A group practices yoga on the beach as the sun sets.

PHOTO BY THOMAS MELVILLE

UP IN ARMS coronavirus exposes disunity in San Diego yoga community

SEE PAGE 12
Local businesses overcome challenges to operate outdoors

By DAVE SCHWAB

Some businesses that closed again due to a spike in coronavirus cases now have a choice to remain operational: moving outside. Fortunately, that choice is being made easier by recent City action.

In response to the growing crisis, Mayor Kevin Faulconer has signed a new executive order extending the growing list of allowed outdoor options to hundreds of additional businesses. That list now includes gyms, worship centers, barbershops and nail salons, which are being allowed to expand their operations into private parking lots.

Local business improvement districts, La Jolla Village Merchants Association and Discover PB expressed fatigue—and gratitude—regarding this second wave of business closures. They also praised local government efforts to prep-up small businesses.

“This has been such a challenging time for all of us and especially hard for small business,” said Village Merchants Association executive director Jodi Rudick. “So, it’s exciting to see all of the creative outdoor dining options emerging in the Village. La Jolla is taking on a European feel as courtyards, patios, sidewalks, parking lots and, even parking spaces come alive with al fresco dining. I’m looking forward to many more cafes to pop up as we move through the modifications.”

“The recent re-closure was a major hit as many businesses had just invested in reopening within a week of being re-closed, not just in social distancing infrastructure but the processes of hiring back staff and employees coming off unemployment, who now have to re-navigate the system,” said Discover PB’s executive director Sara Berns.

Noting the new prohibition barring some indoor operations follows on the heels of many PPP grants expiring, Berns added, “We fully support the efforts of our public health officials and the work they are doing and hope people will help by complying with social distance and mask mandates so that our businesses can get open again.”

The degree to which local small businesses have been impacted by re-closing indoor activity due to COVID-19 has depended a lot on their nature and whether they do—or can—take their operations outside.

“We’ve been adjusting and dealing with it,” said Henish Pulickal of Pacific Beach, who is in the real estate and residential construction trades. “The first couple of months were a big adjustment, now it seems that it’s becoming a new normal.

“Our family understands that attitude is everything, so we’ve got smiles under our annoying face masks. Business wise, real estate and construction has been very busy. People are still buying homes and many that aren’t buying/selling are doing construction.”

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Village Merchants Association endorses more outdoor seating, curbside pickup

By DAVE SCHWAB

L a Jolla Village Merchants Association in July discussed numerous alternatives for freeing up outdoor space now that indoor dining has been temporarily banned again, including painting curbs to shorten parking limits and setting up outdoor cafes and parklets.

“COVID has changed our business model quite a bit,” said LJVMA executive director Jodi Rudick. She added merchants want to free up more outdoor space for customer pick-up. “They’ve been asking us if we might be willing to approve or support green curbs changing 90-minute parking to 15- or 30-minutes.”

Rudick cited Mike Eastwood, owner of Smallgoods Cheese Shop & Cafe, at 7524 La Jolla Blvd., as one example. “He wants his customers, along with other restaurants on the same street, to be able to run in and pick up what they need without having to search for parking,” she said.

Eastwood characterized the existing 90-minute parking limit in front of his street as “devastating for our business and the salons around us. We have happily agreed to seek a 15-minute parking zone with support from LJVMA.”

Eastwood recently put a petition out for nearby merchants to sign. “We’ve received the unanimous support of every business on our street, 12 pages of customers and neighbors, who also support this idea as well as that of curbside pick-up,” he said.

Added Eastwood, “COVID has made people extremely sensitive about getting out of their cars to access our shops, and don’t want to double park. I’m asking for the community’s support for new short-term parking on La Jolla Boulevard.”

“I support converting parking space to 15 minutes directly in front of their stores,” said LJVMA president Brett Murphy.

District 1 staffer Steve Hadley pointed out implementing desired parking-limit changes has hit an early roadblock. “The Council office has asked for temporary curb-pick up zones, but that request was denied,” he said. “We will continue to push for temporary, pick-up parking during COVID.”

Rudick cautioned that temporary curb-pick up should be sought on a case-by-case basis, because it would be virtually impossible for every merchant to get 15-minute parking in front of their store.

“We’re going down the right path,” she concluded.

Regarding temporary business permits for operating outdoors, Rudick referred directly in front of their stores,” she said. “That would give those who need it extra space to accommodate customers, and the ability to do that.”

Rudick noted the Business Improvement District Alliance, which LJVMA belongs to, is continuing to push for relaxing of standards to allow outdoor dining and curbside pick-up. “Our hope is that all our restaurants will stay afloat through this indoor dining ban.” she said.

“It’s a very big deal that really clears the way for people to take matters into their own hands, while following all the rules, including ADA guidelines,” Rudick said while cautioning, “More sidewalk cafes will not be allowed without permits.”

Rudick said the City is also considering businesses to use parklets, sidewalk extensions providing more space and amenities for people using the street, usually installed on parking lanes. “This would allow businesses, not just restaurants, to encroach into parking spaces that are adjacent to their storefront.”

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A project for redeveloping a lot with a companion unit at 3535 Promontory St. in Crown Point fared no better in July than it did in January, as Pacific Beach Planning Group once again turned thumbs down on the redo plan by a lopsided margin.

Project developer Igor Prokopenko owns the parcel he wants to redevelop, which has been a rental property. He argued before PB planners on July 8 that plans for remodeling the Promontory dwelling and its accessory dwelling unit had been “softened” by redesigning it to mute its modernistic design.

“It was a little too austere for the area, so we added some galeries and made it look a little more traditional than the older design,” said Prokopenko. “We pushed all the living space toward the interior of the lot.”

But PB planners remained unconvinced, moving at the end of testimony by neighbors opposed to the project to recommend its denial on grounds the project was out of character with the neighborhood. Planners also found that the second dwelling proposed on the parcel didn’t qualify as an accessory unit.

The project was yet another example of community push-back by some local planners and residents of an ongoing effort by the City to make it easier—and less expensive—to create companion units. Otherwise known as granny flats, such dwellings are increasingly coming under fire during a neighborhood planning review.

The City has justified relaxing restrictions on building ADUs, insisting it is a necessary and logical step to alleviate the affordable housing crunch which has caused a precipitous rise in rents. Some residents and community planners, however, have claimed relaxing standards to encourage ADUs is a veiled attempt to increase unwanted density in single-family neighborhoods threatening their quality of life and community character.

Following the plan group meeting, neighbors John and Joyce Lilya, who oppose the project, said they “were pleased the planning group saw the neighborhood’s point of view and did not want multiple houses in an R-1 (single-unit) residential zone.”

The Lilyas pointed out that when the original Palmer tract housing was built in Crown Point, that the city had deemed this Promontory lot to be too small for two houses.

“Now these developers want to split the lot and build two unaffiliated houses, disguising the smaller one as an ADU unit in order to exploit the ADU rule book and our R-1 zoning,” the couple said.

Asked what they preferred on the site, the Lilyas said, “Neighbors want one single-family home built, not two houses.”

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Councilmember Campbell’s short-term rentals proposal stirs up emotions

By DAVE SCHWAB

District 2 Councilmember Dr. Jennifer Campbell’s compromise proposal on short-term rentals has stirred strong emotions, being condemned outright by at least one civic group, while other stakeholders have adopted a more conciliatory tone.

Campbell worked with representatives recently from Unite Here Local 30 and Expedia Group, the parent company for leading short-term rental brands Vrbo and HomeAway, to craft a compromise on short-term rentals. The parties agreed to a set of comprehensive rules to regulate San Diego’s short-term rentals industry.

As outlined in a memorandum of understanding, Campbell’s proposal would reduce the volume of whole-home short-term rentals, while creating legal inventory for short-term rentals platforms and local operators that comply with the new rules.

In a letter to San Diego Community News Group published online July 7, Pacific Beach Town Council decried Campbell’s proposal for “not consulting community town councils, planning groups, and residents.” Pacific Beach Town Council’s letter claims Campbell’s approach would “legalize short-term rentals in our neighborhoods,” while arguing that short-term rentals are “illegal under the city’s zoning code and have no place in residential zones.”

“San Diegans deserve short-term rentals regulations that protect our neighborhoods, preserve valuable housing and will stand the test of time,” said Campbell, whose district includes the Point Loma, Pacific Beach and Mission Beach, in a released statement. “I promised my constituents I would work for them to tackle the tough issues, and that is exactly what happened here. I appreciate the willingness of Unite Here and Expedia Group to work with me in the spirit of collaboration. I look forward to discussing their proposal with my colleagues when this issue comes back to council,” said Campbell.

“After several failed attempts to address the issue, it is clear that a compromise is what we have needed and a compromise is what Campbell is proposing,” said community activist and planner Scott Chipman of Pacific Beach. “After hundreds of hours of public testimony, everything that could be said has been said about what is good or bad about short-term rentals.”

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District 2 Councilmember Dr. Jennifer Campbell’s compromise short-term rentals memorandum would:

- Establish four tiers of STRs in the City of San Diego, ranging from home-sharing to whole-home rentals.
- Cap whole-home STRs at 0.7 percent of the City’s housing stock (based on SANDAG’s annual Demographic and Socioeconomic Housing estimates), which would equate to 3,750 permits today – reducing whole-home STRs by 70 percent or more based on the City Auditor’s estimation that 16,000 STRs exist today.
- Establish two-night minimum stays for most whole-home rentals.
- Allow residents a maximum of one permit, per person.
- Adopt the Mission Beach Town Council’s recommendation to permit up to 30% of the housing units in the community to be used as whole-home STRs (1,086), which will be in addition to the city-wide cap.
- Allow all residents to home-share.
- Allow part-time STR operators to obtain a permit at lower annual fees to accommodate high visitor events such as Comic-Con, Pride or December Nights.
- Create a detailed Good Neighbor Policy with strict enforcement guidelines, a fine structure for violations, and a permit revocation standard for repeated violations.

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Conspiracy Theories
At Pilgrimage of the Heart, a North Park and Normal Heights-based studio with a zero-tolerance policy for racism and violence, Fortier and current colleagues reached out to her for advice on her controversial theories and were given YouTube videos to watch, QAnon. People who argued with her were told they did not have an open mind.

Fortier did not respond to a request for comment on this story. Fortier is not only yoga teacher who is a part of the anti-vaxxer movement.

“We’re starting to divide ourselves—the people who are more research-based and have knowledge versus those people who think, ‘Hey, you know what? The earth is flat. It’ll be okay,’” said Sydney Cohen, an instructor at Pilgrimage. “In our community, a lot of us have gotten into fight about how dangerous [that is] and we don’t want people to think that this light within you can conquer a virus,” Cohen said.

Despite Cohen’s concerns, Cohen said that many do not know what to do in response. Around the same time Pilgrimage of the Heart was in support of Black Lives Matter, Fortier’s posts became more extreme with alleged Holocaust denials and骂骂咧咧的内容 on Instagram and Facebook accounts. She posted about George Soros, the truth about Hitler, ‘mental slavery,’ and Aunt Jemima.

Fortier was not included in the recent class schedule and is no longer listed as an instructor on the Pilgrimage website. People who contacted the management group of the studio said that Fortier’s behavior were ignored. They wondered if she had been quietly let go and that the studio simply hadn’t updated its records.

Without a public statement, a former student of Fortier’s, Joanie Baumgardner, individually contacted people she previously recommended join Fortier’s classes to avoid the teacher because “their colors were coming out.”

“I have to do that work, I think Pilgrimage should have to do that work too,” Baumgardner said.

Sujantra McKeever, who owns the studio, explained that Fortier is currently not employed with them and that she has not heard of a formalized plan of yoga not included in their smaller class schedule.

Yoga teacher Nikole Fortier’s post of ‘Adolf Hitler: The Greatest Story Never Told,’ a debunked movie of revisionist history, which is often cited by Holocaust deniers and White supremacists. CONTAINED GRAPHIC

He said he contacted a lawyer and an HR professional about Fortier’s posts who confirmed he cannot fire someone for protect- ed speech. He told me he can only have a code of conduct barring prejudice and harassment inside the workplace. He said he chose not to act because Fortier does not post when contacted or on social media because it would lead to a paper trail potentially opening him up for a lawsuit.

“I can’t fire someone for what they say outside of work. I would not do that because I legally can’t,” McKeever said. “In terms of pub- lic statement, I don’t want to get into a war of words with people. We’ve made our statement about Black Lives Matter. We’ve had a business plan for the last two years. I think we’re waiting for someone to speak up.”

One of the only ways to fire someone for social media posts under California law, McKeever said, is someone says they are speaking on behalf of their employer. Fortier uses her authority as a guru to try and turn others to her beliefs before transitioning to the New Age yoga world as a representative of Pilgrimage in posts shared with San Diego Community Newspaper Group.

“We had a very clear statement from the spiritual leader and then she just fails to take any responsibility,” former Pilgrimage student Jill Bean said.

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnnews.com
Del Mar Race Track holds virtual hat contest

The Del Mar Race Track opened this year on July 10 with attendees watching it remotely. This year was the 26th annual Opening Day Hats Contest, which was their first virtual hat contest. Contestants throughout the U.S. entered, including Nashville, Iowa, and Palm Springs keeping the tradition alive. They were all vying for a chance to win two VIP tickets to the 2021 Breeders’ Cup World Championships at Del Mar.

Sporting their best ensemble with a fabulous hat, the entrants were asked to post a photo of themselves on Instagram or Twitter with the hashtags #DelMarHatsContest and tag @DelMarRacing to win on Opening Day. There were over $2,700 in prizes plus a $500 gift certificate for merchandise from Christine A. Moore Millinery and Studio Savvy Salon.

On Saturday, July 11, the Grand Prize winner was Rebecca Templeton of Mitchellville, Iowa. I asked this horse racing lover how she coordinated her ensemble and she said, “I am a firm believer that the dress comes first.” However, for this particular outfit, she had won the hat at the virtual Kentucky Derby fashion contest for the homemade quarantine outfit. Deciding to go with this beautiful large hat from Christine A. Moore Millinery, she began looking for a coral dress to match and found this one on ASOS. Templeton said: “My husband and I will definitely be attending the Breeders’ Cup next year. We love attending the Breeders’ Cup and have been to eight of the last 10.”

Hayley Danielle Fulton of Torrance came in a close second all decked out with a fuchsia and white fascinator designed by Illana Kogan. Fulton was photographed with her black retriever, Midnight, who was wearing a fuchsia harness and wore matching fuchsia feathers.

Jessica Lewis of Campbell was the third-place winner. She sported a stunning white and blue fascinator by designer Amy Pate. This electrical engineer submitted a beautiful photo with her husband and son.

Katherine Kapavik of Vista took the fourth-place award with a cobalt blue wide brim hat and matching dress. She posted her picture with her Great Dane who was also wearing a large hat.

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- Ground floor features living room w/ gas fireplace & patio, powder room, storage, & eat-in kitchen w/ breakfast bar.
- Upstairs are 2 bedrooms separated by a full bathroom. Property enjoys 3 off-street parking spaces off alley, 2-3 more in the front driveway, & separate laundry room.
Recognizing all of the different tribes we belong to encourages diversity

By Natasha Josefowitz, Ph.D.

The newspapers have been discussing the new tribalism as evident in our contentious politics. We are increasingly nationalistic in our ways and more opposed to others’ points of view. We embrace the attitude: Only I am right, and the rest of you are wrong. Only my tribe—political party, religious group—is right. Political and religious tribes are the ones most likely to promote conflict. Non-members of the tribe are disrespected and all conflict. Non-members of the tribe are disrespected and all conflict. Non-members of the tribe are disrespected and all conflict. Non-members of the tribe are disrespected and all conflict. Non-members of the tribe are disrespected and all conflict.

When I was a young mother, I belonged to a tribe of other mothers with young children, and now I belong to a new tribe of great-grandmothers with whom I share photos of my four great-grandsons. I belong to a tribe of widows, a tribe of former skiers and horseback riders, and, of course, I am a member of a tribe of all the people living in my retirement community.

What does all this mean? It means I am at ease interacting with people who share a part of who I am or was. There is familiarity, which is comforting. I am not alone writing poetry; I can share some of the woes and joys with another person who writes verse, too. I am happy when I meet someone who went to my alma mater, Scripps College, or who received their advanced degree at the age of 50.

All these commonalities feel good, whether you are part of a tribe of churchgoers, bridge players, or singers. There is recognition that “we are not alone and the desire to belong to a group is part of our DNA. Even meeting someone who mentions that a favorite book growing up was the same as mine gives me a surge of pleasure at the connection.

All the tribes I have described so far are affiliations due to some recognizable commonalities, through interests, geography, language, nationality, gender, education, work, history, etc. These are tribes we connect with spontaneously. While there are many personal benefits to this sense of inclusion we feel when we identify our groups, there are also negative repercussions to others and our society when we work to maintain these boundaries between groups. Being exclusionary can wreak havoc on the opportunities available to people outside our tribes, support the continuation of inequities and injustices, and, at worst, cause us to dehumanize others. The acknowledgment of tribalism can help us identify where it becomes dysfunctional and where integrating members of different tribes is the road to survival in a democracy.

Take a few minutes and identify some of the tribes you belong to. Make a point of recognizing the pleasure of knowing each other, sharing mutual interests, lifestyles, loves, and the joys of belonging. It is also vital to reach out to other tribes to preserve our shared humanity, to recognize that ultimately all people are part of the tribe of humans.

The Chinese restaurant was founded by Law’s late father in 1977. He said the remodeled space will retain its 70’s look while incorporating upgrades such as reaccredited booths, a new roof and flooring and an extended bar. Law added the menu will continue to feature popular dishes like kung pao chicken, as well as new offerings. Also remaining will be Mandarin House’s ram-based tropical drinks served in Tiki mugs.
JUST LISTED!

3443 OCEAN FRONT WALK UNIT L.
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SOLD for $420,000!

The market is hot right now! If you are even remotely thinking of selling, give us a call today for a free consultation on the value of your home!

PB Fun Fact:
Mission Bay High School was built in 1953 but the first graduating class was 1955. Prior to it being built, most kids in PB attended La Jolla High (like my maternal grandmother).