City joins regional CCA agency

By JEFF CLEMETSON | La Mesa Courier

After months of negotiations amongst local cities, La Mesa made it official on Sept. 10 that it will join a regional Joint Powers Authority that will buy and sell clean energy to residents. La Mesa and Chula Vista both cast votes to join the JPA on Sept. 10. Encinitas voted to join on Sept. 11 and San Diego and Imperial Beach on Sept. 17.

“We are really excited about the progress we’ve made and what the future really holds for us as a region to move forward with this JPA and provide cheaper, cleaner, greener energy to our constituency, to the rate payers,” said Lee Friedman, infrastructure policy manager for San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer’s office. San Diego is the lead city in the JPA and is paying for most of the implementation costs.

Sophie Wollfram, director of programs for Climate Action Campaign, described the plan as “one of the most progressive in California” and urged the council to pass it without amendments.

“This is a huge moment for La Mesa and our region. This vote … will set the region on a path to clean energy choice, rate relief for working families, good middle class jobs and local clean energy,” she said.

Environmentalists from San Diego 350 and a representative of Sullivan Solar Power also urged the council to approve the JPA agreement without amendments to avoid any delays in passing it.
City adopts adult use cannabis rules

By JEFF CLEMSTON | La Mesa Courier

Seventeen. That is the greatest number of adult use cannabis dispensaries that can operate in La Mesa following a vote by the City Council on Sept. 24 that adopts new rules governing cannabis businesses in the city.

The new rules state that only medical cannabis dispensaries that are currently approved or have applied for a condition use permit as of the Sept. 24 meeting can apply for a permit to operate an adult use dispensary co-located in their medical dispensary. There are currently 17 such dispensaries either open or in the permit process in the city.

The number of adult use dispensaries was almost 16, because the original ordinance included a provision that would block all adult use dispensaries from opening within a 1,000-foot perimeter of schools in residential neighborhoods. One dispensary, soon to be opened on La Mesa Boulevard, fell into that 1,000 perimeter of Lemon Avenue Elementary.

The dispensary owner, his attorneys and cannabis activists argued during public comments that the dispensary should be allowed an exception and granted a permit.

“We’ve invested over $750,000 to get to this point in the cities process, fees, tenant improvements which have been completed and just last week we completed the offsite improvements required by the city for street and sidewalk improvements at a cost of $50,000 — those are done,” said Jeff Bartell, owner of Fresh Selection, the dispensary in question. “So an incredible investment has been made at this point, assuming we would qualify for the recreational permit under the old separation rules. It’s a matter of fairness at this point.”

Bartell also argued that although he’d still be permitted to run a medical dispensary — because the new rules cannot override Prop U, the citizens’ initiative that legalized medical marijuana businesses in La Mesa — he’d be at a competitive disadvantage to the 16 other dispensaries allowed to sell recreational cannabis to people of 21 years of age with proper ID.

After debating different ways to approach allowing Fresh Selection an exception, the City Council asked if it was legal to make the cutoff for dispensary permit applications the date of the meeting to avoid a rush of new applications the next day. City Attorney Glen Salbittini affirmed that it was, so the amendment was added to the ordinance, allowing Fresh Selection to apply for an adult use permit.

In addition to allowing the 17 adult use cannabis dispensaries, the new ordinance also sets guidelines for other cannabis businesses such as grow operations, cannabis product manufacturing and testing facilities. Those businesses will only be allowed in industrial zones. The new ordinance keeps Prop U requirements for safety and security like cameras, armed guards, alarms, odor control, etc.

The new rules are expected to go into effect sometime in November.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemston at jeff@sdnews.com.
The future of citizen oversight of the La Mesa Police Department is still very much up in the air following a vote by La Mesa City Council to shelve a proposal by Chief Walt Vasquez.

On Sept. 10, Chief Vasquez presented a report to City Council on developing national models for citizen oversight of La Mesa Police Department. Residents and activists have been requesting some sort of oversight of LMPD following a 2018 incident at Helix High School involving an officer tackling a student to the ground who was in handcuffs.

After explaining various types of citizen review processes that are employed by different cities and counties, Chief Vasquez recommended the city adopt a Citizen Public Safety Panel — an 11-member panel appointed by City Council that would be a conduit between the community and police and add an increased level of transparency. The panel would receive information on police policies and procedures and be invited to participate in community activities.

That plan was not well-received by many residents who attended the Sept. 10 meeting, and the scope of it was also questioned by some council members. "You are out in the community a lot, you work in partnership with the community," said Council member Akilah Weber to Chief Vasquez. "I know that there are a lot of community events — Coffee with a Cop, other things where people can come in and learn about the different things about being a police officer, workshops, etc. So, how is this different from that, because I don’t really see much of a difference?"

Vasquez explained the key difference is that the panel would meet quarterly and the meetings would be open to the public.

Weber then pointed out that people who want to make a complaint against the police would not feel comfortable addressing a public panel and asked Vasquez if complaints about officers are confidential. They are, he said, but can only be investigated if there is some kind of contact information about officers, are confidential. They are, he said, but can only be investigated if there is some kind of contact information about officers.

That the proposed public safety panel did not include a mechanism to review police complaints against officers or conduct independent investigations on reported incidents was a major sticking point for the residents and activists who spoke at the City Council meeting.

“I’ve very disappointed because this is a citizen’s advisory committee. The process here contradicts community policing,” said Jack Chu, a local activist who has organized a group of community members to look at citizen oversight of police. Chu added that the proposal was an “insult” his group. “We were given this resolution five days ago — no input, no chance to amend. Everyone knows we’ve been working on this, but we were not consulted.”

Chu said the panel idea did not adhere to the recommendations of a grand jury that made recommendations to cities in San Diego County on how to approach citizen oversight.

Janet Castanos, another community member who worked on the citizen oversight issue, described the proposal as a “betrayal of public trust.”

“This resolution, that is suppose to focus on increasing community involvement, was developed by city officials without any involvement from citizens of our diverse La Mesa community,” she said. “Instead, it was developed behind closed doors. How does this impact public trust?”

Besides being left out of the proposal’s development, community members’ other major complaint was that the panel proposal lacked any real oversight of police — no way to review questionable actions of officers by that may occur.

According to Scott Tiedemann, an attorney that consults police departments who spoke at the City Council meeting, the issue is a legal one — La Mesa is a general law city, not a charter city, and therefore citizens are not permitted to review police matters.

“The government code talks about general law cities and who has authority over the police department, and it’s the police chief,” he said. “That control deals with issues like conducting investigations, control over peace officer personnel records.”

Tiedemann said most cities in California with citizen oversight are charter cities, although the city of Tulare and neighboring National City are general law and have had citizen oversight of police matters for more than 20 and 30 years, respectively. Council member Weber asked Tiedemann if those cities have lost any lawsuits over their citizen review boards and Tiedemann said no.

Tiedemann suggested that a better way for community members to get the kind of oversight they want is to petition to change La Mesa to a charter city. Council member Bill Baber voiced support for this proposal.

“You do have the power in your hand to change this if you want to move toward a charter city,” Baber said. “Just putting this on the table. It’s probably something no one wants to hear because it’s a longer solution, but it would be a cleaner solution.”

Mayor Mark Arapostathis noted that the process in developing some kind of citizen oversight broke down between the police and the community members and suggested starting over and going about it differently.

“I would ask that we continue this process and give some more direction for what we want this process to look like and who should be a part of this process,” he said.

Council member Colin Parent suggested using the makeup of the panel suggested by Chief Vasquez, or an existing group like the Community Relations Commission, to hold public meetings and develop a plan for citizen oversight. Council member Kristine Alegio also supported that suggestion.

After discussion, the council passed a motion by Weber for the city to form a task force for civilian oversight of the police with staff support, comprised of 11 members of various backgrounds and geographic locations of La Mesa that is directed to do community outreach and education about citizen oversight, determine what La Mesa’s needs are for citizen oversight and draft an appropriate policy. The task force will be an open application process with final appointment by the City Council.

A final version of Weber’s motion will be voted on at a future meeting after staff drafts a more formal resolution.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdnews.com.
An oiling chart for an old Studebaker

From the time before GPS, a road map of Southern California

An early drawing of San Diego’s Balboa Park

(Photos by Doug Curlee)
West side plans CONTINUED FROM Page 4

and property owners to access for beautification projects like new signs, artwork, landscaping improvements, power washing and painting buildings, etc.

“It’s just giving a nod to businesses in west La Mesa that need a little sprucing up and maybe it’s a public art program, maybe it’s something else,” Alessio said. Alessio also found a funding source for the program.

“One of the things that came to our attention ... is that people say there is no money for this,” she said. “Well [the businesses] aren’t asking for huge chunks of money and we identified a funding source, which is our own expense accounts.”

Alessio offered to put her $4,000 account toward the program, but if it is successful she said the city should consider using general fund monies and expand the program. Baber offered his account as well, making the seed money for the program the $7,000.

The other program, proposed by Council member Bill Baber, would directly address issues caused by illegal cannabis dispensaries that left some of the properties in west La Mesa in need of attention.

The chapter will still exist for the friends and family members of the chapter, and they will try to continue in an informal way, making sure this generation doesn’t forget the past. Almost everyone at the luncheon is an honorary member. They are family and friends of the survivors — wives, sons and daughters, grandchildren, and just supporters.

But the Carnation Chapter, once the largest of several chapters nationwide, can no longer officially exist.

“The rules say that the president and the vice president of the group must be actual survivors,” said 98-year-old Hedley. “There is just one no one who can fill the second chair, so we have to shut it down. We are really a dying organization, aren’t we?”

There is no arguing that. There are seven actual survivors left in the group, but only one of them was able to make it to the luncheon — Clayton Schenkelberg, who will turn 102 next month. Hedley is the only one still able to walk and communicate well.

So well, in fact, that he’s booked for several appearances at schools and civic events over the next few months, despite the fact that he’s fighting some serious physical challenges himself.

“The Lord willing, of course,” said the deeply religious Hedley.

The Carnation Chapter people plan to continue to meet as a social group in the future, as much as they can. But they won’t be collecting dues and sending them to the national Survivors Association — there is really no national association anymore.

Everyone knew this day was coming — which doesn’t make it any easier. It never does.

— Doug Curle is a longtime San Diego reporter in both print and television. Reach him at dougcurle@csrx.net.

Pearl Harbor Survivors group holds final meeting in La Mesa

They survived the massive Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

More than 2,400 of their fellow sailors, soldiers and Marines didn’t.

They recovered, fought in the Pacific and Europe, won WWII, and became known as the Greatest Generation. But they finally met the enemy no one can defeat — time.

Sept. 3 brought about the end of the road for Carnation Chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, 56 years after its founding, at the final meeting held at the Latter Day Saints church in La Mesa. Chapter President Stu Hedley had to drop the final gavel at the anniversary luncheon with three words.

“We are done.”

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The value of volunteers within a community

By MARY ENGLAND

Today, volunteers are in more demand than ever before. The latest value of a volunteer is $25.43 per hour. Volunteers are the backbone of society and a community. The 2018 Volunteering in America report found that 77.54 million adults (30.3%) volunteered through an organization last year. Who volunteers the most? Generation X (those born between 1965 to 1980) leads among generations in the United States. Generation X had a volunteer rate of 28.9%, followed by baby boomers at 25.7%.

Volunteering provides many benefits such as mental and physical health, and helps counteract the effects of stress, anger, and anxiety. The social contact aspect of helping and working with others can have a profound effect on your overall psychological well-being. Volunteers receive many benefits such as: gaining confidence, making a difference, being a part of a community, learning new skills and having fun!

San Diego, a city blessed by San Marcos statistics that state that, overall, 29.4% of residents volunteer, which is about 770,109 volunteers and 57 volunteer hours per capita providing 110.2 million hours of service. An interesting fact is that 58.2% of these residents donate $25 or more to charities. Another interesting fact is that 65.5% of residents engage in informal volunteering as well as formal volunteering.

The La Mesa Chamber of Commerce is proud of our volunteer base. At our events throughout the year, whether it be an evening mixer or one of our large-scale community events, our volunteers show up and are ready to work. They are the key ingredient to our success. At any one time, we may have anywhere from 30 to 50 volunteers on site and performing the tasks necessary to execute a flawlessness event.

Volunteers are the most important resource community organizations have. The ability of people working together better for the betterment of their community and themselves is a valuable resource. I suggest that when you attend any function within our community and you see one of our Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol folks working, or you at the Flag Day Parade, or you are visiting the local library, or you are attending a community dinner or attending any other meaningful event within our city, stop and say “thank you” to the tireless volunteers. Your acknowledgement will mean the world to them and put a huge smile on their face and yours as well.

The La Mesa Chamber of Commerce recognizes and thanks our outstanding volun-

tees that work with us throughout the year. We are also grateful to the public and members of communities throughout the region, that assist us as we make a difference in the lives of many. We are honored to partner with our volunteers and the community and will soon launch our annual charitable projects. We will again adopt 24 La Mesa homebound seniors and gather canned goods, toiletries and items for their holidays and Christmas. We need your help again, will you be ready?

By MARY ENGLAND

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La Mesa Dem Club will focus on new candidate recruitment

By TINA RYNBERG and JEFF BENESCH

“Step on up” is the theme of the Wednesday, Oct. 2 general meeting of the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club. With the recent shocking news that 53rd District Congress member Susan Davis has decided to retire, her personal story carries the message that now is the time to have many members of local government entities where ultra-conservative values affect policy and law. People still get appointed to local school boards simply because of their church affiliation.

We must continue our fight for middle class values such as science, women’s health rights, criminal justice reform, climate action, sensible gun laws, affordable health care and economic equality. We need more affordable housing, transit choices, immigrant justice, stronger union representation, living wages, and an end to discrimination and hate in all sectors of public life. How do we get activists on all levels of local government who share these progressive ideals?

We’ll hear some of the answers from County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, La Mesa City Council members Colin Parent and Dr. Akilah Weber, and Helix Water Board Director Mark Gracyk. They will gladly share their stories and strategies to run strong and successful campaigns to achieve office for those with tenures in the California Legislature, and followed those offices with tenures in the California Board of Education, and guests with a great panel of programming for the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club.

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President Trump is keeping his promise to “make America great again” by tackling international trade issues that have been ignored for too long. We are finally making progress in enforcing trade agreements that are fair to the United States and bringing in billions of dollars to our economy. There has been a sharp drop in the number of illegal crossings at the Mexico border, but it is still a major crisis that needs our continuing attention.

In two and a half years, Trump’s accomplishments for our country are monumental, but have not been publicly highlighted in the “mainstream media.” That is why it is up to us to remind our fellow citizens how much better things are today.

Republican Women of California – Navajo Canyon are looking forward to our annual Fashion Show on Oct. 8 at the Bali Hai on Shelter Island. With a theme of “Spirit of San Diego,” fashions by Glamour Girls of El Cajon and a delicious buffet lunch, it is guaranteed to be a fun-filled afternoon for a cost of $40. This is our only fundraiser of the year and it always gets rave reviews. To add to the excitement we have a $100 cash door prize, opportunity drawings, gift cards, and a silent auction for holiday items. This is a great opportunity to get acquainted with Navajo Canyon members and learn more about what we do throughout the year. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Reservations are required, so please RSVP at FASHIONrwcnc@gmail.com or call 619-561-8304 for more information.

Our next regular meeting at the Brigitante will be Nov. 12 — the date of California’s primary election — and our featured speaker will be Eric Golub, a politically oriented comedian. We will enjoy some humor, and also be updated on what is happening in politics locally, statewide and in Washington.

— Pat Boerner writes on behalf of the Republican Women of California – Navajo Canyon.
From construction to engineering at Grossmont

In 1958-1959, a unique program began at Grossmont: a program to teach students home construction skills. According to a June 14, 1959 San Diego Union article, the plan was conceived by John Warburton, Grossmont High School (GHS) principal two years in 1957.

Nov. 1, 1959, construction began on a home designed by student Frank Moog, located on the north side of the football field. Nine carpentry students constructed the building, and 16 home economics students, three drafting students, four workshop students, and two metal shop students also worked on the home in various capacities.

While the carpentry students built the house, the home economics students designed and decorated its interior. Only the electrical, plumbing, and roofing were done by professionals. After its sale, the home was moved to its new location.

The program continued at Grossmont for many years. In 1975, after the program had moved to Santana High School's vocational construction classes, Footiller Wayne Thowless, Class of 1977, was the designer of that year's home.

Today, continuing that early tradition, GHS's Engineering Pathway students, taught by Jeffrey Lee, participate in Project Lead the Way's Engineering nationwide STEM program. Students focus on engineering career readiness that meets industry standards including communication and collaborative, technical, and innovative skills.

In the three-year Engineering Pathway, students focus on design, mechanics, electrical, energy, structural design, robotics and content specific to a senior capstone course.

Grossmont has chosen Civil Engineering & Architecture as their capstone course where students apply their content knowledge and skills to architectural design and engineering. Within the capstone course, students explore all aspects of civil engineering and architecture including residential and commercial design and code, structural analysis, site science, surveying, hydrology, and wastewater.

An element of this three-year program is for students to participate in project-based learning where students resolve current engineering challenges. These culminating projects showcase their science, mathematics, and engineering skills through innovative designs that relate to relevant problems in society.

Recently, two of Mr. Lee's former engineering students, Jessica and Jamie Medlin, sisters from Grossmont High School's first cohort complete the Engineering Pathway, designed residential homes that met their clients' requirements while following residential code. As seen by their work, these aspiring civil engineering students demonstrate that they are well prepared for college and engineering career opportunities.

Mr. Lee welcomes community and industry participation in this year’s project. If you would like to be one of the clients for a senior student's residential design project in the Civil Engineering & Architecture capstone course, please contact him at jrllee@guhsd.net for more information.

To discover more about Grossmont past and present, visit our website at footiller-museum.com or visit the GHS Museum Wednesday, Oct. 2, from noon-3:30 p.m. or by appointment. Contact 619-668-6140 or email ghsmuseum@guhsd.net.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum
A new school year brings new opportunities for students, and that is certainly true at Helix. In the 2019-20 school year, Helix continues to offer college courses on the Helix campus. These courses are part of the dual-enrollment program, which allows students to earn college credits and credits toward high school graduation at the same time. Each year, more classes are offered, giving students a head start on their college education.

One dual-enrollment class being offered this year is Business 195, which focuses on financial decision-making and management. Students learn about topics such as life-long financial planning, budgeting, managing checking and savings accounts, building and maintaining good credit, retirement and estate planning, insurance, homeownership, and building an investment portfolio.

Instructor Amy Hull, who has a master’s degree in business administration (MBA), says that teaching things like theories and formulas is an important part of the course, but even more important is connecting those ideas to the students’ decision-making.

“There are different financial decision life stages,” Hull said. “I really focus on the things that are applicable to them in their different phases of life.”

For example, if students know they want to go to college in four years, and they know they need a specific amount of money, they can use what they learn in this class to find out how much they should invest/save now to make their dream college a reality. Another opportunity being offered to students is a program called College 101. Students who participate in this program, led by Helix’s College Access Counselor Cathy Singer, learn just about everything they need to know about applying to college, such as deciding where to apply, how to craft a college portfolio.

The members of the La Mesa Sunrise Rotary and the Helix High School Interact Club are getting ready for another productive year serving the local community. An Interact Club is a volunteer group of students at a high school who work with a local Rotary International Club, which provides an advisor or advisors to work with the students on community service projects. The high school provides a volunteer faculty member who is the liaison with the students and the sponsoring Rotary Club advisors. Helix High School has had a very active Interact Club for many years.

“We are excited to start 2019 with history teacher Brett McKinney as our new interact advisor,” said JoAnn Bergquist, the La Mesa Sunrise Rotary advisor.

PAST PROJECTS
Some of the projects last year included working with Noah Homes, Sharia’s Closet, Father Joe’s Village, Habitat for Humanity, and many more great local organizations. Interactors also participate in Rotary activities such as the Internet Symposium at SDSU and a water filtration project at UCSD. Several times a year, students visit the La Mesa Rotary Club, which meets at Marie Callender’s on Friday mornings.

FUTURE PROJECTS
With the assistance of Bill Pogue, Bergquist meets weekly with the “Interactors to plan service projects and teach them about the global impact of Rotary International. In addition to supporting the Interact Club, LMSR also sponsors Helix students with scholarships, a speech contest, and a Rotary Youth Leadership weekend conference.”

See Helix Highlights, Page 23

By AARON LANDAU

The members of the La Mesa Sunrise Rotary and the Helix High School Interact Club are getting ready for another productive year serving the local community. An Interact Club is a volunteer group of students at a high school who work with a local Rotary International Club, which provides an advisor or advisors to work with the students on community service projects. The high school provides a volunteer faculty member who is the liaison with the students and the sponsoring Rotary Club advisors. Helix High School has had a very active Interact Club for many years.

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If you’d like to learn more about La Mesa Sunrise Rotary, visit our website at lamesasuinsurerotary.com. To learn more about Helix Charter High School, visit helixcharters.org.

—Aaron Landau writes on behalf of La Mesa Sunrise Rotary.
The coming month of October often has people focusing on costumes and candy. However, this time of year literary circles around the county participate in One Book, One San Diego.

One Book, One San Diego is a community reading program managed by KPBS in partnership with the San Diego County Library and the San Diego Public Library. The purpose of the program is to encourage residents to join in the shared experience of reading and discussing the same book. The program also encourages participation in related events, discussions of the ideas raised in the featured books, and examination of how these ideas connect with our daily lives and local communities.

This year, the selected title is “The Great Believers” by Rebecca Makkai, a novel about the terrors and tragedies of the AIDS epidemic and its repercussions, told through a story of friendship and redemption in the face of tragedy and loss. Taking place in Chicago in the 1980s, “The Great Believers” shows the tensions that can exist in our birth families and the compassion of our chosen families. It won the Stonewall Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

The La Mesa Branch Library’s Adult Book Club will be discussing this title on Oct. 16 at 10:30 a.m. If you plan on attending, you can pick up a copy of the book at the front desk.

There is a One Book for Teens title: “The Crossover” by Kwame Alexander, winner of the Newbery Medal and the Coretta Scott King Honor Award, is a coming-of-age story of two basketball-playing brothers and their family. Teens in grades six through 12 are welcome to check out “The Crossover” anytime for the Teen Book Club, which will meet on Thursday, Oct. 17, at 4 p.m.

Some past One Book titles have included “March: Book One” by Congressman John Lewis, “Sandcastle Girls” by Chris Bohjalian, and “Waiting for Snow in Havana” by Carlos Eire.

The city of La Mesa’s West La Mesa Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity project is inviting the public to an Active Transportation workshop at the La Mesa Branch Library on Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2-4 p.m. This workshop will consist of a short training session that identifies the new improvements in our neighborhood that make walking and bicycling safer and how walkable communities improve the overall health of the public. Active transportation is the future! Your input is very valuable to the city of La Mesa! Snacks will be provided.

That same evening, we will be having a “Stranger Things”-themed teen lock-in after hours, 6-10 p.m. This event will include themed crafts, snacks, a costume contest, a photo booth, and more. Of course, we will have all kinds of “Star Wars”-related books, DVDs, Blu-rays, and music available to check out as well.

The La Mesa Branch Library on Thursday, Oct. 19, is going to be an eventful day at the La Mesa! Snacks will be provided.

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La Mesa Oktoberfest

1973 - 2019

Village

FREE!
All Ages Festival

Bier, Food, Music, Karneval & Community Tradition

October 4th, 5th, 6th

LAMESAOKTOBERFEST.ORG
La Mesa Oktoberfest is a free event and is expected to bring more than 100,000 people from across Southern California for what has become San Diego’s largest Oktoberfest event. This year’s event is held Oct. 4-6, which follows the traditional celebrations in Munich that kick off in mid-September.

For visitors interested in traditional German music, both local and regional polka bands will be performing throughout the weekend, including The Oompah Brothers, The Bavarian Beer Garden Band and Polka Party Band. The music stages will also feature a mix of rock, country, tribute acts and pop standards from Captain J & The Jive Crew, Charlie’s Angels, Righteous & The Wicked, Rio Peligrosos, Manganista, Aether X, Power Snake, Super Buffet, The Mighty Untouchables and Elton John Kenny.

Beer lovers who have attended previous Oktoberfests will once again be served at the Hofbrauhaus Biergarten, which serves pints of traditional German beer. The Craft Beer & Spirits Garten will also be serving a mix of traditional German beers, craft beers from local breweries as well as cocktails.
### Hofbrauhaus Bier Garten

**Friday, Oct. 4**

- 4 p.m. – Bavarian Beer Garden Band
- 5 p.m. – Captain J & the Jive Crew
- 6 p.m. – Bavarian Beer Garden Band
- 7 p.m. – Charlie’s Angels
- 8 p.m. – Bavarian Beer Garden Band
- 9 p.m. – Righteous & the Wicked

**Saturday, Oct. 5**

- 10:30 a.m. – Oompah Brothers
- 12:30 p.m. – Rio Peligrosio
- 1:30 p.m. – Oompah Brothers
- 2:30 p.m. – Manganiesta
- 3:30 p.m. – Oompah Brothers
- 4:30 p.m. – Aether X
- 5:30 p.m. – Oompah Brothers
- 8:45 p.m. – Power Snake

**Sunday, Oct. 6**

- 10 a.m. – Polka Party
- 11:30 a.m. – Super Buffet
- 12:45 p.m. – Polka Party
- 1:45 p.m. – The Mighty Untouchables
- 3 p.m. – Polka Party
- 4 p.m. – Elton John Kenny

### Palm Avenue Bier Hall

**Friday, Oct. 4**

- 4p.m – Games
- 5pm – Oompah Brothers
- 6pm – Games
- 7pm – Oompah Brothers
- 8pm – Games
- 9pm – Oompah Brothers

**Saturday, Oct. 5**

- 10:30 a.m. – Games
- 12:30 p.m. – Bavarian Beer Garden Band
- 1:30 p.m. – Games
- 2:30 p.m. – Bavarian Beer Garden Band
- 3:30 p.m. – Games
- 4:30 p.m. – Bavarian Beer Garden Band
- 5:30 p.m. – Games
- 6:30 p.m. – Bavarian Beer Garden Band
- 7:30 p.m. – Games
- 8:45 p.m. – Bavarian Beer Garden Band

**Sunday, Oct. 6**

- 10 a.m. – Games
- 11:30 a.m. – Oompah Brothers
- 12:45 p.m. – Games
- 1:45 p.m. – Oompah Brothers
- 3 p.m. – Games
- 4 p.m. – Oompah Brothers

### Craft Beer & Spirit Garten

**Friday, Oct. 4**

- 4-10 p.m. – DJ J. Medina

**Saturday, Oct. 5**

- 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. – DJ NVious
- 4-10 p.m. – DJ Shldk

**Sunday, Oct. 6**

- 10 a.m.-2 p.m. – DJ NVious
- 2-6 p.m. – DJ J. Medina

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**Schedule Details**

- **Friday, Oct. 4**
  - 4 p.m. – Games
  - 5 p.m. – Oompah Brothers
  - 6 p.m. – Games
  - 7 p.m. – Oompah Brothers
  - 8 p.m. – Games
  - 9 p.m. – Oompah Brothers

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  - 3 p.m. – Polka Party
  - 4 p.m. – Elton John Kenny

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**Locations**

- **Hofbrauhaus Bier Garten**
- **Palm Avenue Bier Hall**
- **Craft Beer & Spirit Garten**

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**Event Dates**

- October 4, 5, 6

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**Vendors**

- **Food Trucks**
- **Seating Area**
- **Restrooms**
- **German Karneval Area**
- **Games**
- **Inflatables**
- **Oompah Brothers**
- **Music Bands**
- **DJ Sets**

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**Contact**

- [www.lamesaoktoberfest.org](http://www.lamesaoktoberfest.org)

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**Images**

- (Photos courtesy McFarlane Promotions)
Oktoberfest
CONTINUED FROM Page 12

New to this year’s event is the Palm Avenue Bier Hall, which offers an authentic German biergarten experience complete with lederhosen-dressed waitresses to deliver pints and brats as well as live Bavarian music.

La Mesa Oktoberfest is offering a way to save on steins with its Hofbrauhaus Biergarten Passes. Prices range $5 to $45 and depending on what level of pass, can include VIP entry and restrooms, front-of-line privileges, two complimentary beers, a commemorative stein, a chicken hat or flower crown, German beverages, juicy bratwurst, snitzel, a huge pretzel and more.

Also new this year are special Sunday Funday prices at Oktoberfest. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 6, get half off all drinks in all biergarten and half off single-ride tickets for the Ferris wheel.

In addition to music, beer and food offerings, La Mesa Oktoberfest is a chance for visitors to find authentic handmade treasures and explore authentic art and German-style craft pieces from more than 30 local artisans in the Craft Fair tent.

Back again this year are family-friendly activities at the German Kinder Karneval, featuring a towering Ferris wheel, rock-climbing wall, massive inflatable slides, interactive art, brat-eating competitions, scavenger hunts and more.

Other fun activities like wiener dog races and howling contests will be held in the Dackeldorf Dachshund Village.

For a complete list of all the free German fun and to purchase VIP passes, visit LaMesaOktoberfest.org.
People who love line dancing often attest to a renewed sense of self-confidence. Adrienne Hart, who teaches the popular line dance class at La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center, has some first-hand experience on what it is like to move from fear to living with joy and confidence.

Hart, a San Carlos resident, has everything to live and dance for. Just as she brings smiles to people who want to add a little extra exercise and fun to their personal lives, Hart had a similar motivation, albeit much stronger. For nearly 20 years, she had suffered from a debilitating panic disorder called agoraphobia during which she could not even leave her own home.

By a miracle she says is from God, she was healed of the disorder. Out of sheer gratitude, Hart wanted to bring back to life that hope she had as a little girl to dance. But she did not want to dance alone.

So Hart found company in her group of Rhinestone Grannies, a dance troupe of older women who perform one-hour shows that include dance, comedy and song. The youngest is Karen Bain, 65; the oldest, Betty Cleveland, 89. Now 80 years old, Hart had no idea that the troupe would be such a hit in the community.

Every December, the troupe holds a fundraiser for the local Warrior Foundation-Freedom Station. “This will be the 11th year. All the proceeds go to our local military heroes,” Hart said.

Hart’s story about overcoming agoraphobia has been such an inspiration for people that she began sharing her story with organizations and churches. She speaks about how the disorder started, what she experienced and how recovery came about for her.

“I am also currently working on a one-woman play about my struggles with agoraphobia,” Hart said.

The mainstay of Hart’s work is teaching line dance and the love of it. Several of her students have been with Hart since she started teaching.

“According to Alzheimer’s Association, dancing is one of the best things you can do to protect from developing the disease. Our class is a great place for exercise and to meet new friends,” Hart said. Barbara Jacobs, who has danced in Hart’s class for nine years, says that every week she feels rejuvenated after the class.

“I have learned that I can still dance, appropriate to my age, but the joy I feel is the same throughout the many years I have lived,” she said.

Douglas Geiger, who’s been a student of Hart’s for 10 years, says that she has been given a great outlet for exercise as well as her own love of dancing.

“Most of all, we learn that even though our hips hurt and our knees crack, our eyes are weak and our balance is not as good as it used to be, ‘we ain’t dead yet,’” she said. “Our teacher is always on top of every movement and changing it to make it safe as well as fun. And most of all it is the fun and friendship.”

One of the first things that Hart explains in the line dance class is that the main goals are to exercise the body, the mind and to have fun. In each class, students warm up with Hart to a lively song before starting lessons. She usually reviews between six and nine dances per session.

Many of the dances are repeated during the year, with the music ranging from all genres, including country, Latin, Irish, jazz, swing, rock ‘n’ roll and even waltzes.

“My method is to slowly go over each step and then give counts, or beats, for each section,” Hart said.

Some students have some physical limitations, so Hart shows them how to modify a particular step to accommodate them. The 1 1/2-hour lessons include at least one five-minute break during the class.

“I remind them to drink water,” she said, “and we laugh a lot during the class. They especially love it when I make a mistake. My husband usually leads in the laughter.”

Hart laughs at herself along with them because, as she explained, she has everything to live and dance for now.

“It’s the friendship, too, that keeps many of the students joining up with the Rhinestone Grannies.

“We are like a family,” Hart said. “We celebrate together, cry together, laugh together. The friendship and caring for each other is beautiful to see.”

Although mostly women are in the class, men are welcome, too. Hart’s own husband joins in on the fun after he sets up the equipment. And the group also includes John James, an original member of The Platters, who performs under the stage name Duke Richardson. James participates with the dancers when he isn’t on the road.

The classes take place each Monday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center. Anyone 21 and over is welcome. The fee is $7 per class. For more information, go to rhinestrongrannies.com.
$10 Off On Any Bottle Of WINE!  Must Bring In Coupon or Show On Your Phone.  Limited Time Offer.

BUY ONE entree and get a SECOND FREE with the purchase of two beverages
Valid at the La Mesa location only.  Expires 10-24-19 (up to a $10 value).

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PATTY’S CAFE
8155 Lake Murray Blvd., La Mesa, CA 91942 (Next to Big Lots) Mon-Sat 7am to 9:00 pm Sun 7:00 am to 3:00 pm

16  Sept. 27 – Oct. 24, 2019  La Mesa Courier sdnews.com
Big, wet burritos roll into La Mesa

It’s an insult to term what you’ve eaten at Sombrero “San Diego-style Mexican food.” In fact, the family that founded the 17-location chain wouldn’t care if you shouted it from a rooftop because they’ve actually incorporated those exact words into the company logo.

The taco shop sprang onto Lake Murray Boulevard the first week of September in a spanking-clean structure boasting that “new building” smell. There’s indoor seating, a drive-through window, and ample space in front that will soon become an outdoor patio.

Its arrival to La Mesa — the first Sombrero restaurant here, even though the city is home to its corporate headquarters — is a godsend for local residents. That location still remains, it was his parents who technically started the chain in the College Area during the late 1960s. They expanded to only a few locations before dissolving few locations before dissolving

Javier Correa Jr. and Sr. (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

“I've long been a longtime fan of Sombrero's bean and cheese burritos, a basic item but one that’s constructed with super-fresh tortillas supplied regularly to all locations by a local maker. Better yet, the refried beans are so consistently creamy that you’d swear they contain lard. But not so. “We don’t use lard in anything,” Correa Jr. emphasized. Rolled tacos (available in shredded beef only) are top sellers — fluted beauties sporting thin, delicate casings that gently shatter with each bite. They come in orders of four, although others in our region.

The Jumbo Combo Plate is a steal for $12.25. It yielded a mound of moist and fluffy pork that clearly tasted slow-roasted. Some of the meat was shredded, some of it chunky. Correa Jr. noted there’s enough pork in the order to fill two burritos. The plate also came with rice, refried beans and tortillas.

But it’s the California burrito — or its less weighty option of a California taco — that best epitomizes the company’s San Diego-style Mexican food. Here, this gringo meat-and-potatoes construct brings together flash-grilled carne asada with requisite french fries, cheese and pico de gallo. Unless I’m adequately intoxicated, I’ve never been a fan of the creation. But it will forever rank as a wild seller at Sombrero and at all other taco shops dotting our landscape.

Correa acknowledges his menu fully aligns to everyday north-of-the-border grub. “But we do it in a polished manner,” he noted while pointing to Sombrero’s hand-folded crunchy tortillas, as well as the slowly stewed chile verde pork, and assorted chili peppers used for making four types of salsas. Other meal choices include breakfast burritos, numerous tortas, large and small tostadas, nachos and loaded fries — exactly the kind of food most of us start maniacally craving when ever we leave San Diego County for any length of time.

—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 fsabatini@san.rr.com.

Restaurant Review

By FRANK SABATINI JR.

춘천

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Its arrival to La Mesa — the first Sombrero restaurant here, even though the city is home to its corporate headquarters — is a godsend for local residents who devoutly drove to El Cajon or Spring Valley or San Diego to get their fixes on such items as Angus carne asada or Sombrero’s “special” burritos laded with a silky brownish-orange sauce you’ll also find covering the enchiladas.

“The sauce was my grandmother’s recipe from a long time ago,” said Javier Correa Jr., the company’s vice president whose father, Javier Correa Sr., began growing the business in 1984 after opening Sombrero in South Park.

That location still remains, although it was his parents who technically started the chain in the College Area during the late 1960s. They expanded to only a few locations before dissolving 1960s. They expanded to only a few locations before dissolving

Javier Correa Jr. and Sr. (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

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Pacific Southwest Railway Museum and the unique La Mesa Depot

By BILL DIAMOND

It’s not every day you have a piece of history in your own backyard but the city of La Mesa does, the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum and the La Mesa Depot. If you haven’t visited, the PSRM Association has been focused on the 100-year celebration of the November 1919 completion of the San Diego & Arizona Railway (SD&A).

The San Diego-area historical and educational nonprofit has been marking the 112-year anniversary of the start of construction of the SD&A with a variety of family-friendly activities such as its SD&A Groundbreaking Festival on Sept. 7, at PSRM’s second location at Campo Railroad Park and Museum in Campo. However, don’t wait too long to enjoy the festivities as the 2019 centennial anniversary will conclude with a special re-enactment ceremony and other family activities on Saturday, Nov. 16, in Campo.

According to Bruce Semelsberger, archivist for the library of the PSRM Association, the La Mesa Depot was constructed in 1894 by the San Diego, Cuyamaca & Eastern Railway. The railroad was the brainchild of the governor of California at that time, Robert W. Waterman, who wanted to get a railroad to a point close to his Stonewall gold mine in the Julian mining district.

“In order to sell the idea to investors, the railroad was supposed (on paper) to go to Utah by way of Julian. The line that was built in 1888 went from San Diego to Foster Station north of Lakeside. The site of the station on Joe Foster’s ranch was where the San Vicente dam now exists,” Semelsberger said.

“There was a depot where passengers transferred to a stagecoach for traveling on to Ramona, Santa Ysabel and Warner’s, also a turntable for the steam locomotives and a water tank. Joe Foster also operated a small hotel there and there was a stone quarry where the rock was mined to construct the Zumiga Jetty in San Diego’s harbor entrance.”

He said the route from San Diego to El Cajon is largely that of the current trolley Orange line. The SD&C&E was amalgamated into the San Diego & Southwestern Railway about 1913 and then the San Diego & Arizona Railway in 1919. The SD&A was purchased by Southern Pacific in 1932 and the name changed to San Diego & Arizona Eastern, which was in turn bought by the city of San Diego in 1979.

“The depot served La Mesa from the date of its construction through WWII after which it was deemed surplus by the railroad company and the depot was sold to the Lakeside Chamber of Commerce for $1,” he said.

The planned “wild west” attraction in Lakeside was never built and the depot became an antique store owned by Flossie Beadle, he said.

After her death, it had other uses as a hen house and possibly other things. After a fire nearly burned the building and some others stored in Lakeside, PSRM volunteer Larry Rose recognized the depot in a newspaper story and spearheaded the effort to return it to La Mesa and restore it about 1979. Semelsberger explained.

Lifetime PSRM member and volunteer Reena Deutsch has spent much time researching the SD&A and wrote “San Diego & Arizona Railway: The Impossible Railroad,” which illustrates through vintage photographs and narrative about the history of the SD&A Railway, built by John D. Spreckels.

It describes the 12-year construction from 1907 to 1919 and its on-again, off-again operations over portions of the tracks right up to modern times. Early engineers

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**Cox adds Prime Video app to Contour TV**

Wondering which TV show or movie to watch when you have some time to unwind? Cox Communications just made it even easier to find a new favorite show with its recent launch of Prime Video on Cox Contour TV.

Prime Video joins Netflix, YouTube, NPR One and others in the Contour TV library of apps. Cox Contour TV customers can use their voice remote control to easily and quickly access their Prime Video shows on their television, with acclaimed shows such as “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” directly on their televisions.

Other popular Originals include “Hanna,” “Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan,” “Guava Island,” “Homecoming,” and

“The Man in the High Castle.”

“There’s no need for a secondary device or input switch,” said Suzanne Schlundt, vice president of field marketing. “Similar to Contour’s other integrated apps including Netflix, YouTube and iHeart Radio, all you have to do is speak into your voice remote control and say things like ‘Prime Video’ or ‘Mrs. Maisel’ and Cox Contour will take you to your Prime Video programming.”

Prime Video can also be accessed in the “Apps” section of the Contour guide.

“Contour has become one of the most innovative platforms in cable,” said Schlundt. “By adding the Prime Video app to Contour, Cox continues to make it incredibly easy for customers to access all the programming they love in one place.”

Popular Prime Video TV shows include:

“The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” (2 Seasons)

This winner of eight Emmy Awards tells the story of Midge Maisel, a perfect 1950s housewife with two kids whose life gets turned upside down when her husband leaves her. Instead of falling to pieces, Midge surprises everyone she knows by taking the stage and becoming one of New York City’s most colorful stand-up comics.

“Hanna” (1 Season)

Based on the 2011 film of the same name, “Hanna” is a brooding thriller about a young girl raised by her father in isolation in the woods and trained to be a lethal assassin. Thrust into the real world with no sense of social normalcy, Hanna skillfully dodges an off-book CIA agent while searching for the truth about her identity.

“Jack Ryan” (1 Season)

This political action thriller follows CIA analyst Jack Ryan, a character from Tom Clancy’s well-established “Ryanverse” who is pulled from the safety of his desk job to work in the field.
In order to serve customers by 2021, the JPA agreement need
park. It began in 1998, the idea of five women who walked their dogs in the park. Shepherded by Becky Rice, one of those women, it finally became a reality in October of 2001. park. It began in 1998, the idea of five women who walked their dogs in the park. Shepherded by Becky Rice, one of those women, it finally became a reality in October of 2001.

Over the years, the dog park grew to the three fenced dog runs that it is today. Run by volunteers, Canine Corners maintains the park and offers socialization opportunities for both dogs and their owners.

But the years have taken their toll on the park: the fences are sagging, the dust is overwhelming, the hard-scape seating areas are underwhelming, and the trek through the creek bed to get to the gate is treacherous.

It’s time for a facelift, and it’s called “Becky’s Project” in honor of cofounder Becky Rice, who passed away in August.

The Canine Corners Reconstruction Committee has developed a plan to prepare the park for a new surface by improving the drainage and grading. Other items on their ambitious agenda include: new vinyl-covered fencing; improved hard-scape seating areas with new benches; addition of 2,600 square feet to the north side (mostly benefiting the small dog section); improved water access; improved waste disposal containers; and play features for dogs. The piece de resistance will be the brand-new bridge entrance. The elegant pillared gateway will welcome dog owners into an enlarged entry to the dog runs.

It promises to be a definite enhancement to an already lovely park. The plans have been approved by the Joint Powers Authority, which manages Harry Griffen Park. The next step is to get funding to pay for the dream. The committee hopes to gather funds from multiple sources, including La Mesa businesses, grants, and donations from fundraisers and their website fund page (search Canine Corners Becky’s Project). Information and donation opportunities may also be found at: caninecornersdogpark.com or their Facebook page. Donations may be mailed to Canine Corners Dog Park, PO Box 2192, La Mesa, CA 91943.

Helix Resident Featured in Memoir Showcase

Mr. Helix resident Sandi Nieto is one of 10 winners of the fifth annual San Diego Memoir Showcase Competition, put on by the San Diego Memoir Writers Association. This year’s contest theme was “I Didn’t See That One Coming,” and nearly 200 submissions were received and reviewed by a panel of judges.

Nieto’s submission, “We Had the Dog Tags All Along,” chronicles her father’s disappearance in 1954 and her feelings of abandonment. She later learned what happened to him following the death of her mother in 1968.

Nieto has lived in Mount Helix for 30-plus years. She credits her husband for encouraging her to write.

“He was the one who encouraged me to start thinking about writing my story for real,” she said. “When I’d tell someone parts of my life story, I would always say in a kidding way, my novel will be coming out soon! I still have doubts about my story as a memoir. Honored and grateful I was considered for the showcase.”

The 10 winning submissions that were selected to be in the fifth annual San Diego Memoir Showcase will be performed before a live audience at the North Coast Repertory Theatre on Oct. 28. This year, there will be two shows: a 4 p.m. afternoon matinee as well as a 7 p.m. evening performance. Tickets available at bit.ly/2zokUPW.

SANDI NIETO (courtesy SFD communications)

IN MEMOIR SHOWCASE

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SANDI NIETO (courtesy SFD communications)

Healthy Foods Satisfy

La Mesa and the surrounding area are fortunate to have so many locally-owned businesses providing our residents with delicious, healthy foods. We are all aware of the importance of eating well to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and these local businesses can help us make that happen.

La Mesa’s Windmill Farms is one of the many local businesses that offers high-quality, healthy products. Their produce is fresh, and they have a variety of options available, including fresh salads, local vegetables, and even baked goods.

Cold-pressed and fresh-pressed juices are also available for purchase, and they are made from the highest-quality ingredients. In addition to their produce, Windmill Farms offers a range of other healthy options, such as hummus, nut butters, and fresh-cut vegetables.

Their commitment to providing fresh, healthy options is what sets them apart from other local businesses. They are passionate about their products and work hard to ensure that they are always of the highest quality.

In conclusion, Windmill Farms is a great choice for anyone who wants to eat healthy and stay on track with their dietary goals. They offer a wide range of healthy options that are sure to satisfy your cravings for fresh, delicious, and nutritious foods.
OBITUARY: SALLY A. DEMCHAK

Sally Ann Demchak peacefully passed away at her home in La Mesa, CA on April 2, 2019. Sally was born on March 14, 1928 in Rochester, New York to parents Samuel and Josephine Lombardo, now deceased. Sally was the oldest of three daughters: Maryann Oliver and Patricia Miner, both deceased. Sally was a long time resident of La Mesa, CA where she resided with her husband, retired US Air Force Major Paul J. Demchak and four children. She is survived by her husband, Paul, and their four children: Barry, Scott, Robyn and Karen Gilbert. She is also survived by her four grandchildren and one great grandson. Sally and Paul enjoyed traveling the world during and after Paul retired from the U.S. Air Force. For many years, Sally was a legal secretary. She also worked with the legal community typing legal briefs, transcripts and books. Sally worked with college students, university students and staff members to produce their graduation theses. Sally and Paul walked the hills of La Mesa, with many of their friends, for an early morning workout. Throughout the years, Sally was no stranger to tournament bowling, golf and many bridge groups. Sally was a Parishioner of St. Martin’s Roman Catholic Church of La Mesa, CA.

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Featured Artist: Nonita Vidal Degen

Nonita Vidal Degen is a local mixed-media artist who loves plein-air painting of the San Diego landscape. She is a self-taught artist whose artistic interest has spanned many years. Through the years she has been a mother, teacher, banker, and a nurse. And, she has always applied art into her life.

After retirement, she fueled her artistic passion by attending art classes in public colleges, art shows, exhibits, and museums. Her family and fellow artists continue to inspire her to go out and paint landscapes in Balboa Park, scenic ocean views, and other beautiful spots in the San Diego area. She feels that painting plein-air is an exhilarating experience through which she can feel closeness with the beauty of God’s creation.

She is a prolific painter who feels joy and fulfillment with eternal blessing through her artistic expressions. She has shown her works in Oregon and California and has achieved merit awards for her artwork. Nonita encourages everyone who has the desire to create to just go there and enjoy painting.

Nonita Vidal Degen’s artwork will be featured at the Foothills Gallery from Oct. 4-Nov. 2. The public is invited to an artist reception at the Foothills Gallery on Oct. 5, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

The Foothills Gallery at Porter Hall, 4910 Memorial Drive, is free and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, call 619-464-7167.

—Linda Michael is the editor of Footnotes, the monthly newsletter of the Foothills Art Association.

Helix does ‘Sound of Music’

By ALEX OWENS

The hills around Helix High School should be alive with the sound of music come Oct. 11.

That’s because the Highland Players are presenting the classic musical “Sound of Music” for seven performances.

It’s the first time in a while that the Helix Drama Department has presented a classic musical, but director Paul Reams is singing the praises of the stage version, which is different than the film version (because it’s hard to set up the Austrian alps on most theater stages).

“Obviously, the film is able to do things like having the Von Trapps sing each line of ‘Do Re Mi’ at a different location,” he laughed. “That’s not at all what this looks like.”

The original stage play isn’t as iconic as the movie, so Reams was happily surprised when he reread it before choosing it for the new season.

“People forget how well written the book is,” Reams said. “There’s a great moment where Max Detwiller and Baroness Elsa Schrader are trying to convince Captain Von Trapp to do the politically expedient choice which is easier at the time. But, ultimately, he decides to run off to the mountains and lose everything in the process.”

The cast is very diverse — definitely more diverse than 1930s-era Austria — and Reams was concerned that might not be totally realistic. Ultimately, he decided to go with the best actors for each part regardless of background.

“It may not be totally realistic, but that’s how most modern versions are doing it these days,” he said.

One role was easier to cast than the others, that of 5-year-old Gretel. Though elementary school students don’t attend Helix, Reams was able to find the perfect actor right in his own house: his own daughter Lucy.

“She’s in the third grade and she comes over after school for the rehearsals. It’s a real joy and she loves the students,” he said. “It’s really beautiful being able to integrate work and family.”

Because the main selling point of “The Sound of Music” are songs like the title tune, “My Favorite Things,” and “Climb Every Mountain,” Reams figures audience members can’t help but join in with the cast member.

“I hope people do hum along, but there is this dark tale about people making hard choices and experiencing a real sense of loss because of it.”

“The Sound of Music” will run Oct. 11-19. Evening performances start at 7, with a 6 p.m. performance on Thursday, Oct. 17. There will be 2 p.m. matinees on Oct. 12 and 19. Tickets are $10 for non-students. $8 for students with ASB cards, available at bit.ly/2kM0lw.

—Alex Owens is a La Mesa-based freelance journalist.
Thursday, Oct. 3

‘Picasso at the Lapin Agile’
Through Oct. 12

Grossmont College Theatre presents a play by Steve Mar tin in 1904 Paris. Albert Einstein, a 25-year-old patent clerk, waits for his date at the Lapin Agile, a Parisian watering hole, when 23-year-old Pablo Picasso drops in to meet a recent conquest. Kept company over the years by 30-year-old Gertrude Stein and other modernist artists, Picasso and Stein become lifelong friends. Tickets: $20-30. Visit bit.ly/2lZT0rB.

La Mesa Oktoberfest
Through Oct. 6

Strap on your lederhosen and get ready to bust out your best chicken dance at the 46th Annual La Mesa Oktoberfest. German food, dress, entertainment and beer are the highlights of this free event — the largest of its kind in the San Diego region. Biergarten passes VIP ticket packages range $5-$45. 10 a.m.-10 p.m. in the La Mesa Village.

East County Intergenerational Games
Adults active age 50 and up are paired with youth ages 7-12 for non-competitive, fun activities including street hockey, soccer, T-ball, horseshoes, jump rope, corn hole and pickle-ball. 9:30 a.m.-noon at La Mesa Arts Academy, 4200 Parks Ave. Pre-registration is required for this free event put on by the city of La Mesa. Sign up at omy-famesa.us/specialevents or call 619-667-1322.

Friday, Oct. 4

First Friday Night Market
This delightful ambiance and fun-filled style can be at the First Friday Night Market at Grossmont Center! Sponsored by Vegan San Diego, this free event gathers the most exceptional vegan vendors all in one spot so that you can savor and sip delectable plant-based food and beverages. 5-10 p.m. at Grossmont Center, 5500 Grossmont Center Drive. Free.

Saturday, Oct. 5

Urban Street Scenes Juried Photography Show
Reception
Join Naisnook Framing + Art for an evening of fabulous local photography, wine, snacks and friendship! 6-8 p.m. at Naisnook, 8130 La Mesa Blvd. Awards will be announced at 7:15 p.m. This free event is open to the public. For more information about entering this show, visit bit.ly/2zmAjTl.

Saturday, Oct. 12

‘On Golden Pond’
Through Nov. 3

Lamplighters Community Theatre presents a play written by Earnest Thompson, made famous by its 1979 film adaptation. The plot focuses on aging couple Ethel and Norman Thayer, who spend each summer at their home on a lake called Golden Pond. During the year the story takes place, they are visited by daughter Chelsea, her fiancé Billy Ray and his son Billy Ray Jr. The play explores the often-turbulent relationship the young woman shared with her father growing up, and the difficulties faced by a couple in the twilight years of a long marriage. Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. at Lamplighters Community Theatre, 5915 Severin Drive. Tickets are $23 general: $20 seniors, students, active military; $18 groups of 10 or more, available at bit.ly/2pvMmFr.

‘Matilda the Musical’
Through Oct. 26

“Matilda the Musical” at Young Actors’ Theatre, a San Die go Youth Musical Theatre premiere! Inspired by the twisted genius of Roald Dahl, the Tony Award-winning “Matilda The Musical” is the captivating masterpiece from the Royal Shake speare Company that revels in the anarchism of childhood, the power of imagination and the inspiring story of a girl who dreams of a better life. Fridays and Thursdays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. at ENCORE! Theatre, 9520 Cam po Road, Spring Valley, $13 tickets available at bit.ly/2YihmOj.

La Mesa Walks!
Thursdays

Enjoy a fun walk with friends and neighbors. First and third Tuesdays, meet at various locations, second and fourth Tuesdays meet at 9 a.m. at La Mesa Library, 8074 Allison Ave. Call 619-667-1300 for more information.

Sunday, Oct. 13

A Fair Trade Event
St. Martin of Tours invites the public to “Shopping That Makes A Difference” at its Fair Trade Event 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours Parish Hall, 7710 El Cajon Blvd. Shop for fair-trade gifts, home décor, clothing and jewelry from a variety of vendors. Enjoy fair-trade coffee, tea, ice cream and chocolate. Fair wages create brighter futures for families in developing countries. Call 619-466-3241 for more information.

Thursday, Oct. 10

‘The Sound of Music’
Through Oct. 19

The Highl nder Players, Helix Charter High School’s Drama Department, presents the classic musical. “The Sound of Music.” Oct. 11 at the Helix MemStage Theater, 4220 Lowell St. Evening performances start at 7, with a 6 p.m. performance on Thursday, Oct. 17. There will be 2 p.m. matinees on Oct. 12 and 19. Tickets are $10 for non-students, $8 for students with ASB cards, available at bit.ly/2xMMkOl.
CLIMATE STRIKE 2019
In September, youth all over the world participated in a climate strike – an idea generated at a global youth summit in 2015. The premise of the event is to bring together thousands, or even millions, into an empowering global network while acting locally to stop climate change. Students in Helix’s Environmental Club took this opportunity to spread awareness around campus. Leaders of the club — Damiak Zikas, Metisha Myerson, Natalie Phan, Lucy Ellison, and Ansea Ricks — worked with Helix administration to organize a march and forum to reach out to their peers. Time was set aside during lunch break for students who wished to participate. Zikas gave this account of the event: “During the Global Climate Strike March, we provided snacks, stickers, handmade signs courtesy of our club members, and music to bring people together for a common purpose: to decrease the use of fossil fuels, promote the Green New Deal, and bolster wider awareness overall. The Environmental Club board members talked for about a minute and a half about the impact and solutions for climate change. We then all marched from the inside of school to the front, then wrapped around back to the Science Quad. We wrapped up the march by thanking everyone and having them write on poster paper ideas for sustainable swaps and ideas for stopping climate change.”

UPCOMING EVENTS
• Helix Orchestra with the La Mesa Arts Academy Orchestra present “Coffee and Classics” on Thursday, Oct. 3, at 7 p.m. in the Helix Mainstage Theater. Tickets are $10 for adults, $5 for children, and are available at helixsudopuzzle.com.
• Homecoming Game – Helix vs. El Capitan, Friday, Oct. 4, with a 7 p.m. kickoff. Tickets are $7 for adults, $3 for elementary and middle school students, $5 for seniors (55+), and free for Helix students with an ASB card.
• The Highland Players production of “The Sound of Music” – Oct. 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19 in the Helix Mainstage Theater. Showtimes are: 6 p.m. on Thursday, 7 p.m. on Fridays, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturdays. Tickets are available at highlandplayers.ticketleap.com.
• Helix Alumni Committee All-Class Picnic – Sunday, Oct. 13, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Helix. For more information, visit helixalumni.wixsite.com.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION TOURS
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 October are Oct. 3 at 5:30 p.m., and Oct. 18 at 8:10 a.m. Reserve your spot using our website, helixsudokupuzzle.com.

—Jennifer Osborn writes on behalf of Helix Charter High School