic for Del Cerro is the proposed All Peoples Church. There are Del Cerro residents who only recently became aware of the project. This is unfortunate because there are multiple opportunities to find out what is going on in Del Cerro.

This is a project that has been presented to the Del Cerro Action Council (DCAC) (delcerronactioncouncil.org) and the Navajo Community Planners, Inc. (NCPI) (navajoplanners.org) over 15 times in the past two years. It has also been referenced in the notes or minutes of the quarterly DCAC posted on their website, the monthly meetings of NCPI, and in articles in the Mission Times Courier. The Mission Times Courier is also available online at missiontimescourier.com. Anyone may sign up on their respective websites to receive emails/updates from these community-based organizations.

Our new District 7 City Councilmember, Raul Campillo, who took office on Tuesday, Dec. 8 will have a website and you may sign up on his website to receive updates on city and District 7-related items. Go to sandiego.gov/city-hall, click on City Hall on the right-hand side of the page and scroll down to Councilmember Raul Campillo. Forward this information on to your friends and neighbors in Del Cerro. There are multiple opportunities to become involved on what is transpiring in the Navajo area.

NCPI is one of more than 40 community-based land use organizations recognized by the City of San Diego. Each of the four communities in the Navajo area have four representatives elected to sit on the board for two-year terms. It is strictly an advisory organization as far as the city is concerned. To date, no vote has been taken by NCPI or DCAC regarding approval of the project. NCPI voted in an advisory capacity, to allow the All Peoples Church to apply for an amendment to the Community Plan to allow the church. This means they may proceed to apply to the city for their project. NCPI will not vote on the project until the church has completed all city requirements.

When the All Peoples Church has completed all city requirements, they will return to the DCAC and then proceed to NCPI.
President of Patrick Henry High School’s junior class, he and his fellow class officers faced a challenge none of their predecessors had ever faced before. Normally, junior class ASB officers plan and host a Winter Formal — the proceeds from which go into a bank for the following year’s senior graduation events like prom. But with gatherings and large events like dances cancelled, Chubb had to come up with a different way to raise money.

“I realized that [Winter Formal] was not going to be able to be a thing, and if we do go back next year, we need this money in order to have a good senior year,” he said. “The week I was elected in the first week of ASB, I started looking around at more direct to consumer where there is no in-person, you work with a company online that’s all shipped to people’s houses.”

The senior ASB at Henry has now held three online fundraisers: A holiday decorations (wreaths, etc.) that raised around $600; a holiday shop (candles, snacks, jewelry, etc.) that raised around $400; and an ongoing holiday sale that ships out hams and turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas. That ends Jan. 1.

“That one has done pretty well so far, we’ve got like $400 and we still got a month to go,” Chubb said, adding that there is also now an online merchandise store that raises money for all of Henry’s classes. “So everything is just switched now, geared to all online since we can’t really do anything at all in-person.”

The online fundraisers help, but will unlikely make up for the kind of money an in-person event like Winter Formal brings in.

“Winter Formal is generally a pretty big fundraiser,” said ASB advisor Autumn Flores, adding that the annual dance held in the main campus T-shirt sales, which by this time usually raises between $5,000 and $10,000, depending on the size of the junior class. Also missing from the junior class fundraising are the weekly frozen yogurt sales and on-campus T-shirt sales, which by this time of year would have raised around $2,000. Still, Flores commended Chubb’s initiative, especially since other classes are even further behind in the fundraising they normally see by this time of year.

“The junior class has been kind of an outlier in that Devin has been incredibly motivated — not that my other officers aren’t motivated, they are — but he’s been very big on fundraisers,” Flores said.

Patrick Henry’s senior class is the most behind because it has lost not only its on-campus T-shirt sales and frozen yogurt sales, it has also lost one of its main fundraising sources — the annual Senior Alley where seniors purchase parking spaces they can paint and personalize.

“That’s also a pretty big revenue generator for our senior class, usually between $8,000 and $10,000 from that particular fundraiser,” Flores said, adding that all these kinds of fundraisers go toward making prom night and other graduation events affordable for all of Henry’s students. “Last year, we had them prom, their tickets would have been $5 or, at most, $5.50.

So how will senior prom and other grad events be funded when those events are allowed to continue? The short answer is there is no answer yet.

“I have a feeling that some of the things that we might look could mean there may be a year where things are done more modestly,” Flores said. “Normally, we’d have prom at a hotel or a venue. We might be looking at old school hosting our prom in the middle of the middle of our quad with outside lights and creating our own venue here.

“To be honest, my seniors probably wouldn’t care as long as they got a prom, but those are the kinds of concession we might be looking at,” she added.

In the meantime, Chubb and his fellow ASB officers are doing what they can in promoting their online fundraisers through alumni social media pages and whatever else will help them get the word out.

Now with [our fundraising] being all online and these companies ship all over the country, I’ve gotten some sales from like Texas, Maine — all over,” he said, adding that the best way to support his and all the other classes at Henry is by following the school’s ASB Instagram page — @pahenryasb — which lists all current events and fundraisers.

MIXED SUCCESSES

High school associated students aren’t the only groups that have had to make changes in fundraising during the pandemic. PTAs from middle and elementary schools are also replacing their in-person fundraisers with online ones.

“We lost potential major funding from our biggest fundraiser of the entire year because most of it is straight up profit,” said Hardy Elementary School principal Laura Alluin. “We have a large Jog-a-thon scheduled in March or April and that’s our largest fundraiser of the entire school year. Obviously we weren’t able to do that.”

Although Hardy didn’t hold a fundraiser last spring to replace Jog-a-thon, it didn’t really need to because those funds are usually used for school activities like field trips, which were cancelled.

Hardy was also able to carry on with other fundraisers it usually holds — although now moved online — with mixed success. The school continued its Family Dining Days that partners with local restaurants — Corbin’s Q, Woodstock’s Pizza, Chipotle, etc. — that offer a percentage of the proceeds from which go into a bank for future school events.

\[SEE SCHOOL FUNDRAISING, Page 4\]
a night’s sales to the school. The Dining Days had varying degrees of success as restaurants at different times could only offer pick-up and not in-person dining. The Hardy Dads Club also carried on its usual Christmas tree and greensale sales, with online ordering and payment for the first time.

“I heard it was not as successful as the past two years — there was a rock star family who was very successful who now graduated — but more profitable than the first two years we did it,” Alluin said.

What was successful for Hardy was the online Raisa Craze event — a “kindness-a-thon” held as an experiment to replace Jog-a-thon.

“The kids make pledges online saying, ‘I’m going to three acts of kindness.’ ... Then they advertised to their friends, families and neighbors and sent out the links that say, ‘Will you pledge money for each act of kindness that I complete?’ And then they had to go back and take photos and write explanations of the kinds of kindness that they did. And the money came rolling in,” Alluin said. The school hit its goal of $5,000 in only two weeks and ended up with over $6,500. “It was a windfall for the school, which is money the teachers can use to buy much needed school supplies,” Berg said. “We’re hoping to keep most of our remaining items such as ArtCorps which is an interactive art program for kids. As of now, those items will stay and we will be rolling over the less than the desired for next year, but still meeting our minimum goal.”

The school still has other fundraising opportunities for the year including Dine-in events (which Berg pointed out will likely be “dine-outs”) that are similar to Hardy’s Family Dining Days and a box tops fundraiser where students collect tops of cereal boxes for rebate money from cereal companies.

“We’re hopeful we can meet our goals on those or we may have to extend the end date to the fundraiser in hopes of getting a few additional donations. “It looks like we’ll be ending that fundraiser at about 57% of our goal. We were able to adjust the net amount and cut some costs that would have normally been associated with running the event which we didn’t have this year so that helped our bottom line.” Berg said. Even with cutting down some overhead costs of holding the Jog-a-thon event, the deficit in funds raised has meant cuts to programs at Phoebe Hearst.

“We have already cut some items from our budget such as reducing teacher mini-grants, which is money the teachers can use to buy much needed school supplies,” Berg said. “We’re hoping to keep most of our remaining items such as ArtCorps which is an interactive art program for kids. As of now, those items will stay and we will be rolling over the less than the desired for next year, but still meeting our minimum goal.”

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, Berg said she is “extremely proud” of her PTA team this year that was able to provide an “awesome fall” for Phoebe Hearst students.

“We held a Pumpkin Carving contest; the school foundation held a Halloween Parade, and we consistently showed up for supply drop offs and every chance we got to see our parents and students,” she said.

And although fundraising for these special events and programs is important, Berg pointed out that it is not the most important issue schools, students and parents are facing right now. “As the TOT 50,000 resident, I can tell you I’ve received a lot of notes and calls from parents eager to get their kids back to school and concerned with the timeline of that possibility. Not one of them has been concerned about our love fundraising,” she said. “I don’t think raising money for the school is high on parents minds right now, but instead they just want their kids back in school. Sadly, I can’t give them the answers they want because I’m in the same boat they are.”

—Read editor Jeff Clemetson at jcf@sdnews.com.
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How local churches can foster racial justice and reconciliation

By DAVID E. CUMMINGS

Bishop AB Vines of New Seasons Church in Spring Valley knows a thing or two about racial bias first-hand.

“If I get a ticket for a light not being lit, there’s five cent guaranteed, because I’m 5 feet 10 inches, 300 pounds. That’s not happening to you [looking at my white friends] with the same 10 things. I went to college. I’ve been married for over 25 years, been in ministry for 30 years, I became vice president of the [Southern Baptist] Convention, but I still get nervous when a cop comes by. All he sees is a black guy. I should not have to have that fear. You [looking at me again] don’t have that fear. I live that fear every single day.”

New Seasons is a large, multi-site church comprising a diverse array of ethnicities.

“How everyone goes through pain, everyone wants to experience love, and we can’t survive without hope,” says Vines. “Everybody at some point needs those three things. It’s universal.”

Despite our shared humanity, however, the majority population sets the standards for intelligence, success, and acceptable behavior.

“The Anglo population thinks or has been thinking that they are the model and the measure for success,” says Juan-Daniel Epitía, Pastor of Hispanic Ministries at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church in North County. “The Anglo ethnocentric perspective has criminalized whomever looks different, whomever has an accent, whoever’s skin is like mine [brown]. It has been criminalized and thought of as a thief or someone who is going to hurt you or me and our children so we must get rid of them.”

While the church may not be able to undo four centuries of racial injustice entirely on its own, it is in a unique position to facilitate one of the greatest needs of our time.

According to City Life Church Pastor Dale Huntington, “there’s a lot of wisdom we can gain from people in these neighborhoods. For the longest time, they have spoken up on behalf of people, and now I’m trying to learn how to speak up for people to listen to other people. We need to hold our communities to foster open and honest conversations about race.

As close communities with common beliefs and values, churches are ideally situated to foster open and honest conversations about race.

Epitía agrees. “I think one of the things we need to cultivate is learning to listen to each other,” says Epitía. “There are a lot of assumptions, prejudices, judging before, and that means that there is fear and ignorance.”

“We need to learn to listen with empathy and respect.”

Mid-City Church of the Nazarene in City Heights takes this principle one step further by ensuring that multiple ethnicities are represented in the church’s leadership.

“I think the beauty in the multi-congregational model is in how we make decisions together and govern together when it comes to ministry or responses to say, Black Lives Matter,” says Mid-City Pastor Becky Modesto. “Because you have so many different perspectives, you have to really listen well. Taking time to have people who are different than you at the table is really important.”

During recent protests in San Diego to police brutality, Mid-City didn’t unilaterally take action to express its opinions. Instead, they reached out to the local stakeholders to hear what they felt would be most helpful from the church.

“I called several leaders here and just asked, ‘how can we best walk alongside you?’” says Modesto. “[It’s about] listening to people’s stories, that empathy of just sitting there, just listening and understanding.”

Empathetic conversation with people who are not like us or with whom we disagree, however, is not easy. “One of the problems is that we’re not willing to see if perhaps we’re deficient in our systemic racism and benefiting from it,” says Huntington. “We’re just willing to say, ‘I’m not a racist.’ And there’s so much more digging to do.”

Overt racism is easy to spot and easy to correct. It’s the silent bias that’s the things we think and say without even realizing it, that are most insidious.

“If I go into an elevator, a white woman is going to hold her purse tighter. When I go shopping at Nordstrom’s, I’m going to get followed. Those things have got to be really recognized and dealt with,” says Vines.
Navajo Canyon members and guests were thrilled to attend the November meeting at the Legacy Resort Hotel in Mission Valley. We learned that with 18 competitors, our ladies were eager to get together and catch up on all the political frontline happenings.

To that end this election cycle has been a roller coaster ride is clearly an understatement. Locally, Republicans have a lot of statewide victories to celebrate because elected officials and propositions which passed or failed, but will the presidential election end up in the Supreme Court?

A final note: if Trump was to be confirmed as the new president, which he has not yet conceded, he still has several legal options that could prevent the new administration from taking power. It remains to be seen how this situation will play out. But the fact is that Trump has made it clear that he is not conceding and is actively working to overturn the election results. This has raised concerns about the legitimacy of the upcoming administration and the future of democracy in the United States. It is crucial that we continue to support our elected officials and work towards a peaceful transfer of power, as the health and safety of our country depend on it.
said David Wellis, CEO of San Diego Blood Bank. “The need has already increased over the last couple of weeks and we anticipate even more requests from hospitals as we head into the new year.”

Appointments are required to donate blood and convalescent plasma. To see if you qualify, please visit sandiegobloodbank.org or call 619-400-8251.

MISSION TRAILS WATER PROJECT CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

When looking from the right vantage point towards Mission Trails Regional Park, a large mound of dirt can be seen in the park. What is it? It’s a construction project by the San Diego County Water Authority to upgrade a section of the regional water delivery system.

Rest assured, once construction is complete, the dirt hill will be restored and revegetated with native plants – many seeded from the park itself.

Work efforts on a new flow regulatory structure (FRS II) are beginning to take shape with many of the wall sections installed. The FRS II will be an underground concrete water tank that will store slightly less than five million gallons of water and be used to balance flows in the aqueduct system. FRS II will be the second underground water tank in the park – both work to efficiently move water through the region.

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I am a resident of Del Cerro and am writing to register my opposition to the proposed mega-church in our community. This is near the intersection of College Avenue and Del Cerro Boulevard. This is an inappropriate proposal for the site in terms of traffic, safety, size and zoning. Please don’t let this project happen.

—Steve Behar, Del Cerro

I am concerned Del Cerro citizen who is against the building of a mega church on College Avenue. I have lived in Del Cerro since I was a child and now I am a homeowner in the same neighborhood. There are several reasons why this is not a good idea. This will greatly increase the traffic in our neighborhood. With a capacity of over 900 people, which they originally listed about the church, will bring many more cars and congestion at all different days and times of the week. This alone makes it unsafe for walking and driving. This also makes it a less desirable place to live which drives down our home value. This is not an appropriate place to put a massive church. We have a nice, mid-sized church just down the road with St. Therese. This church will bring many more cars and congestion at all different days and times of the week. This alone makes it unsafe for walking and driving. This also makes it a less desirable place to live which drives down our home value.

I hope you will consider my family’s concerns and do what you can to stop this mega project before it is too late.

—Jordan Chaim, Del Cerro

It has been brought to the attention of one of the of the Del Cerro community, that there is a non-denominational mega-church proposed on the remaining open space located at I-8 and College Avenue. I urge the Del Cerro Action Council, the Navajo Community Planners, and the City of San Diego, to deny the approval of this out-of-character mega project. Our community is made up of single-family homes in a residential community that this mega project would destroy. The project would bring an unprecedented amount of traffic into the neighborhood which it was not designed for, it will lower the property values adjacent to the neighborhood for its quiet community feel, its safety, and its many green hills and canyons. The construction of a mega project will disrupt everything we love about the neighborhood. A large corporate structure such as this does not belong in a sleepy residential area (not to mention that the proposed construction site was zoned for residential development), and traffic caused by some 900-plus congregants will undoubtedly worsen driving conditions for residents (drivers already speed down our street when they can’t make a u-turn on College Avenue).

We are also concerned about what effect this will have on safety for pedestrians — we walk our daughter to preschool daily and look forward to our daily walks even more so in these pandemic days. We are also disappointed at the prospect of losing one of our neighborhood’s treasured green areas.

In addition to these very real safety and quality-of-life concerns, a mega project is not at all in keeping with the tone and values of this quiet community — and the lack of transparency in the planning process up to this point has been very upsetting. I hope you will consider my family’s concerns and do what you can to stop this mega project before it is too late.

—Jordan Chaim, Del Cerro

Maya’s Cookies opens Grantville storefront

By Robin Dohrn-Simpson | Del Cerro Times Courier

Is it possible to have a tasty, ooey-gooey cookie that is vegan? Yes, and egg and butter-free never tasted better than Maya’s cookies. Maya Madsen, owner and baker, has taken her passion for cooking, healthy eating and sweet tooth to a new level that has made her the country’s top Black-owned vegan bakery.

Being a personal trainer for 30 years, Madsen always ate healthy and allowed herself a cheat day. On that day she made cookies. Everyone needs a cheat day. As a vegan she wanted to create delicious vegan cookies using the best quality ingredients.

Over the past few years, people would pass by her bakery and peek in the windows and ask to buy her cookies. “I was only licensed to sell online, so I had to turn people away,” Madsen said. “I always want to do what my customers want, so I decided to get all the city permits to sell directly from our bakery.”

She has now opened her bakery for retail sales to the public. Her storefront is off the beaten path, but not too hard to find — across the street from the post office in Grantville. Just look for the pink storefront at 4760 Mission Gorge Place Suite G.

Madsen also sells her cookies at the Little Italy Farmers Market on Saturdays and the Hillcrest Farmers Market on Sundays.

Madsen prides herself on using the highest quality ingredients in her cookies. She offers a variety of cookies and is constantly rotating them in and out. Some popular ones are her Classic Chocolate Chip, Birthday Cake, Snickerdoodle, White Chocolate Macadamia, Chocolate Chip S’mores and Marble Fudge.

Cookie enthusiasts, you’re in luck. Madsen has expanded her business to include gluten-free cookies. The bakery is not “celiac safe” as they cook with regular flour and gluten-free flour in the same facility. But, depending on your level of sensitivity, you can enjoy two or three flavors that she has on hand at a time. It took her a few years to add this to her menu since she had to get her recipe perfected. She has twelve flavors in her repertoire. For the holidays Madsen features gingerbread cookies. To check specific ingredients, look on her website where she lists every cookie detail.

This holiday season, Maya’s Cookies has four different deluxe holiday tins with unique flavors: Chocolate Peppermint S’Mores, Sparkle Sugar Cookies, Gingerbread and White Chocolate Cranberry. You can order cookies online to be shipped to anyone on your gift-giving list or pass by the bakery and pick up an assortment. The proceeds from the sales of the holiday tins will go to support two charities near and dear to her heart, helping young women of color through high school and college and an animal refuge in Santee.

To order online or for information on ingredients go to mayascookies.com.

Robin Dohrn-Simpson is a local freelance food and travel writer. Reach her at dohrnsimpson@hotmail.com.
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as an action item on their agenda. The project will then go to the City of San Diego’s Planning Commission and ultimately to the City Council. Public testimony will be heard by both entities. Currently NCPI and DCAC are Zoom meetings.

The next DCAC meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. The link to attend this meeting will be posted on the DCAC website (delcerroactioncouncil.org) on Monday, Jan. 25. NCPI meets monthly (they are dark in December) on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. They post their Zoom meetings on their website at navajoplanners.org. Anyone may sign up on the websites to receive information.

There is no update from the City of San Diego on the proposed Del Cerro Maintenance Assessment District. The holidays are upon us and the DCAC Board of Directors wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

—By Del Cerro Action Council secretary Jay Wilson

SAN CARLOS AREA COUNCIL NEWS

We now enter that time of year when we take stock of all that’s happened over the past 12 months. The rampant devastation from COVID-19 and a series of natural disasters across our state and nation, makes it imperative that we focus on the moments that have brought us any peace, comfort and happiness.

Zoom and other forms of communications technology have made it possible for families and friends to stay in touch and celebrate occasions such as birthdays, weddings and holidays. Drive-in cinema has made a come-back. Zoom concerts are now a thing. Families have rediscovered puzzles and board games. Essential

THE HOLIDAYS ARE UPON US AND THE DCAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS WISHES EVERYONE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON.

—BY DEL CERRO ACTION COUNCIL SECRETARY JAY WILSON

—BY DEL CERRO ACTION COUNCIL SECRETARY JAY WILSON

—BY DEL CERRO ACTION COUNCIL SECRETARY JAY WILSON

See Community Briefs, Page 12
Community briefs

COMMUNITY / OPINION

COMMUNITY / OPINION

People brushed up on their bak-
ing, gardening and sewing skills. COVID-19 forced us to reimagine everything from arranging for employees to work full time from home, to setting up restaurants outside from drive-by graduations and birthdays to socially-distanced grocery shopping. It’s been a boom-

ing year for bicycles, bidets and bar-
becue grills. Quarantine gives us the opportunity to spend 40 min-
utes in a massage chair without guilt. I have personally never seen so many people out on the trails biking and hiking. Kids are learn-
ing an appreciation for the great outdoors and the night sky.

The last time the San Carlos Area Council gathered was last Decem-
ber. Since it may be many more months before we can physi-
cally meet, we have decided to host a holiday Zoom meeting for San
Carlos neighbors on Wednesday, Dec. 16 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. We can use the time to meet our neighbors, discuss any important local issues, and usher out the year 2020. We hope you’ll join us!

If you have a San Carlos story to share, or would like to get involved in your community, please contact San Carlos Area Council vice pres-
ident Patricia Mooney at patty@crystalpyramid.com.

—By San Carlos Area Council vice president Patricia Mooney

Letters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Save Del Cerro. Voice your opinion to your local leaders. Just say NO!—Michael Livingston, Del Cerro

Your report about the Zoom people’s church project meeting did not reflect the main consen-
sus of the people that spoke.

First, that the majority of the participants who live in Del Cerro do not want this 900 member mega church due to the traffic impact it would cre-
ate. Second, that the majority of Del Cerro participants would rather have the taxable 24-unit single family project that was already approved by the City Council.

The community of Del Cerro want their voices heard and re-
ported without bias.

—Bob Martin, Del Cerro

I am a resident of Del Cerro. I am demanding a second vote on building a mega church on College Avenue and Del Cerro Boulevard. The citizens of this community deserve a say in what is approved and how it is approved. This proposed project has a total lack of transparency.

We pay taxes on expensive homes in Del Cerro and there-
fore we have a right to be heard. —Sandra M. Einstein, Del Cerro

[Read more letters at missiontimescourier.com]
San Carlos journalist wins Archaeological Society award

Cynthia G. Robertson, a regular contributor to the Mission Times Courier and other local publications, is a two-way tie winner in the sixth annual San Diego Archaeological Society Art Show. Her image “Guiding Light” of the San Diego Mission de Alcala, won the People’s Choice Award for the competition.

Robertson’s photo is of the sidewalk and bell tower of the Mission de Alcala.

“The title is a testament to the history, culture, and religion of the time when the missions of California were being established. Being an active church now, with its place in history, Mission de Alcala remains a guiding light,” she explained.

Robertson’s other submission to the show, “Liminal Space,” is a photograph of the Serra Museum in Balboa Park. It received an Honorable Mention.

There were five categories of artwork showing the various ways that art and archaeology intersect. Those categories were Fine Art, Photography, Archaeological Line Drawing, Traditional Arts and Video.

Long interested in archaeology, history and anthropology, Robertson was intrigued when she was invited to participate in the competition.

“I actually worked at the Anthropology Museum when I was a student at Mesa College,” she said. “I even considered working in the field as an anthropologist.”

As a result of her winning photograph, she has earned a one-year membership to SDCAS and the opportunity to serve on the board.

The art show was judged blindly by the Art Show Committee who had prior no knowledge of the artists’ race, gender, cultural affiliation, experience or background. The show is now online on the SDCAS website through Dec. 31. The website explains that art and archaeology are inextricably linked. Archaeologists often study the artistic creations of past cultures, whether ancient Grecian mosaics or finely crafted stone tools of pre-contact California.

Visit sdcas.org for more information on the archaeological society and to view the art show.

Guiding Light, Mission de Alcala (Photo by Cynthia Robertson)

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Penelope's Mexican Food
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Carol Tolosko created Centifonti Restaurant as a nod to her great grandfather Cosmo Centifonti who immigrated with his wife Carmela, in the late 1800s from Abruzzi, Italy to Burlington, New Jersey. Cosmo started his “One Stop Shop” — a delicatessen, with an ice cream parlor, candy store, smoking lounge and a bar. Tolosko wished to emulate the concept with her own eatery located in the Village of La Mesa.

Centifonti is a restaurant with an eclectic menu of Italian and Californian favorites — something for everyone, children and adults. You’ll find a bar featuring 25 craft beers on tap, a gelateria and also a candy store.

Carol and her daughter are fourth and fifth generation chocolatiers who make their own chocolate goodies. Carol’s mother, until recently, made the candy and caramel apples so loved by patrons.

The restaurant, which is open daily, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. A unique breakfast favorite is the Southwest Breakfast Bowl. This is a bread bowl filled with Centifonti potatoes (red potatoes with red and green bell peppers and onions) smothered in house-made chili, two eggs any style, cilantro, tomatoes, avocado and sprinkled with cheddar and cotija cheese. If this isn’t enough, you can have it topped with chipotle cream.

If you prefer a sweeter meal, try the French toast with thick Texas toast dipped in a custard batter flavored with Amaretto, cinnamon and vanilla sprinkled with sliced almonds and grilled to a golden brown.

For a healthy alternative try their house-made granola with a mixture of grains, nuts and raisins, sweetened with honey. Cover with your choice of milk. Soy milk or almond milk.

Lunch and dinner offer an assortment of burgers, paninis, soups and salads, as well as full entrees of American and Italian food. If Italian food is on your wish list, try the Spicy Penne Pasta, Lasagna, Spaghetti and Meatballs, Ravioli and Fettucini Alfredo. Not all entrees are Italian, but all are flavorful and made from fresh, local ingredients. The good news for gluten-free eaters is they offer gluten-free pasta.

For the competitive beer drinkers, try the 128-ounce Das Boot filled with your favorite brew, Or for the not so competitive, try the 64-ounce option. Ring the bell once you’ve finished.

“My motto is: Something unique sells and treat the customer like family,” Tolosko said. And it’s working. Centifonti’s has been in business for 15 years and going strong.

What’s next for Tolosko? A speakeasy with dining and dancing. Like her food, she has an eclectic assortment of musical acts who are waiting to transport San Diegans away for an hour or two.

For current hours and specials go to centifontis.com.

—Robin Dohrn-Simpson is a local freelance food and travel writer. Reach her at dohrnsimpson@hotmail.com.
Mission Trails Park users share their stories

Recently, the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation highlighted three park users to help illustrate how much the park means to the San Diego community. As one of the park’s neighbors, you know how well you use the park is and has become, especially during the pandemic.

Protecting and maintaining 8,000 acres as well as providing educational and other resources to Mission Trails’ estimated 2.2 million annual visitors is an immense responsibility. We at the MTRP Foundation support the park and its staff in this endeavor by raising funds for trail maintenance, habitat restoration, education programs and more. We all need the park, and now, we need you.

December is our most important fundraising month and it’s also when the majority of us make our charitable gifts. This year, please make a gift to support Mission Trails and take advantage of the special charitable giving incentives in the 2020 CARES Act. Learn more about these incentives, giving to Mission Trails, and make a donation at mtrp.org/giving.

Now, meet some of our regular park users, people like you who love MTRP.

THE RUNNER

On runner Jenny Nakamura’s first trip to San Diego to visit her boyfriend and now husband Sean, he took her to Lake Murray and Cowles Mountain.

“Both places are special for us. Lake Murray is one of my favorite runs. I love getting to the turning around and seeing the belleisy at the end,” she said.

Nakamura runs 20-30 miles a week and lives near Mission Trails.

“It’s really cool to have trails in the city. I love that there is so much variety, from paved paths to trails with hills, single track, and even the occasional water crossing depending on the time of year.”

On Instagram as @runnylegs, Nakamura shares photos of her runs at locations near and far, including at MTRP. Remarking on a run earlier this year, she shared, “I remember doing a sunset run at Lake Murray the Thursday before everything locked down in March. It’s such a beautiful place to see the sunset.” We concur.

THE BIRD WATCHER

Liz Dorski has been coming to Mission Trails since 1983.

“I remember walking the old potholed Junipero Serra road from what is now the Visitor Center to the dam. We had to climb across a large water/sewer pipe to get over the river and hike through the grasslands area. Now, with the establishment of the regional park status, the space is professionally and lovingly cared for and protected, which is invaluable, not only for people, but for nature.”

Dorski is an avid birder and enjoys birdwatching at MTRP.

“The best time to spot birds is either morning or dusk, but really any time of day will be fruitful if you are observing. So much of birding is listening, and being quiet and still. A good place to birdwatch in MTRP is near any body of water with lots of trees. The water draws birds for a drink, food, and bathing, while the trees provide safety and cover from predators.”

In addition to volunteering at MTRP, Dorski has more recently been one of the newsletter contributors, so she knows the park, its staff and volunteers well.

“Not a day goes by that I don’t recognize how fortunate I am to have a home, good health, social support, and resources and I am enormously grateful to be able to donate my time and money to MTRP to help keep it going for years to come. It’s not only our backyard, it’s home to many critters and plants that add to the park’s beauty, and they serve our respect.”

THE MOUNTAIN BIKER

When Ramon Galindo isn’t working as a reporter at NBC 7, you’ll probably find him at Mission Trails where he’s been a frequent visitor for the past six years. In his job, he’s done stories about Mission Trails, including about hiking safely and our rattletrails.

In pre-Covid times, Galindo also volunteered at the MTRP Visitor Center.

“I was looking for volunteer opportunities and after completing the 5-Peak Challenge, it occurred to me that volunteering at MTRP would be a great opportunity to share my knowledge of the park’s trails while helping out the place where I love to spend my free time. When I interact with the public at the Visitor Center, I can discuss with them the park’s diverse plant life, fascinating geology, and the rich history of the Kumeyaay.”

In addition to hiking the trails and up Mission Trails’ five peaks, Galindo likes to mountain bike, especially on the trails near East Fortuna Staging Area.

“It’s a good workout and there are a variety of trails so you can bring friends of all skill levels,” he said. “I have been going to the park during Covid, but usually early in the morning and on the weekdays to avoid possible crowds. It’s still important to enjoy nature for physical and emotional health.”

Make a donation to support Mission Trails at mtrp.org. Donors of $100 or more will receive our new thank-you gift, an MTRP license plate frame! You can help the park today.

—Jennifer Morrissey is executive director of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation.
Henry joins ‘No Place For Hate’

By MICHELLE IRWIN

This year, Patrick Henry High School — along with all the Henry cluster schools — are going through the process of becoming No Place for Hate schools. At Henry, our goal is to create a learning community free of prejudice and build a community based on inclusivity.

As a learning community, we must advocate for equity and combat any type of racism that seeps into our lives. We must analyze our cultural frame of reference and widen our cultural aperture to understand the people around us.

James Baldwin once said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” Our purpose is to address institutional racism and explicit/implicit biases in order to unite and become a community that is bound by integrity, dignity and the pursuit of a more just and peaceful world.

Students, family members, staff, faculty, and community members meet bi-weekly to discuss ways to develop lessons and activities to educate all our students and faculty members. Our students and staff have signed a No Place for Hate Pledge and discussed microaggressions as a lesson. We have many more events planned throughout the year in order to end racism and provide a safe community for all students.

Check our our No Place for Hate website at noplaceforhatephs.weebly.com.

In mid-November, we were given the approval to begin sports conditioning for cross-country, football and field hockey. Our student athletes and coaches are held to the highest standard of safety precautions. It has been refreshing to see our students on campus in the afternoon doing something they love. We hope to add more sports throughout the year.

Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases, our district has delayed the reopening of our schools for Phase 2. In mid-January, we will have a status update on a possible reopening date. There are many factors to reopen, which include the utmost safety conditions, agreements between our district and our employee unions and implementation of PPE equipment at every school.

Please remember to visit the Patrick Henry website for up to date information about our school and district at patrickhenryhs.net.

We hope you have a safe holiday season. On behalf of the Patrick Henry High School Faculty, we want to thank you for being our partner in education so we can ensure all students graduate with integrity, purpose, and options.

—Michelle Irwin is principal of Patrick Henry High School.

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Crusaders Soccer Club looks ahead to 2021

By JAY WILSON

Beginning the middle of October, the COVID-19-delayed season for the Crusaders Soccer Club’s recreational soccer began. Over 50 teams of boys and girls have enjoyed being with friends they had not seen in six months, learned new soccer skills and had fun.

The best memory from the season was hearing about an 8-year-old boy yell to his mother as he raced across the soccer field on the first day of practice with a huge smile on his face. “Hey mom, I saw Jason. He is not on my team this year, but he waved at me and said he would wave at me next week at practice.” The expression on his face, and his comment was worth everything. You can see that same smile on virtually every player each week they come to practice and the Saturday scrimmages between the players on their team.

Our competitive teams have been practicing diligently since the middle of June and are anxiously waiting to play games for which they may have to wait until 2021 to be played.

Our professional competitive and our volunteer recreational coaches have all risen to the challenges of teaching soccer skills to players with ever changing COVID-19 protocols. There were no off-the-shelf guidelines for coaching players who initially had to remain several feet distanced from one another and still concentrate on soccer.

Tryouts of our competitive teams are set to begin in January 2021. The dates and times will be announced on our website, crusaderssoccer.org.

Beginning Dec. 15, registration for our 2021 recreational spring season for boys and girls born between 2007 and 2017 will commence. Visit the Crusaders Soccer website at crusaderssoccer.org for more information and registration. The eight-week season is currently scheduled for March and April. Teams will play on Sundays.

The Crusaders Soccer Club would like to thank Dan and Mary Buxton, the owners of the Play It Again Sports in La Mesa for donating the large portable soccer goals now being used on the lower Lewis field for the Saturday scrimmages. The Crusaders Soccer Club’s Board of Directors sincerely thank the players, parents, coaches, and grandparents for helping make 2020 a successful year despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus. As 2020 comes to an end, we wish everyone a happy and safe holiday!

Join us on and off the soccer field in 2021 as we celebrate 50 years of serving San Diego’s East County.

—Jay Wilson writes on behalf of Crusaders Soccer Club.
COVID murder
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

seemed like an easy way to try and infect someone else and try to get away with a murder in a way most people wouldn’t see as murder,” he said.

Roesler then outlined the story, began writing, and five weeks later had finished his book. He felt compelled to finish “Novel Coronavirus” quickly because he said it was an obvious story for writers to write and he wanted him to be one of the first. The self-published book is now available on Amazon and other bookstores.

Besides the mystery of how Kevin’s murder plan is eventually found out, the book also features scenes of people hoarding toilet paper, zoom cocktail parties, zoom funerals, characters who are high school seniors and disappointed they are missing normal graduation events.

“The main thing I was trying to do, in addition to wrapping around this whole quotidian, was to capture just what it felt like to be in quarantine,” Roesler said. “Trying to capture all those different experiences that are unique to 2020 and put them all in one place in this book so that hopefully in the future it will be a good resource for people to go back and go, ‘Oh, that’s what it was like,’ or remember that’s what it was like living through 2020.”

While Roesler hopes the book will be a good historical experience, does he worry about it being used as a contemporary guide for would-be murderers?

“I’ve thought about it, but I look at it the opposite way around,” he said. “By putting the book out there, it’s more sort of warning people in law enforcement that this is a possibility. Keep this in mind as people are dying because you can’t necessarily assume that every infection is just a complete accident.”

That might be difficult for law enforcement, according to Roesler’s own research he conducted while writing his book. “I don’t think there is any way to tell the difference between an intentional infection and an accidental infection,” he said.

“Novel Coronavirus” is Roesler’s sixth self-published book. The thrilled aerospace engineer moved to Allied Gardens a couple years ago from the Bay Area and is now a dedicated writer. Besides “Novel Coronavirus,” Roesler is also publishing a trilogy. His first book titled “Act Globally” — in 2020.

“It’s my first reach into science fiction, although it isn’t about aliens or space battles or anything,” he said, adding that the story is about a company that makes self-replicating machines that are used by an eccentric billionaire to create a mountain outside of Las Vegas that is bigger than Mt. Everest.

“Novel Coronavirus” and all other titles by Roesler are available on most ebook platforms. For “Novel Coronavirus,” 50% of all proceeds from the book will be donated to charities — 25% to Feeding America and 25% to the World Health Organization.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemenson at jeff@sdnews.com.

ALLIED GARDENS/BENJAMIN
Allied Gardens/Benjamin Library sends a huge thanks to the San Carlos Garden Club for its generous donation to our branch. We very much have enjoyed hosting this lovely group of plant enthusiasts over the years and have especially cherished the lovely bouquets they donated for our circulation desk to be enjoyed by staff and patrons. The club’s monetary donation will go toward the purchase of popular materials for all to enjoy. Thank you!

While on the topic of appreciating, I (librarian Kevin Tran) would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Allied Gardens community and its wonderful residents. I have had the great pleasure of working in this amazing area for over six years and truly appreciate everyone’s welcoming and friendly nature.

For this reason, it is with a heavy heart that I must say farewell as I recently received a promotion to manage the Logan Heights library. I will certainly miss everyone and this wonderful community.

Holiday activities
Crafts aren’t just for kids. Starting Dec. 14, Allied Gardens/Benjamin Library will be offering craft kits for adults and teens until the end of December. To see the week’s project, be sure to go to the library’s Facebook page each Monday. These kits will include all materials to make a gift for yourself or a loved one and will be available while supplies last.

The Allied Gardens/Benjamin library is pleased to announce 2020 will continue its annual tradition of holding a Snowman coloring contest! Please come to the library to get an entry form. Once you complete your masterpiece, send us a picture of your creation (address is on the form) by Dec. 18 and you will be entered to win a prize for your age group. The contest is open to people of all ages. Winners will be announced on Dec. 19 on the library Facebook page.

So please be sure to check out our Facebook page to stay informed of all the fun things we have lined up: facebook.com/alliedgardenslibrary.

—By librarian Kevin Tran.

SAN CARLOS
The year 2020 has been interesting for all of us. We all had to change and adapt our lifestyles to find a way to manage the new normal in our lives. We adjusted our service in order to still provide library materials to the community and we are committed to be a continuous source of opportunity, discovery and inspiration.

In February, we held our Robotics Showcase Extravaganza 2020 which was a smashing success that attracted 270 attendees. The Patrick Henry Patriots, Wizalos, Squash, Daidair Mechanical Dolphins, Pretzel Cats and City Critters all came out to show off their creations.

The Kearny High Blue Tech Club showed off a miniature underwater remote-operated vehicle (ROV) and the SDSU Mechatronics brought out their large underwater ROV. The appearance of SODI SWAT robot units entertained the crowd and inspired the young robotics teams.

We had to think creatively about Free Comic Book Day 2020 and how to distribute comic books to our patrons. WD Publishing graciously provided 5,000 comic books to give away so we partnered with the City’s Parks & Rec Department to deliver the books to San Diego school sites that were providing meals to school children. A box of comic books was also sent to the San Diego Convention Center to provide reading material for Operation Shelter to Home. We are so proud that during these times we were able to find ways to work together and still provide services to the citizens of San Diego.

New online programming
Join our Facebook page to enjoy our online programming at facebook.com/SanCarlosBranchLibrary.

—Reach along with librarian Assistant, Miss C. as she shares a Holiday story on December 24 at 10:00 a.m. We will also be providing a Holiday craft kit from December 21 to 26 which can be requested through our Contactless Pick-Up Service.

Weekly online programming
• Join us for a weekly inspirational quote by J.R.R. Tolkien in an online program called “Lord of the Rings Life Lessons.” Librarian, David Ege, will enlighten and inspire by reading select passages from The Lord of the Rings. Videos will be posted every Monday at 10:00 a.m.
• Do you ever wonder what you and your kids should read next? Then you should watch “What’s Ms. Erin Reading?” to help you decide! Each week, Youth Services Librarian, Erin Moore, will release a teaser image and then a video of a fun book she is reading. Book review videos will post every Friday at 2:00 p.m. You may also contact Ms. Erin for children’s reading suggestions at emoire@sandiego.org.

—By San Carlos Library managing librarian David Ege.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

To Our Friends & Customers

After 60 years of working and serving in Allied Gardens, Del Cerro, and San Carlos, we’ve come to love our community and cherish each and every relationship we’ve built with you, our customers and friends. We’ve been inspired this year as so many of you have given of your time and resources to help others through hard times. We wish each of you and all of your loved ones a joyful, safe, and healthy Holiday Season and New Year.

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