Farmers market future in jeopardy

Jeff Clemeton  
Editor

La Mesa’s Friday farmers markets could soon be coming to an end.

At its March 26 meeting, the La Mesa City Council voted to seek out offers for a farmers market held on a different day, in a different location or held differently to appease businesses that claim the market has cost them money since it moved to La Mesa Boulevard one year ago.

The council gave the current market until the end of July to run as is, and unless the council grants another extension or agrees on a new market proposal, the city’s farmers market — the longest running in the region — will essentially be closed down until a new one emerges.

How it came to this

When the Friday farmers market moved to the Village in May of 2018, it became under the control of La Mesa Village Association (LMVA) — a group of business owners that advocate for its members and market the Village through public events like the car shows, Oktoberfest, and Holidays in the Village.

“When we started the La Mesa Village Association, one of our main goals was to move the farmers market up to the Village, because that’s what the community wanted and that’s what the businesses wanted,” LMVA co-chair Theresa Pavlo said.

See FARMERS MARKET page 4

Sharp Grossmont sued over hidden cameras

Dave Schwab

The number of women suing Sharp Grossmont Hospital in La Mesa in a class-action lawsuit alleging hidden cameras secretly filmed them while they were undergoing surgical procedures has grown from 81 to 231 plaintiffs.

Sharp Grossmont claims the women were filmed inadvertent-ly during an investigation from July 17, 2012 to June 30, 2013 into the alleged theft of an anesthesia drug, propofol, which was in short supply then.

The former chief of anesthesia for Sharp Grossmont Hospital, Dr. Patrick Sullivan, 54, is corroborating the plaintiff’s accusations. Sullivan is also suing Sharp Grossmont, claiming he was forced to resign by the hospital administration following his whistleblowing over the unauthorized tapings.

Noting the hospital is “unable to provide further comment on this active legal matter,” Sharp Grossmont Hospital used hidden cameras to investigate missing drugs from its Women’s Centers. (Photo by Jeff Clemeton)

The power of God’s love is the greatest agent for bringing needed change, and healing into the world. 

Saturay May 4  
2:00PM

La Mesa Bourndway one year ago. The

Local photographers, painters prep for Little Italy event. Page 8

La Torta Café keeps founder’s traditions alive through family recipes. Page 11

A member of the Christian Science Board of Lectureship
-Mark McCurties

MEANINGFUL CHANGE  
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Sitraad May 4  
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Race for District 2 takes shape

On April 11, former state Assembly member and state Senator Joel Anderson announced his candidacy for the District 2 seat on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. So far, Anderson will be running against Poway mayor and fellow Republican Steve Vaus, who announced his candidacy on Feb. 20.

Democratic candidates Tom Lemmon and Kenya Taylor are widely seen as longshots for the board seat in District 2, which includes Lakeside, Alpine, Ramona, of San Diego communities of East County residents of the 620,000 square miles and more than 2,000 districts. The district encompasses more than 620,000 East County residents of the incorporated communities of Lakeside, Alpine, Ramona and Julian along with the cities of El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Santee and Poway, as well as the city of San Diego communities of Allied Gardens, College Area, Del Cerro, Grantville, Navajo, Rolando and San Carlos.

OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE

District 2 is the largest of San Diego County’s five districts. The district encompasses more than 2,000 square miles and more than 50 communities and cities with more than 620,000 East County residents of the unincorporated communities of Lakeside, Alpine, Ramona and Julian along with the cities of El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Santee and Poway, as well as the city of San Diego communities of Allied Gardens, College Area, Del Cerro, Grantville, Navajo, Rolando and San Carlos.

Knee Arthritis Solutions

Join us for a FREE dinner seminar
Thursday, May 23, 6-8:30 PM

Learn from orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Bates about the latest options for the treatment of knee arthritis. Dr. Bates will answer your questions and discuss:
- Arthritis of the knee
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This seminar will be held in Alvarado Hospital’s SDR1 Conference room on:
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Attendance is free, but seating is limited. Registration required to attend.

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WOMEN’S CLUB: Esther Jones celebrates her 100th birthday with family and friends on March 30 at the La Mesa Woman’s Club (LMWC). Esther was born in Hebron, North Dakota on March 29, 1919. She grew up in Hebron, one of eight children. She attended Dickinson State University and graduated with a teaching degree. Her first teaching assignment was in the farmlands of North Dakota where she taught students in grades kindergarten through 12, in a one-room school house. She continued teaching for 27 years in North Dakota, San Diego and La Mesa.

Esther joined LMWC in 1985 and served as president for six years. Esther is admired as a strong leader and a kind friend to all. She remained on the LMWC executive board until last year, mentoring presidents and sharing her warm smile and encouragement with everyone. Esther was celebrated as the LMWC Woman of the Year in 2012. She plays bridge at the clubhouse several times a month with members who she refers to as “dear friends.”
SDCNN purchases SDCNN newspapers

Julie Main becomes leading female publisher in San Diego

Kendra Sitton
Contributing Editor

In a deal made official on April 1, San Diego Community Newspaper Group (SDCNN) purchased SDCNN, including the La Mesa Courier, La Mesa Courier and the now-closed Mission Times Courier, and the new publisher was announced as Julie Main, the new publisher for San Diego Uptown News, San Diego Downtown News, Mission Times Courier, La Mesa Courier and the now-closed Mission Valley News. The company has three coastal communities. With these four additions, Main runs the largest independent newspaper group in the region. As a woman in the male-dominated media industry, this marks a significant achievement.

“It’s a rewarding industry. There are so many people who care about the community newspaper industry is everyone has a story. It’s great to be able to peek back the layers and find these treasures (stories) and share them with our readers,” Main said. “These people with stories NHN to say about positive things happening in your community for a change?”

Main, who was invited to enter the newspaper industry again in 2009 and founded SDCNN, said that has been a big part of the success of SDCNN. In 2009, she bought the newspaper network from a group of investors and has since purchased SDCNN, of which she is now the publisher.

David Mannis, the former chief of anesthesia at Sharp Grossmont Hospital in the 1980s, said that the hospital is no longer using the anesthesia drug. “I believe Sharp has continued to use the drug and is no longer using the anesthesia drug,” Mannis said.

SDCNN publisher Julie Main

David Mannis. The former couple founded SDCNN in the 1980s. Even after their divorce in 2002, they worked together on the La Jolla Village News, a local newsletter that can be read in San Diego. After 10 years in the newspaper industry, he has decided to enter semi-retirement. Semi-retired because he retained control of one remaining SDCNN publication, Gay San Diego.

“I will miss being involved in the Uptown, Downtown, Navajo and La Mesa communities. I’m pleased to remain Gay San Diego and to provide this important platform for the LGBTQ community,” he said. “I hope to build an even broader audience for this publication.”

SDCNN publisher David Mannis

The merger led to a shuffle in the editors leading each of the newspapers. Albert Fulcher will serve as the editor for Gay San Diego. Jeff Clementson is moving to SDCNN’s Pacific Beach office to continue leading Mission Times Courier and La Mesa Courier. Newly-hired editor Kendra Sitton is also moving to PB and will continue her work at San Diego Uptown News. In addition, she is now the editor of San Diego Downtown News, which was formerly under the purview of Fulcher.

“This is a change in ownership with a new team of editors and a new set of priorities. We can assure you this hospital letter sent April 4 to the community addressing plaintiffs’ allegations.

“Given the number of reports that have come out recently and the questions they raise, we wanted to explain the situation to you directly,” the letter said. “We know you are concerned about positive things happening in your community for a change?”

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“My goal is to develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted, multi-modal approach to addiction that will help people overcome drug abuse and improve their quality of life,” Mannis said. “We need to develop programs and services that are specific to the needs of each individual, not just a one-size-fits-all approach.”

The most exciting thing about the newspaper industry is everyone has a story. It’s great to be able to peek back the layers and find these treasures (stories) and share them with our readers,” Main said. “These people have stories to tell about positive things happening in your community for a change?”

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Former Sharp chief of anesthesia Dr. Patrick Sullivan (Courtesy Albury PR)

Former Sharp anesthesia chief Patrick Sullivan, M.D., disputes Sharp’s version of events surrounding the unauthorized tapping of female patients.

“Not only did Sharp betray the trust of the patients at Grossmont Hospital, the people of East San Diego County and the people of California and the United States who were rightfully outraged by Sharp’s wanton disregard for privacy and human decency, but Sharp ignored my concerns when I brought the filming to their attention,” said Sullivan. “They continued the filming for three more months, and served me up a nice plate of retaliation for my efforts. I and other anesthesiologists at the Sharp Grossmont Women’s Center had to resort to putting tape over the cameras to protect the patients’ privacy.”

See SHARP LAWSUIT page 15
To get the market moved from its previous location in the Civic Center parking lot, LMVA filed a request for proposal (RFP) from the city, which was approved by the City Council under the caveat that the permit to operate the market would be reviewed after six months. At the six-month review, city staff reported on the market’s progress. That staff recommended for changes to the farmers market based on meetings with businesses, the community and the LMVA.

To address the divide, the City Council renewed the permit for another six months but tasked city staff with looking at different options for the market, including moving the day or the location as well as tweaks to the setup that might benefit brick-and-mortar businesses affected by the market. Staff was also to facilitate arbitration between the LMVA and the businesses opposed to the market to come up with compromises.

Alternative options
At the March 26 City Council meeting, City Manager Yeomie Garrett presented staff-recommended options for changes to the farmers market based on meetings with businesses, the community and the LMVA.

Garrett was to keep the farmers market on La Mesa Boulevard on Fridays with certain suggested recommendations and LMVA agreed to the first five: move street-closure time from 1:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. to allow more lunch business in the Village.

Create short-term passenger drop-off zones on Allison Avenue, Fourth Street and Palm Avenue for ease of access to service businesses and restaurants.

Request LMVA use funds from the weekly farmers market to promote the Village outside of La Mesa. LMVA committed to put $1,000 a month toward marketing through social media, print and signs.

Remove banners from back of vendor booths for more visibility of brick and mortar.

Invert the booths so market visitors would stroll between booths and brick-and-mortar businesses. This recommendation proved impossible, however.

“What we discovered was, the feasibility of inverting presented a challenge due to the required width of the drive aisles in the middle of the market footprint,” Garrett said.

The short time to load in means that the booths couldn’t be back to back because vehicles would need to pass the ones that are loading in. And if the booths were facing each other, it would not push against the sidewalks, that would create a safety hazard and raise the feasibility for the brick-and-mortar establishments.” The city determined inverting was “not in the best interest of vendors, businesses or customers,” Garrett said.

Reduce the number of hot food vendors. The market currently has six that don’t offer the same food as eateries on the street. The recommendation met with some reporting net losses of revenue and others reporting net gains during the market.

Boon or bust?
Before the council voted on the staff recommendations, businesses both for and against the market showed their cases to either keep or reject the LMVA’s permit to operate it.

“Most of the big restaurants want to keep it because a lot of the retailers like myself are still suffering greatly. The farmers market have not been very bad for us,” said Maxwell’s House of Books owner Craig Maxwell. “We really do believe that no solution that amounts to anything less than moving the event or changing the day will be sufficient.”

For Favor Mexican Restaurant owner Peter Soutwood described the market as “destructive” to her business because she no longer gets reservations for Friday dinners. “And the farmers market is not bringing enough people to replace what I have lost. It hurts,” she added.

A downturn in Friday business is not universal in the Village, however. Another store and restaurant owners report the opposite — that the market has been a boon.

“We have something that is a gift, in my opinion. We have this huge exposure that goes on,” said Brenda Leek, a partner in Curbside Eatery. “Curbside is thriving off of the farmers market and lunch and dinner. We can’t take a reservation because we’re full.”

Fourpawz owner Peter Soutwood said the farmers market was damaging to his lunchtime business, but he adapted and capitalized on what the market offered by getting a booth up in the market to sell broods and improve his restaurant’s viability.

“In the few hours that we have from market time until close, we make more money on Friday than we do on Saturday opening at 11 a.m. or Sunday opening at 9 a.m.,” he said.

“As a business owner, it has been very interesting to me to see the farmers market both in terms as what it has done for our visibility and taking a challenge, which was the loss of lunch time,” he said.

Numbers wise, there are a lot of things that affect our business and in aggregate, the market has been fantastic for us.”

Soutwood also spoke on behalf of the LMVA’s members.

“We at LMVA are fully in support of the farmers market where it is,” he said. “We understand that’s a good thing for the Village, which is why we are listening to our members and trying to advocate for them.”

In an interview after the council meeting, Favro, who owns retail shop Amethyst Moon, said her Friday business is up threefold and other retailers on La Mesa Boulevard like Art H are also experiencing a windfall during the market.

A difficult vote
After hearing comments, the City Council debated the staff recommendations.

Councilmember Kristine Alessio entered a motion to end the market and put out an RFP to “find an entity or group that will make it better” and move the market to another day or location.

Councilmember Bill Baber seconded the motion, and said he was disappointed that no compromise was reached between the LMVA and the other businesses. Specifically, Baber cited the LMVA board’s decision to reject the city staff’s recommendation to eliminate or reduce hot food vendors, describing it as a “Waterloo moment.”

Soutwood said the board unanimously voted down the recommendations, even though a lot of the members present were restaurant owners.

“All of them said they wanted to exclude that,” he said. “Part of that was the principle of thwarting back of any businesses being able to come in and have a go of it. Part of it was the complete direction. It’s selling, selling, selling food versus selling around food selling around dinner to dine.”

Councilmember Dr. Akilah Weber expressed concern over the lack of compromise between the council and the LMVA.

“I haven’t seen any change,” she said. “The market as it is today is pretty much the same. The loss of lunch time and elimination of hot food vendors from the market has been a boon or bust.”

Councilmember Colin Parent offered up an alternative motion to keep the market where and when it is but impose some of the staff recommendations as a requirement of the permit. Mayor Mark Arapostathis seconded the motion but added that all the recommendations should be required, including the shuttle service and eliminating all hot food vendors from the market.

The substitute motion failed to gain support of the other three council members and was rejected in a 2–3 vote.

Before the vote on Alessio’s motion, it was amended to allow for RFPs to include the current time and location and extend the current market through July after Parent pointed out that without some extension, the market would close at the end of April. He also predicted that a new RFP process would do little to change the division over the farmers market.

“I think best case scenario, the Village Association makes an alternative application and it’s going to look a lot like the signature campaign to show public support of the market.” (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

The La Mesa Village Association has started a signature campaign to show public support of the market.
Farmers market can continuation

Farmers market, from page 4

current application, maybe with some of the concessions we discussed in the substitute motion, and no one else is going to apply to do this event,” Parent said. “That’s what I think is going to happen. And I think if they do that — by the way, I hope that they do — I think it’s not going to solve peace in the Village.”

If that happens, Parent added, the council should prepare themselves for an even more difficult vote between upsetting some business owners against the market or upsetting other business owners and a majority of residents who support the market.

The council then voted unanimously on Alessio’s amended motion.

Market reaction

After the vote, Scotwood said the LMVA board would likely react to its RFP and propose a market with some of the recommendations on Fridays in the Village.

“There’s no market if you switch days and times,” he said, adding that without the income generated by the market, LMVA would stop existing and the city or another organization would have to step in to hold Oktoberfest, the car shows, and other events.

Holidays in the Village and any other event.

“If the market goes, all those dollars, all those people go,” he continued. “They people go,” he continued. “They go away completely, would we even refunded our money back.” Patard also pointed out that some of the concessions we discussed in the substitute motion, maybe with some of the recommendations on Fridays in the Village.

“They’ve done surveys, they surveyed all the businesses, they’ve done a PowerPoint presentation,” she said. “They’ve even refunded our money for parking so out of $4,500 we gave them in the beginning, they gave us $3,800 back.”

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“I’ve written letters to City Council. I’ve emailed people, I talked to the mayor when he was down here for the event,” he said. “It’s not fair that they are making it hard for all of us. We want to have this great place to be.”

Patard also pointed out that every business supports the market is packed during market hours and only the ones that are against it, it’s interesting, a point that Favro thinks is fueled by discussions about the market on social media.

“I’m hearing talk about boycotting people’s businesses,” she said. “Please don’t boycott any businesses. If people have a legitimate reason to be against the market, they have every right to voice their opinion. Don’t voice that you want everybody to boycott them, they work as hard as everybody else.”

Brian Beevers, market manager for the Friday markets, was also surprised that the City Council did not vote to renew the permit. He said the market has shown incredible success in terms of numbers in the one year that it has operated in the Village.

“La Mesa is now a sought-after market. There’s people coming from all over to shop here and there are vendors who can’t wait to get into this market,” he said. “It was such a success and we love to have what La Mesa has right now.”

Beevers said that moving the market to another day like Wednesday could still succeed but in a much “less impactful way” because there would be a lot less vendors and a lot less people.

Beevers also said that very brick-and-mortar businesses have taken advantage of ways to utilize the market that he offers like setting up a booth or signing up for his text campaign that goes out to thousands of other businesses. He doesn’t think the market is the reason why some businesses struggle.

“The City Council needs to evaluate why certain things are being blamed on the market,” he said. “For example, the market has exponentially more people on Friday than there would be otherwise. And we know that a good percentage of people are coming from out of town. If I were a business, I’d be like there’s no other time I could be able to tap into brand-new business than right here right now at this market.

“If the market goes, all those people go,” he continued. “They don’t come anymore, so that is a lost opportunity for every business on this street.”

Beevers said he will continue to work to make the market grow to the benefit of all the businesses.

“I’d be sad to lose something I put my heart and soul into,” he said.

What’s next?

By the end of April, the city will issue its farmers market RFP through the purchasing portal called PlanetBids. It is unclear how many bids the city will get, besides the LMVA. Grossmont Center may bid to move the market to its parking lot. The La Mesa Chamber of Commerce has said it will look at the RFP to see if it is worth pursuing, but added that there is no definite plan to take over the market. Other market managers may bid to start a new market.

According to the City Clerk’s office, interested market managers or organizations should register on PlanetBids to be automatically notified when the RFP is published. All questions about the RFP will be asked through the portal so potential respondents can see both the question and the city’s response. Submittals in response to the RFP will only be accepted in digital format through the PlanetBids portal. Questions about the process can be answered by La Mesa Purchasing Officer Scott Munzenmaier at 619-667-1113 or by email at smunzenmaier@la-mesa.ca.us.
Reducing student homelessness is a humanitarian, economic issue

Teresa Stivers

Homelessness among California’s college students has reached a crisis. Facing mounting housing costs and a burgeoning affordable housing crisis, tens of thousands of college students across the state are experiencing homelessness or theSimon. Student homelessness is a critical issue that needs our leaders’ consistent support and action.

According to a recent survey, nearly 20% of the Los Angeles Community College District’s 230,000 students experienced an instance of homelessness last year. While percent- headache CSU and UC fared somewhat better — with 11% (or about 47,000 students) and 5% (11,000 students) reporting an increase in homelessness, respectively — California’s housing crisis is devastating its students. Former foster youth suffer homelessness at disproportionate rates compared to the general population. Helping these students finish school, get jobs and establish themselves as productive adults would break the cycle of child abuse and poverty they’re trying desperately to overcome.

As a provider of extensive services to foster youth throughout Southern California, Walden Family Services applauds this proposed legislation and calls on legislators to quickly pass SB 568. Our state’s college students should be adequately resourced, not worried where their next place to sleep will be.

—Teresa Stivers is CEO of Walden Family Services. For more, visit Walden.org.

Paper receipts could be the next plastic straws

Paper receipts generate enormous amounts of waste each year — and hardly anyone needs them

Beth Porter

Paper receipts are a habitual end to retail transactions. But their usefulness is questionable — they can be tossed out within minutes of being printed, or go on to line the bottoms of our bags and wallets.

In an increasingly digital world, it may seem that paper receipts are on the decline, but new data from Grand View Research shows the opposite to be true. Every year, paper receipt use is increasing worldwide, including in the U.S., where 256,300 metric tons of paper receipts were consumed in 2018. These small pieces of paper can have a huge impact. Millions of trees and billions of gallons of water are consumed to create them, generating tons of waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Most thermal paper receipts are also coated with bisphenol A (BPA) or BPS, endocrine-disrupting substances that we absorb through contact, disrupting hormones, and human health. The state of California is leading the way, proposing a one-time mandate to “skip the slip” and transform the local delivery of care into a coordinated system that puts the needs of people, not programs, first. Not a dumping ground: I continue to work with other public health officials to ensure that the local delivery of care is designed around the needs of those we serve.

Making communities healthier: The County is taking big steps to bolster services for those affected by mental illness and substance addictions.

Supervisor Kristin Gaspar, Supervisor of the Second District, Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors, announced that the County has created a new position to oversee the County’s behavioral health efforts. The new supervisor will work to improve access to care, coordinate efforts across the system of care, and ensure that the County is working to meet the needs of those affected by mental illness and substance addictions.

I’ve asked the County to continue to work with other public health officials to ensure that the local delivery of care is designed around the needs of those we serve. In their attempt to quietly house these monsters in San Diego County, the District government is hoping that the public and hospital officials are exploiting small communities that lack the resources and expertise to challenge these placements.

Power of choice: The Board of Supervisors recently agreed to develop options for launching a community choice energy program. The vote opens the door to real competition in the energy market and aims to provide ratepayers with a choice.

The board will be briefed on the development of the program over the next few months, with a detailed proposal expected to reach us in October.
On Wednesday evening, May 1, the 500-member La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club will be honored to host an address by SDSU President Dr. Adela de la Torre. Among the many topics we hope she’ll include are those that will most affect our close relationship with the large campus on the western edge of our club’s membership boundaries.

What is the timeline and detailed plans for Mission Valley West and the future of that monument center? What are the plans for the expansion of SDSU? How will this expansion affect the academic growth of SDSU in terms of added majors and areas of study, if at all?

How is SDSU now responding to the “mini-dorm” crisis? Have recent city initiatives assuaged any of the complaints from near neighbors, alumni, students?

What is the future of SDSU football and the use of the existing stadium? How long term are the plans for a replacement multi-use facility for Aztec sports and professional soccer? Can the existing stadium be used for Aztec Football until the new stadium is built?

What about the student debt crisis? (Total national student loan debt is now larger than the total credit card debt in the United States.) SDSU’s rising cost of tuition? Availability of scholarships, grants and work study to reduce student debt and school costs?

Will all students bear any of the cost of the SDSU West project?

These are but a few of the top issues of interest to those of us that are neighbors, alumni, students and supporters of San Diego State University. Of course, there are many other subjects that we’d love for Dr. de la Torre to address, particularly with her unique experience and personal background.

We’d be remiss if we didn’t ask her to share her significant expertise on transnational health issues and how this is one of many concerns we have with building walls instead of bridges between the United States and our important cultural, geographic and economic neighbors to the south.

Dr. de la Torre was appointed by the California State University Board of Trustees as the new president of San Diego State University. Joining the campus in June 2018, Dr. de la Torre is the ninth permanent president of SDSU and the first woman to serve in that role. She brings with her 30 years of service in leadership roles within institutions of higher education, including the California State University system, the University of Arizona and the University of California, Davis.

Prior to her appointment as SDSU president, she served as the vice chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Diversity at UC Davis. Dr. de la Torre’s research focuses on aspects of Latino community health — an area in which SDSU is a national leader.

We’ll also have the privilege of hearing from the newly elected chairman of the San Diego County Democratic Party, Will Rodriguez-Kennedy. He will talk about the important issues facing local progressives, the upcoming 2020 election cycle, how we can get involved in electing Democrats in important local and regional races, and most of all, how we can keep the Blue Wave going from our great success in 2018 in San Diego County.

Will Rodriguez-Kennedy got involved in politics through the LGBT+ and veteran communities fighting the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy, which had affected him during his service in the United States Marine Corps. He has served on the San Diego County Veterans Advisory Council and on the board of San Diego LGBT Pride. He was also elected president of the San Diego Democrats for Equality and the California Young Democrats.

The May 1 meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Drive, just north of University Avenue in La Mesa. Please join us as a guest or become a member, with our modest annual dues starting at $30. Like us on Facebook and check out our new website lamesafoothillsdemocraticclub.com.

—Tina Rynberg is president and Jeff Benesch is vice president of programming for the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club.
La Mesa artists prepare for ArtWalk

B.J. Coleman

La Mesa is graced with a natural beauty and amenable climate that can inspire artists.

Monique Straub is one La Mesa artist whose paintings derive from natural images, including leaves, trees and flowers. Her husband, John Straub, is a photographic artist, whose subject matter changed frequently after military service, drawing, and as a young teen, he worked in different jobs. He served in the U.S. Navy and then developing them in his father’s darkroom. John’s preferred subject matter changed when he turned 16 and began driving. He fell in love with cars and on-the-road images as his preferred photography subject. Photographic art is John’s full-time profession. He shows his work at festivals and galleries. John’s next scheduled showing after ArtWalk will be in Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Monique Straub’s studio is located at 8838 Center Drive, Suite C. She works there weekdays, with open hours from 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. She welcomes local residents to visit her there and view her paintings during those hours. Art from Monique and John can be purchased online.

Jason Humphrey is another La Mesa artist who draws inspiration and subject matter from nature. His mixed media art, which began with “original ink,” followed by a layering technique, begins with “original ink,” followed by a layering technique. Humphrey said that he has been creating art all his life and that he is self-taught. He recalled often playing by himself and drawing, and as a young teen, he experimented with spray paint art. He served in the U.S. Navy from the age of 17, and subsequently after military service, worked in different jobs. Humphrey has considered himself a professional artist for the past 10 years, although he still works a “day job” as a surgical laser technician, which helps support his wife, Alicia, and their three daughters.

Humphrey estimated that he travels to 20-30 art shows and festivals each year. In May, Humphrey will show his work in Beverly Hills. In August, he will be in Los Almos.

“You have to get your art out there to different audiences,” he said.

This will be Humphrey’s seventh appearance showing his art at the Downtown ArtWalk. He has participated in the companion ArtWalks at Liberty Station and Carlsbad.

“Little Italy is the grandaddy of them all,” he said. “This promotes the love of art. At Little Italy ArtWalk, you can have intimate conversation with people who come by. You can talk about what goes into art, and how art has a healing property.”

Humphrey noted that he accepts commissioned projects on specific subjects. Prints of his works have a starting price of $40. With colors added to make a print unique, the cost rises to $150 to $200.

“Art should be accessible for everyone,” Humphrey said of his lower cost print artworks.

Other La Mesa artists slated to display their work at ArtWalk include Amir Barlev, David Cuzick and Cindy Teyro.

—B.J. Coleman is a local freelance journalist and editor/staff reporter with the 22nd Legionnaire. Reach her at bjcoleman@gmail.com.

La Mesa artists John Straub (left) with his wife Monique standing front of Monique’s paintings in her La Mesa studio (Photo by B.J. Coleman)

La Mesa artists prepare for ArtWalk

La Mesa is graced with a natural beauty and amenable climate that can inspire artists.

Monique Straub is one La Mesa artist whose paintings derive from natural images, including leaves, trees and flowers. Her husband, John Straub, is a photographic artist, whose subject matters focus on outdoor activities, mainly involving cars.

The couple, who have lived in La Mesa for 30 years, will have their artworks on display and for sale at the upcoming ArtWalk in Downtown San Diego’s Little Italy at the end of April. They spoke about their experiences as artists in an interview at Monique’s new La Mesa studio.

Monique (who pronounces her name “moe-nay”) moved last month from a Mission Valley studio to be closer to home. Her La Mesa studio also features natural northern light conducive to painting.

“This will be John Straub’s sixth year and Monique’s 12th year at ArtWalk in Little Italy. The 2019 Mission Federal ArtWalk is the 35th in the annual series. The event will fill 16 blocks of Little Italy on Saturday, April 27, and Sunday, April 28. Over 350 artists will display their works. Musicians and performing artists will entertain event-goers on stages during the arts festival. Attendance is expected to exceed 120,000 at the weekend event.

John said that he has been an artist all his life. He further disclosed that photography is a family tradition. He began taking photos of surfing subjects at the beach during his early years, and then developing them in his father’s darkroom. John’s preferred subject matter changed when he turned 16 and began driving. He fell in love with cars and on-the-road images as his preferred photography subject. Photographic art is John’s full-time profession. He shows his work at festivals and galleries. John’s next scheduled showing after ArtWalk will be in Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Monique has been a full-time artist for 22 years. Her next showing following ArtWalk will be in Monterey in August. John and Monique both plan to display their artworks at the Laguna Beach Art Affair.

Monique expressed appreciation for the Downtown ArtWalk.

“There is a real ease of set up at this festival,” she said. “You can drive up to your booth and unload directly at your location. And you can meet people personally, unlike shows up in galleries. You get to see repeat collectors who return each year.”

Monique Straub’s studio is located at 8838 Center Drive, Suite C. She works there weekdays, with open hours from 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. She welcomes local residents to visit her there and view her paintings during those hours. Art from Monique and John can be purchased online.

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La Mesa artists John Straub (left) with his wife Monique standing front of Monique’s paintings in her La Mesa studio (Photo by B.J. Coleman)
Sneak peak at new titles

Chelsie Harris

One of the best parts of working in the library industry is getting a sneak peak at new titles before they hit the shelves. As a reviewer for Library Journal, I receive an advance reader copy once a month to read and review. These reviews aid library systems in determining which titles to purchase for their communities. But enough shop talk — here are a few of my recently reviewed novels, which are now available for ordering here at the library or online at sdcl.org:

Grace Luther as she embroils "Sinless") follows 18-year-old, blind, autistic, and mentally challenged Grace Luther as she embroils "Fearless," the second book in the "Eye of the Beholder" series by Sarah Tarkoff (first title: "Stop Ahead") by Duke Windsor (Foothills Art Association). Linda Michael

The Foothills Art Association is pleased to feature the artwork of Duke Windsor at its gallery during the month of May. The artist’s extensive life experience and sensitivity to his surroundings gives his work a unique presence of place.

Windsor was born in Texarkana. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a combat illustrator and drill instructor. He subsequently studied classical voice at San Diego State University, later performing with the San Diego Opera Chorus. An avid practitioner of the martial arts, Windsor owned and operated a martial arts studio for seven years, eventually achieving the rank of fourth degree black belt.

Windsor’s urban and rural landscapes have been exhibited and received awards at juried exhibitions, group shows and corporate venues in San Diego and Southern California, and they are held in many private collections throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Windsor is an associate artist member of the California Art Club, Oil Painters of America, International Acrylic Painters Association, San Diego Watercolor Society, and Foothills Art Association. He has also served as a member of the Public Arts Selection Committee of the San Diego Regional Airport Authority Art Program. Windsor is a highly sought-after art educator who has taught art to both adults and children at numerous venues, and he has juried many local and regional art exhibitions. He currently teaches drawing and oil painting at Art on 30th in North Park and is a workshop instructor with the La Jolla Athenaeum.

Windsor has over 15 years of museum exhibit design experience. He is currently working on a new book and is also accepting new art commissions. Windsor’s studio is located on Mt. Helix near the city of La Mesa.

Duke Windsor’s artwork will be featured at the Foothills Gallery at Porter Hall, 4910 Memorial Drive in La Mesa from May 3 to June 5. An artist’s reception, free and open to the public, will be held on Saturday, May 11, 1–4 p.m. The Foothills Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 619–646–7167.

—Linda Michael is editor of Footnotes, the newsletter of the Foothills Art Association.
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A revered torta cafe pays homage to its late founder

Restaurant Review
Frank Sabatini Jr.

From a wall behind the order counter hangs a photograph of a handsome Miguel A. Rojas, the restaurateur who not only raised the creative bar on tortas, but named them lovingly after numerous siblings, nieces and nephews.

The businesses’s sudden passing a year and a half ago left some of those family members in charge of keeping his spirited legacy alive at La Torta Cafe, which Rojas launched in 1994. Prior to that, he had moved to San Diego from his native Mexicali, attended the city’s high school, and took a job in the maintenance department for a retirement home.

But when the meat within soft telera rolls.

The cafe’s menu offers 40 varieties of the Mexican sandwich, which traditionally captures avocado, veggies and meat within soft telera rolls. The yeast bread is a close cousin to French baguette, boasting thin, crispy crusts and soft centers. Rojas developed his own recipe for the rolls in conjunction with California Baking Company, which still adheres to the proprietary formula. His are fluffier than most and sport an exceptional, toasted crust studded with cornmeal for a bit of added texture. After minimal chew, they practically melt in your mouth.

In his peak, Rojas operated six locations of La Torta Cafe throughout San Diego County. But when the economy tanked a decade ago, he sold them while retaining his La Mesa restaurant, which sits a stone’s throw away only from his original location.

Here, the cottage-like structure is fronted by a garden patio. Inside, a cute and homey design embraces a salsa bar in the middle of the room. The tortas really don’t need any of their enhancements, but if you opt for tacos or burritos, don’t overlook the creamy jalapeno and chipotle salsas.

Visiting as a rookie, we started out with Rojas’ original chicken tortilla soup, a seemly classic Mexican potottage but flaunting the additions of sour cream and chili paste in the broth. It’s faintly creamy, mildly spicy and grandly comforting.

Per demand, items such as rolled tacos, burritos and chimichangas were added in Rojas’ later years. We would have skipped over them all until learning that the rolled tacos (served four to an order) are made in-house. And you’ll know it upon first bite.

Available in beef or white chicken meat, we ordered the former. Their casings are the most delicate I’ve ever encountered, almost like pastry tubes. The chicken inside escaped that odd, glazed flavor I often encounter in other places, and the medley of tomatoes, shredded lettuce and grated cheeses on top were ultra fresh.

Then came the main event, a trio of tortas, half of which we ended up taking home due to their generous size.

We chose as our first the “Miguel Cuban,” a culinary self-portrait of the man with a keen knack for bringing semblance to multiple ingredients. Rojas somehow knew that roasted pork, Milanesa (breadcrusted meat), creamy panela cheese, grilled peppers and onions, avocado, and mayo would make for a well-conceived outcome.

And so what if it tastes as far removed from a traditional Cuban sandwich as the geographical distance between Cuba and Baja California. This version hardly disappoints.

The No. 21 is “Nohemi’s chile relleno” torta. “I’m not a vegetarian, but lean toward it,” Ryback added in recognizing that her brother had hit the mark naming the creation after her. Served open face, the oval-shaped roll takes on a smearing of chipotle mayo that permeates the heated bread like melted butter. A freshly battered pasilla chile stuffed judiciously with white cheese is draped over one half while fanned-out slices of avocado occupy the other. Everything jived.

My favorite, however, was “Nicole’s chile” torta, which Rojas named after a niece. Available with either marinat-ed beef or all-white chicken, we chose the latter. Layered with the finely chopped parsley were onions, avocado, tomatoes, mayo and the same creamy chipotle sauce offered at the salsa bar. The result is a soft and creamy torta that your teeth effortlessly glide through with zero force.

In terms of the number of ingredients contained within the tortas, ours were tame in comparison to many others on the menu.

The “Natalia,” named after Rojas’ daughter, features a hearty stacking of roast beef, ham, turkey, avocado and cheddar and jack cheeses. Or, in honor of his grandfather, the “Pancho’s” layers in beans with turkey, ham and cheddar.

For burger lovers, the “ham-burguesa” torta impresses with two quarter-pound patties grilled with barbecue sauce. With the additions of cheddar and Swiss cheeses, ranch dressing and avocado, you’ve encountered the most bell-stretching torta in San Diego County. All of the tortas are served with home fries — basically thinly sliced fried potatoes with crispy vencore that reminded me of those I’ve consumed in multiple visits to Germany, a country that does wonders with spuds.

Ryback pointed out that her brother was a stickler for quality and presentation, which we found obvious. He was a long-time resident of La Mesa, and revered within the community by customers and fellow business people alike.

“We haven’t changed a thing in how he ran the business. He was a merchant advocate and we’re trying to keep going everything he did here. His legacy lives on,” she added.

Frank Sabatini Jr. is the author of ‘Secret San Diego’ (ECW Press) and began his local writing career more than two decades ago as a staffer for the former San Diego Tribune. You can reach him at sabatini jr@san.rr.com.

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The fallen Foothillers of the Vietnam War

More than 60 years ago, a war began that changed the culturallandscape in the United States. Today, a simple, yet powerful, nationalmemorial quietly captures the men who, whether they weredrafted or volunteered for militaryservice, sacrificed their livesinservice to their county. On Memorial Day 2019, we would like to recognize those who are among this group.

The black granite Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall chronologically lists the more than 58,000 names of men and women who lost their lives in Vietnam. Hanging on the wall in the Grossmont High School Museum are Midway shadow-box displays honoring the names of all seven Foothillers lost in Vietnam. On one wall, the framed rubbings of the names of the 11 Foothillers who died in Vietnam. We will honor those Midway exhibit display are the framed rubbings of the names of the 11 Foothillers who died in Vietnam. We will honor those.

Foothiller Footsteps

Connie and Lynn Baer

Upcoming GHS Class Reunions

Class of 1959-60th Reunion: Weekend of Sept. 21. Contact Joyce Schwartz Camil at jjoycecamil@gmail.com or 619-806-7914 or co-chair Carmen Colonghi Gaunt at carolinigmail@gmail.com or 619-992-8823.

Class of 1964 55th Reunion: Saturday Oct. 19. For information, email gh4at4.cox.net. Location, menu, and reservation details will be provided in a June email.

Class of 1969 50th Reunion: Saturday, June 29. Email Monica Taylor Erickson at monica.erickson35@yahoo.com.

Class of 1970 50th Reunion: Weekend of August 9–11. Contact Mike Baer at mjb@baercorp.com or 619-725-7929.

Class of 1974 45th Reunion: Thursday night Sept. 19 at 6 p.m. alongsidethe pond at Anthony’s Fish Grotto in La Mesa. Visit bit.ly/2JaKxJG for details. Location, menu, and reservation details will be provided in a June email.

Class of 1999 25th Reunion: Friday, June 29 at the Marriott Bayfront. Information at bit.ly/3XXW4U.

Glenn Eugene Luhnow, Class of 1962, for making the mess hall, Mike was shot by snipers. He died in Vietnam. For seven years, his friend has struggled with the grief and the question of “Why Mike and not me?”

For four years in the Army, Craig Haberlein was sent to Vietnam. Four years later, he died from complications from malaria. Foothiller Deanna Sampson remembers Craig as a high school friend. “Since Craig knew it wouldn’t take much for me to get me to cause a disturbance in class... I often wonder what he would have made of his life.”

Over the years, Deanna has felt the loss of Craig’s friendship. In 2018, Deanna’s friend Mark Houston, a graduate of CSUSD in 1969, was notified in person of Mark’s remains returning his remains.

Vietnam at bit.ly/28NC6kR. For a graphic glimpse of the impact of the Vietnam conflict is on display in the museum through two POW medals honoring and remembering two of the many who were never found. Also, thanks to Mark Houston, we have shadow-box displays honoring two of the 11 Foothillers lost in Vietnam.

For a graphic glimpse of the toll of this conflict on Americans, visit the new issue of Life Magazine, which consists entirely of pages of the haunting images of the 242 men who were killed in one week in Vietnam at bit.ly/2SNOoKk.

To see our War Memorial honoring the names of all seven who died or to learn more about Foothillers past and present, visit the museum room—5:30 p.m. on May 1 or by appointment.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum. For more information, visit ghsmuseum@guhsd.net, call 619-668-6140 or visit foothillmuseum.com.
**EDUCATION**

**Program offers opportunity to mentor Helix High students**

Do you remember how crazy it was trying to plan your future as a teenager? If you do, you won’t be surprised that our students want to hear about the college, career, and life experiences from you, our alumni and members of our community. You’ve been here and done it. So your journey and expertise is real, relevant and authentic: information that students want to hear. Speaking to students for just one hour can provide powerful insights, inspiration and motivation that they can make it too.

We are partnering with Alumni Toolkit to create an alumni and community advocate program focused on helping our students and programs succeed. Here’s how it works:

First, go to Alumnitoolkit.org. When you sign up, choose your schools — your home high school and any others you’d like to help. You can offer to help in a variety of ways. It can be as little as sharing your college or career experiences to a class or group of students, helping with student and class projects that match your career interests, or you can choose to go deeper as a tutor or mentor. It’s up to you.

Next, you’ll be asked to complete a short college and career background profile so educators can match you with their program and student needs. It’s easy and rewarding to be a real-life influencer for students walking in your shoes. Come back and be the relatable adult you needed when you were in high school — once or once a month!

**Higherlander Open Golf Tournament**

Come have a great day of golf, fun and food while helping to support local youth. The Higherlander Open Golf Tournament will be held on Friday, June 7, at Carlton Oaks Country Club (Santee). Fees include cart and green fees, tournament gifts and range balls. Other opportunities include hole-in-one car and prizes, pre-tournament putting and short-game contests, closest-to-the-pin and long-drive contests, team awards and dinner.

Helix High School has been serving the families of La Mesa since 1952. The Helix High School Foundation gives back to the school by funding educational scholarships and educational programs that further the school’s mission of college prep and readiness for all. The golf tournament is our primary fundraiser each year and proceeds go to our scholarship fund. Register online at helixhighschoolfoundation.com.

**Performing arts calendar**

- **Dance Concert ‘Musical Mixture’** — May 3 and 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. Tickets are $7 presale, $10 at the door. (Presale tickets can be purchased at ticketleap.com. Pricing ends 12 hours before each show. Cash only at the door.)
- **Instrumental Music Pops Concert** — May 9 and 10, 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. Tickets are $10.
- **Vocal Music Spring Cabaret** — May 14, 15, and 16, 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. Tickets are $10.

**Spring achievements**

The Advanced Sports Medicine program participated in a competition, challenging six other schools from around the county. The students came away with a second-place finish.

The speech and debate team qualified 12 students to the national championships in Dallas in June. The team also won the top sweepstakes prize in the speech division.

Five Helix teams participated in the regional competition for Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA). Two of the teams received medals, and one will continue to the state competition at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in May.

The Colorguard took second place in the Winter Guard Association of Southern California Championships.

The boys’ swim and dive team took first place in the league championships meet, and the girls’ team took third place. The overall combined score was good enough for second in the league.

The boys’ track and field team defeated Steele Canyon, handing them their first league loss since 2010.

**Judges needed for Senior Boards**

Community members are invited to participate as judges for upcoming Senior Boards. All Helix seniors must complete the Senior Project, which entails creating a product, coordinating an event, planning a performance, or providing an actual service that benefits a community. The final phase of the Senior Project is Senior Boards, which provides an opportunity for our students to shine and to feel a sense of accomplishment as they demonstrate their knowledge and skills to their community.

Senior Boards will take place on Tuesday, May 28, and Wednesday, May 29, from noon–4 p.m. Community members are welcome to participate in either or both dates. Please contact me at josborn@helixcharter.net to confirm your participation.

The Senior Project is just one example of Helix Charter High School’s efforts to provide graduates with the tools necessary to succeed in their future endeavors, whether it is college, full-time employment, trade school, or the military.

**Excellence in Education**

If you are interested in finding out more about Helix Charter High School, please attend one of our Excellence in Education tours, held twice monthly. The tours for May are May 2 at 5:30 p.m. and May 17 at 8:10 a.m. Reserve your spot on our website, helixcharter.net. As always, we welcome your input. Please don’t hesitate to contact me at josborn@helixcharter.net.


**Helix Highlights**

Jennifer Osborn

On March 25, three members of Westboro Baptist Church picketed Monte Vista High School in Spring Valley with anti-LGBT messages. The three picketers at Monte Vista were met with a much larger counter protest “Rainbow Dance Party” that showed support for LGBT students. Westboro Baptist Church is based in Kansas and has been designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. The church also picketed El Cajon Valley High School. It is unclear why the two East County high schools were chosen. (Photos by Brenda Arnold)
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**Meeting, from page 7**

a cost of $25. Cash and checks are accepted, but no credit cards. Reservations are required 24 hours in advance, as the room is usually filled to capacity. Please RSVP early to RSVP@rwcnc@gmail.com to guarantee your seat. If you have any questions, you may call or text Marjie at 619-990-2791. For more information on our activities, please visit our website at RWCAzrvcanojocanyon.org and visit us on Facebook at Republican Women of California.

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2020 may seem like a way off, but in political terms it is just around the corner. Republican Women of California Navajo Canyon (RWCNC) will soon be even more involved in grassroots activities to advance our Republicans candidates. Throughout the year, we are registering voters and doing whatever we can to support our elected officials.

We will be volunteering at the San Diego County Fair in Del Mar at the Republican Party booth where voters can be registered; and going to California Republican Party headquarters to help with mailings, make calls and do whatever else is needed. Volunteering is a very rewarding experience so please join us at a meeting and discover ways to get involved and make a difference. Our goal is to have voters focus on important issues and elect Republicans!

—Pat Boerner writes on behalf of the Republican Women of California Navajo Canyon.

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Hi, I’m Whendell. What’s not to love about the beauty of San Diego? We’re the envy of everyone. Let’s keep it that way. But, it’s going to take all of us to protect what we have. That’s why we’re introducing new pricing plans that ask you to think about when you use energy. If you can use less between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m., we can make better use of cleaner energy... and help keep San Diego beautiful. It’s time to save.

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Cinematic mid-life crisis onstage

David Dixon

It’s been a long time since the musical “Nine” was staged in San Diego. The last major production of the adaptation of Federico Fellini’s movie “8½” took place in 2008 at the outdoor Starlight Bowl in Balboa Park. The Lamplighters Community Theatre’s 2019 version in La Mesa has a cast of 16, pays homage to the original, and features several standout performances. But staging it for this season was a happenstance decision by Lamplighters.

Director George Bailey suggested “Nine” only after another selection was turned down because of issues with the rights to the show, which opened the way for him to bring this production. “[Nine] is something I’ve always wanted to work on, and I’ve loved it ever since I heard the original cast recording in the early 1980’s,” he said.

In a Venetian spa that’s starting to show its age (O.P. Hadlock’s set depicts this perfectly), a famous Italian director Guido Contini (played by music director Christopher T. Miller) is struggling to come up with the idea for his next movie, after his last few films flopped.

While he tries to convince his wife Luisa (Keri Miller) that their trip to the spa will be a romantic getaway, Guido deals with his relationships with his married mistress, Carla Albanez (Alyssa Austin), and a muse who frequently collaborates with him in the past, Claudia Nardi (Olivia Torres).

Bailey’s interpretation draws out the humor in the plot, as well as in songs such as “Guido’s Song” and “A Call From the Vatican,” where audiences learn about Guido’s flawed professional and personal life.

The most haunting sequence in the show is one of his simplest—the act one finale, “The Bells of St. Sebastian,” where Guido and the ensemble sing about the religious upbringing that scarred his childhood. Miller and the several actresses (almost all of whom wear black costumes from Pam Stompoly-Ericson, something that gives the evening a distinct look) sing the group numbers in a choral fashion that is powerful and intense.

Maury Yeston’s music and lyrics are funny and lighthearted at the outset but start to become darker at the finale to act one. Later on, his songs begin to show the consequences of Guido’s affairs and prostitution as reality and his imagination continue to collide. Through all this, however, the audience continues to sympathize with him.

Bailey, along with co-stars Christopher Miller and Kerri Miller, find Yeston’s songs beautiful to listen to. “I’m particularly impressed with how the melodies come back to haunt you,” Kerri Miller said. “You really sing things like that as you’re still rehearsing.” Bailey said.

“He [Yeston] manages to create hummable melodies and still be very playful,” Christopher Miller said.

The book and the songs sometimes tie into the number nine in a rather curious way, yet its use does eventually result in a moving conclusion.

Both Christopher Miller and Kerri Miller are married couple several times onstage in the past. Keri mentioned that the marriage they depict in this performance, however, is much more contentious than many they have played previously.

“It’s interesting to work on an angry and sad scenes between us, since it’s so contrary to what our offstage marriage is like,” Kerri Miller said. “To pretend to be so upset with him feels odd.” Miller said. “To pretend to be so upset with him feels odd.”

Christopher Miller as Guido sings and acts with a mixture of mischievous confidence and self-doubt, and Kerri portrays Luisa with a sense of regret that slowly builds to uncontrollable anger and sadness.

Other co-stars featured in memorable moments and solos include Torres, Marnie Klein, Linda Snyder and Dawn Marie Zuniga-Williams who leads the ensemble in “Be Italian,” a number that features quick dance moves from Austin and catchy orchestrations from Up ‘T4 Music (Christopher Miller worked on additional orchestrations) on Bailey’s audio.

The La Mesa interpretation is an unconventional character study that benefits from Bailey’s directorial vision and strong performance by the artists. Check it out, or you may have to wait years to see it again in San Diego County.

“Nine” is running at Lamplighters Community Theatre through May 19. For tickets or more information, visit lamplighterslamesa.com or call 619-303-5092.

—David Dixon is a freelance journalist with a penchant for film and theater. Reach him at daviddixon202@gmail.com.

Highland Players give a new hook to ‘Peter Pan’

Alex Owens

The story of “Peter Pan” has hooked audiences for generations, but now the Helix High School Drama Department is giving La Mesa’s theater-lovers a peak at how the boy who never grew up came to be that way.

“Peter and the Starcatcher,” which runs April 24-27 at the Helix Mainstage Theater, was written in 2004 as a sort-of prequel to J.M. Barrie’s classic 1904 play and provides backstories for characters like Peter, his trusty sidekick Tinker Bell and the seafarer who would become known as Captain Hook.

Drama teacher Paul Reams, who is directing the production, said “Peter and the Starcatcher” is the original “Peter Pan” that hit the musical “Wicked” was to “The Wizard of Oz.”

“They’re both new versions of old stories and anchor look at a familiar property,” Reams said.

Besides being a new look at familiar characters, Reams said there were numerous reasons why the play is a good fit for the Highland Players.

“I like to do recent plays that have a versatile cast size and non-gender-specific roles,” Reams said.

Case in point: The title role of Peter will be played on alternating nights by a male and a female.

“Newer plays offer opportunities to do a lot of creative things with the production,” Reams said. “Most people have never seen the show so they don’t have preconceived notions of how it’s supposed to be.”

Although the familiarity of the characters provides an entry path for audiences, Reams said the story takes time to place at a time before they’ve truly become the versions of themselves known to theatergoers.

For instance, Captain Hook is not yet Captain Hook, but an aspiring evil pirate known as “Black Stache.”

“Also, this play explores the circumstances in Peter’s life that made him want to be a boy forever,” Reams said.

For more information, check out bit.ly/2eYUYZU.

Tickets for the show cost $10 for non-students and $8 for ASB card holders. They can be purchased at bit.ly/2zHWWxu.

—Alex Owens is a freelance writer living in La Mesa.
Nature’s Impressions Through May 11
La Mesa Community Center

Pacific Coast Chorale presents “Ready for the Jubilee: Songs of the Civil War Era.” From the rousing “Battle Hymn of the Republic” to African American spirituals, the folk songs of Stephen Foster and the heartful hope of “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again,” the music of the Civil War era reflected the lives, faiths, and deaths of those who fought—and those who kept the home fires burning. Music for the ages interwoven with readings of Civil War letters. We invite you to join us for “Shenandoah,” “Beautiful Dreamer,” “I Wanna Be Ready” and more. 7 p.m. at The Table: United Church of Christ of La Mesa, 5840 Colton Ave. Free. For more information, call 619-868-3401.

Saturday, April 27

Salsa Under the Stars
Kick off your night with some salsa dancing lessons, then put your moves to use at some of San Diego’s hot salsa salons. Salsa Under The Stars presents "Ready for the Jubilee: Songs of the Civil War Era.” From the rousing “Battle Hymn of the Republic” to African American spirituals, the folk songs of Stephen Foster and the heartful hope of “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again,” the music of the Civil War era reflected the lives, faiths, and deaths of those who fought—and those who kept the home fires burning. Music for the ages interwoven with readings of Civil War letters. We invite you to join us for “Shenandoah,” “Beautiful Dreamer,” “I Wanna Be Ready” and more. 7 p.m. at The Table: United Church of Christ of La Mesa, 5840 Colton Ave. Free. For more information, call 619-868-3401.

Monday, April 29

‘Failure: A Love Story’ Through May 11

Sala y Salsa Fiesta
Lemon Grove Lions Club’s annual event raises money for Lemon Grove Little League and features a salsa contest and salsa dancing —plus Mexican food, live music, prizes and more. 6-9 p.m. at Monte Vista Village Auditorium, 2211 Massa-chussetts Ave., Lemon Grove. Tickets $20 in advance, $25 at the door. Call Ken Burke at 639-408-7350 for more information.

Saturday, May 18

La Mesa Earth Day Festival
Free Earth Day event features bike trail rides, vendor booth and activities, environmental resources, education, music, art and crafts. Bounce house, food trucks and more. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Harry Griffin Park. 9550 Milden St.

Valerie Victor Concert Series: Pacific Coast Chorale
Pacific Coast Chorale presents “Ready for the Jubilee: Songs of the Civil War Era.” From the rousing “Battle Hymn of the Republic” to African American spirituals, the folk songs of Stephen Foster and the heartful hope of “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again,” the music of the Civil War era reflected the lives, faiths, and deaths of those who fought—and those who kept the home fires burning. Music for the ages interwoven with readings of Civil War letters. We invite you to join us for “Shenandoah,” “Beautiful Dreamer,” “I Wanna Be Ready” and more. 7 p.m. at The Table: United Church of Christ of La Mesa, 5840 Colton Ave. Free. For more information, call 619-868-3401.

Saturday, April 28

‘The Arab Americans’ Cuyamaca College Middle Eastern Studies presents this 2017 film detailing the contributions made by immigrants from the Mid-dle East, North Africa and the Arabian peninsula have made in the United States. 12:30 p.m. in the Digital Theatre, 900 Rancho San Diego Parkway, Rancho San Diego. Free.

Free Comic Book Day
Free Comic Book Day is an event that encourages long-time fans and curious new comers to visit their local mom-and-pop-style comic reading. A hope believes that free comic books from many friends, and foodies alike while you sample delicious dishes from over 20 participating Grossmont Center eateries. New this year, are alcoholic beverages at select locations, included with the purchase of our Taste Card. Taste cards start at $10 if bought at guest services, $15 if bought online and $20 if bought in person the day of the event at Grossmont Center. 2-7 p.m. at Grossmont Center, 5500 North Center Drive, La Mesa. Visit grossmontcenter.com.

Tuesday, May 21

LEAD STORY

Free Comic Book Day is an event that encourages long-time fans and curious new comers to visit their local mom-and-pop-style comic reading. A hope believes that free comic books from many friends, and foodies alike while you sample delicious dishes from over 20 participating Grossmont Center eateries. New this year, are alcoholic beverages at select locations, included with the purchase of our Taste Card. Taste cards start at $10 if bought at guest services, $15 if bought online and $20 if bought in person the day of the event at Grossmont Center. 2-7 p.m. at Grossmont Center, 5500 North Center Drive, La Mesa. Visit grossmontcenter.com.

Taste of Grossmont
Sample delicious bites from around the globe at this interactive food-tasting event. Enjoy an afternoon shop-ping outside with family, friends and foodies alike while you sample delicious dishes from over 20 participating Grossmont Center eateries. New this year, are alcoholic beverages at select locations, included with the purchase of our Taste Card. Taste cards start at $10 if bought at guest services, $15 if bought online and $20 if bought in person the day of the event at Grossmont Center. 2-7 p.m. at Grossmont Center, 5500 North Center Drive, La Mesa. Visit grossmontcenter.com.

Saturday, May 18

La Mesa Walks!
Enjoy a fun walk with friends and family. First and third Tuesdays meet at 9 a.m. at La Mesa Community Center, 8074 Allison Ave. Call 619-667-1300 for more information.

Thursdays
Movie Matinee The La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center hosts a series of modern and classic film viewings every Thursday at 1 p.m. in the center’s main hall. Cost is $2 per ticket. For movie listings, visit bit.ly/2P1Ev0S.

Friday, May 24

La Mesa Farmers Market La Mesa’s Farmers Market offers fresh local pro-duce, flowers, pastries, live music, and arts and crafts. 9 a.m. along La Mesa Boulevard, between University Avenue and 4th Street. For more information, visit bit.ly/LM-FM.

Saturday, June 1

Salsa Under the Stars
Lemon Grove Lions Club’s annual event raises money for Lemon Grove Little League and features a salsa contest and salsa dancing —plus Mexican food, live music, prizes and more. 6-9 p.m. at Monte Vista Village Auditorium, 2211 Massachussetts Ave., Lemon Grove. Tickets $20 in advance, $25 at the door. Call Ken Burke at 639-408-7350 for more information.

Saturday, May 18

Wild in the Country Join Lima Tigers & Bears for an incredible special event benefiting rescued animals. Enjoy live music, dinner, dancing, and the company of majestic rescued animals in an idyllic country setting. Featuring family-friendly activities! Wild in the Country includes ones-in-a-lifetime silent- and live-auction items — Super Bowl tickets, anyone? Come, dance, play music, enjoy live music, and arts and crafts. 6-9 p.m. at Triple Tree Hilton. 619-469-7350. Enjoy a fun walk with friends and family. First and third Tuesdays meet at 9 a.m. at La Mesa Community Center, 8074 Allison Ave. Call 619-667-1300 for more information.

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St. Martin sets Earth Day example with Green Ribbon designation

Genevieve Suzuki

Spring cleaning is no joke. Every year, many of us shake off the winter blues, don rubber cleaning gloves and start scrubbing and purging. When it’s all finished, there’s almost no better feeling than sitting on the couch and taking in our newly cleaned home.

It’s funny how we’re accustomed to taking care of the inside of our houses while providing roofs over our heads, but easily forget the bigger home we all share. Earth Day this year fell on April 22, but we shouldn’t neglect caring for our planet to a mere annual celebration. Rather, we should strive to make a difference every day, even if the steps we take are small ones.

The good news is the next generation is learning to be responsible stewards of our environment.

In fact, La Mesa’s own St. Martin of Tours Academy was just named a Green Ribbon School by the state of California’s Department of Education for being a Green Ribbon School.

The California Green Ribbon Schools program recognizes schools across the state for environmental excellence and demonstrated achievement of the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools’ three pillars: the reduction of environmental impact and costs; the improvement of health and wellness of schools, students and staff; and effective environmental education, incorporating science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), civic skills, and green career pathways.

St. Martin, which received the gold level award this year, has been teaching its students about sustainability through their everyday actions and values.

“Our students are becoming ‘engaged citizens of the world,’” said St. Martin Academy Principal Diane Hartley. “They understand that, as Catholics, we are responsible for taking care of our Earth.”

It seems St. Martin Academy is really trying to walk the walk when it comes to environmental stewardship. In 2015, Pope Francis released “On Care for Our Common Home” (Laudato Si), an appeal to “every person living on this planet.” The Diocese then formed Creation Care Teams, which support parishes and schools in their efforts toward environmental sustainability. As a result, after the diocese encouraged all parishes to install solar panels to save on energy, St. Martin of Tours Parish and Academy in 2018 purchased panels that have been projected to offset 97.94% of the academy’s power.

Hartley said St. Martin Academy also uses compostable paper goods and utensils for their Pizza Friday lunches, saves greens from lunch for the compost bin, works hard in the school garden to provide fresh food items for the parish food bank, and uses refillable water bottles free of BPA. Pacheco, an industrial chemist commonly used to create plastics and resins, to help reduce the use of single-use plastic bottles.

Anne Pacheco, who founded La Mesa Fair Trade, has also contributed to the school’s green success. Pacheco, who works at the academy as an administrative assistant, began putting together the Green Ribbon Schools application several months ago. “[I] gave me insight to all that is taught in the classrooms and what needed to be improved on campus. The stakeholders that worked on the 47-page document agreed we are truly engaging our students in skills that are life changing.”

Pacheco’s commitment to fair trade extends to St. Martin Academy. In December 2015, the school was officially declared by the Diocese as the first Catholic Fair Trade School.

Having the fair trade designation means adhering to environmental practices that prohibit the use of the most harmful chemicals and taking measures to protect natural resources.

“I believe it was because we are a Fair Trade School that brought us to the gold. Students not only have learned to take care of the environment, but they know where their products come from, if people have been paid fairly, are organic and that trafficking was not part of the supply chain,” said Pacheco.

If you’re interested in learning more about St. Martin of Tours Academy, fair trade or simply how to be a better citizen of our planet, check out the La Mesa Earth Day Festival on April 27 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Harry Griffen Park.

Genevieve A. Suzuki is a local attorney who lives and works in La Mesa.

(For) Anne Pacheco, administrative assistant for St. Martin of Tours Academy; Tony Thurmond, state superintendent of Public Instruction; Toni Dimuzio, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Systems Support Branch

ANSWERS ON PAGE 8

PUZZLES

SUDOKU

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

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WORSHIP DIRECTORY

Calvary Chapel

Wed. Night...6:30pm to 8:00pm
Sat. Night...6:30pm to 8:00pm
Sunday...10:00am to 1:30pm
Tuesday...6:30pm to 8:00pm
619-697-7221 Pastor Chris Pawlowski and Pastor Dave Riley

La Mesa CA 91942

La Mesa Earth Day Festival was held on April 27 at Harry Griffen Park.

The event included activities such as composting and recycling stations, as well as information booths on various environmental topics.

The festival had over 50 booths representing organizations from around the San Diego County. Attendees could visit these booths and learn about issues such as climate change, water conservation, and wildlife preservation.

There were also several musical performances throughout the day. One notable performance was by the La Mesa High School choir, who sang a medley of songs related to nature and the environment.

The festival also featured a children’s area where kids could participate in crafts and games related to the environment. There was a composting station where kids could learn about how to make their own compost.

The event also included a silent auction with items donated by local businesses.

Overall, the La Mesa Earth Day Festival was a successful event that raised awareness about environmental issues and provided educational opportunities for people of all ages. It was a great opportunity to come together and celebrate our planet.

If you’re interested in getting involved with the La Mesa Earth Day Festival or other local environmental events, contact the city of La Mesa at 619-697-5397.
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SOLDS in 2019 So Far:

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MT. HELIX
MT. HELIX
MT. HELIX
MT. HELIX
MT. HELIX
MT. HELIX
LA MESA
LA MESA
LA MESA VILLAGE
ROLANDO VILLAGE
TREVI HILLS WINERY
FASHION VALLEY
BORREGO SPRINGS