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NEWS BRIEFS

COUNTY COMMUNITY

CHOICE ENERGY PLAN GETS GREEN LIGHT

The Board of Supervisors, moving to end SDG&E’s decades-long monopoly over electricity rates, voted Tuesday to establish a community choice energy program in the county’s unincorporated area.

County leaders said the initiative will bolster the use of renewable energy and cited a recent study estimating it would save 179,000 residential and business ratepayers $12 million a year.

“This is a huge victory for consumers who are sick and tired of getting ripped off by SDG&E and are hungry for an alternative,” said Supervisor Dianne Jacob, board chairwoman. “Ratepayers will finally have the freedom to choose where they get their energy.”

The county is looking at a 2022 launch date and is talking with officials in Carlsbad, Del Mar, Solana Beach, Santee and other local governments about a possible joint choice initiative.

The program includes a key environmental goal. By 2030, at least 90% of the energy provided is expected to come from solar and other sources of renewable power.

A recent study done by a consultant for the county predicted that utility rates for those tapping into the program would be at least 2% lower than what SDG&E is expected to charge.

The county is looking at a 2022 launch date and is talking with officials in Carlsbad, Del Mar, Solana Beach, Santee and other local governments about a possible joint choice initiative.

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A recent study done by a consultant for the county predicted that utility rates for those tapping into the program would be at least 2% lower than what SDG&E is expected to charge.

The study estimates the program will save ratepayers $12 million annually during the first decade of operation.

The county’s unincorporated area covers more than 3,500 square miles and includes Spring Valley, Alpine, Borrego Springs, Fallbrook, Campo, Spring Valley, Alpine, Borrego Springs, Fallbrook, Campo,

La Mesa adopts new 5G cell policy

Wireless facilities for 5G networks are coming — and according to federal and state laws, there is little that local governments can do about it. However, at its Oct. 22 meeting, La Mesa City Council voted to adopt a policy that regulates new small cell towers that will power 5G networks based on current law.

By KRYSTLE CLEMETSON | La Mesa Courier

At the Caverns, teams generally consist of four to 10 players (and they are not suitable for children under the ages of 14), working together for about 90 minutes to solve solutions to different puzzles. Nightwalker Caverns is owned by Shane Watton, and his daughter, Tiffany, and is located just across the La Mesa border at 6760 University Ave., in San Diego.

Shane Watton became inspired to create an escape room about five years ago. He was originally working at Nightwalker Caverns Haunted House, which humorously joked fun at television shows and movies.

Due to positive audience feedback, Shane hoped that there was a way to make the house a year-round attraction.

“In late 2015, we started visiting some escape rooms, and began

Susan Brinchman commented on the city’s proposed 5G policy by video, arguing cell towers pose a health risk to residents. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

SEE NIGHTWALKER, Page 8

Fright night fun

The “Clownatorium – 2 Upside Down” escape room at Nightwalker Caverns (Courtesy Nightwalker Caverns)

Nightwalker Caverns offers no shortage of surprises

By DAVID BROWN | La Mesa Courier

Over the past few years, escape rooms have been a growing fad both domestically and internationally. The venues consist of one or more interactive themed rooms, where players are timed and have to solve various puzzles, in order to escape from the room.

An escape room that strives to be different from the rest in San Diego is Nightwalker Caverns.

The study estimates the program will save ratepayers $12 million annually during the first decade of operation.

The county’s unincorporated area covers more than 3,500 square miles and includes Spring Valley, Alpine, Borrego Springs, Fallbrook, Campo, Spring Valley, Alpine, Borrego Springs, Fallbrook, Campo,
The La Mesa Historical Society

Historical Society presents ‘Stone Age to Space Age’ home tour

By JAMES NEWLAND

The La Mesa Historical Society Historic Home Tour enters its 14th year — having earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the most popular and satisfying home tours in the county. This year, we return to the amazing rural suburban landscape of Grossmont/Mt. Helix featuring an amazing mixture of rustic, classic and modern designs emblematic of this exclusive community. The society’s last tour here in 2016 sold out. This year promises to be another outstanding event highlighting these wonderful neighborhoods and their distinctive homes.

ECLECTIC ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE REVEALED

The Grossmont/Mt. Helix communities present a unique opportunity for realizing San Diego’s distinctive suburban residential dreams. From Grossmont’s early 20th-century hopes for creating a rustic bohemian artist colony of Arts and Crafts-influenced organic residences through the popular classic “revival” styles homes of the inter-war years of “gentlemen’s ranches” surround-ed by avocado orchards or the post-war midcentury modern visions of “nuclear family” nirvana — this year’s tour provides a glimpse into this local architectural heritage.

For all of these 20th-century Grossmont/Mt. Helix homemakers and builders, the rocky, hillside view lots provided a natural canvas for California's legendary indoor-outdoor lifestyle. Tapping into that intersection of organic architecture and Arts and Crafts aesthetic made logical sense in fulfilling the rural suburban dreams of these varied periods of community development.

Individual lots and creative and forward-thinking residents and designers found the semi-rural landscape perfect for these eclectic versions of suburban bliss. Visionary designers and builders of San Diego found design palates, and willing clients, here in Grossmont/Mt. Helix.

STEPPING BACK INTO THE RURAL SUBURBAN LANDSCAPE

The society has arranged for tour guests to experience seven pristine and high-quality examples of Grossmont/Mt. Helix’s residential homes and landscapes. The tour features a range of homes from a 1928 vernacular stone masonry home; a pristine 1913 Spanish Colonial Revival landmark; a compatibility updated and expanded 1914 California Spanish ranch house; a modern organic gem designed and built by local artist John Dirks in 1948; two outstanding examples of east county midcentury designer/builder John Mortenson’s custom masterpieces; and a 1968 modern gem designed by local architect Barton J. Kaufman. These homes, although well-preserved examples of these distinctive periods and styles, are illustrative of how such well-designed and constructed houses continue to serve as family homes — and not just architectural artifacts. Although tastefully and compatibly updated and landscaped, they continue to provide the current owners, several with young children, the same functions and assets that the original owners experienced for these many generations.

TOUR PARTNERSHIPS

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Note: Continuously running shuttles are included with admission and will provide access to the seven homes. Due to narrow streets and minimal parking at the homes, no personal vehicles can be allowed on the tour. The home tour is not ADA accessible and guests will be required to walk up and down lengthy driveways to access several homes.

—James Newland is president of the La Mesa Historical Society.
City sues opioid manufacturers

Acting through the special legal counsel of Robins Kaplan LLP, the city of La Mesa is suing multiple companies and parties in the opioid industry, including

-

Pharmaceutical Industries USA Inc.,
- Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc.,
- Endo Pharmaceuticals Inc.,
- Allergan Finance LLC, and
- Mallinckrodt LLC. Opioid distribution was also named in the lawsuit, including Cardinal Health Inc., Amerisource Bergen Corporation, and McKesson Corporation. The city is seeking reparations for loss of resources, economic damages, and damages to the city’s welfare of the citizens related to the ongoing opioid crisis. Similar to other jurisdictions in California and around the country, the La Mesa City Council has directed the city attorney to file a lawsuit in the Superior Court of the State of California against numerous opioid manufacturers and distributors.

“This lawsuit is necessary to end opioid addiction in our community and its adverse impacts,” said Mayor Mark Arapostathis. “We cannot allow the ongoing crisis to continue. Our citizens are suffering, and we must do our part to address this public health crisis.”

The lawsuit alleges that manufacturers and distributors of opioids engaged in conduct that directly caused doctors to prescribe overwhelming amounts of opioids and intentionally neglected their obligations to prevent the irresponsible distribution of the highly addictive substance. Specifically, the lawsuit includes allegations of public nuisance, fraud, neglect, unjust enrichment, civil conspiracy, false advertising, negligent failure to warn consumers, and fraudulent transfer.

The term “opioid” includes all drugs derived from the opium poppy. The United States Food and Drug Administration describes opioids as “powerful pain-reducing medications that includes prescription oxycodone, hydrocodone, and morphine, among others, and have both benefits as well as potentially serious risks. These medications can help manage pain when prescribed for the right condition and when used properly, but when misused or abused, opioids can cause serious harm, including addiction, overdose, and death.”

“This lawsuit will seek to recover costs and tax resources taken from the city and its citizens due to the bad acts of the manufacturers and distributors of opioids who caused this ongoing crisis,” said lead outside counsel Roman Silberfeld of Robins Kaplan.

The initiative is an affiliate of the World Health Organization’s Global Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, an international effort launched in 2006 to help cities prepare for their own and the world’s growing population of older adults. Currently the global network includes over 41 countries and 847 cities, including nearly 400 in the U.S. alone.

Livable La Mesa planning team members worked with the community for the past 12 months to create goals and objectives that will improve the health and well-being of La Mesa residents of all ages. After engaging with residents in online surveys and community conversations, the baseline assessment pointed to six key domains of livability most relevant to La Mesa.

- The domains include outdoor spaces and buildings; social and civic participation; housing; transportation; community information; and health and wellness. These domains will become the framework for programs and policies enacted across La Mesa in future years.

“The San Diego Foundation is proud to support the city of La Mesa and other municipalities working to create a more age-friendly region,” said Peggy Pico, manager of the Age-Friendly Communities Program at The San Diego Foundation. “We want to create a region where adults can stay connected to their communities and remain independent and meaningfully engaged throughout their later years.”

The Livable La Mesa Action Plan was developed with significant resident participation; participation from all city departments; input from the Community Relations and Veterans Commission and Community Services Commission; and ongoing assistance from partners at The San Diego Foundation, County of San Diego HHSA, Circulate San Diego, San Diego State University’s Social Policy Institute and AARP.
It’s been tough being a vegan in East County. Plant-based eateries are scarce, and mainstream restaurants and retailers still cater largely to carnivores.

But things are looking brighter with the recent arrival of the First Friday Night Market, a vegan festival that operated in fits and starts within a small North Park parking lot until moving to a spacious section of Grossmont Center’s vast parking lot.

The event runs from 5 to 10 p.m., the first Friday of every month. It’s located between Fuddruckers and Chuze Fitness.

La Mesa resident Marcia Quinn couldn’t be happier. “I didn’t go too much when the market was in San Diego because of Friday traffic. But now I can drive only 30 minutes for foods I love, like vegan sushi and some really good sweets,” she said while approaching the tent for Maya’s Cookies.

The cookie vendor uses its confections dry potato starch instead of eggs as a binder, and Earth Balance vegan butter for richness. A few slots away, Eric Glover of Kelly’s Creations engaged attendees with crouton samples sporting cashew-based Parmesan dustings.

Headquartered in Orange County, he takes his products to more than 40 vegan fests around the world every year. Wafting down the entire row of merchants were the aromas of meats to roasted ta- males, potato dumpings and bulgogi nachos. To the average meat eater, the sights and smells seem like any you’d find at mainstream festivals.

First Friday Night Market originally kicked off in the summer of 2018 through a partnership between the nonprofit organization Vegan in San Diego and the former Anthem Vegan Restaurant. It was from Anthem’s parking lot in North Park where the event began capturing the support of both herbivores and omnivores from all over San Diego County.

“We started out with only five vendors in North Park and now have almost 20, six of them non-foo vendors,” said Carly Morales, founder of Vegan in San Diego and director of the monthly market.

After Anthem shuttered, the market was held a few times in another San Diego location, at Fairly 44 in City Heights. It then briefly moved back to its original spot when new owners took over Anthem. But that arrangement soon dissolved.

“We were looking for a new host when Grossmont Center contacted us asking if we’d like to hold it there. So we did some online surveys to see if people would come out to East County, and we got really good feedback,” Morales said.

The move paid off. Attendance has tripled since the market migrated to La Mesa in September, according to Morales. A beer garden hosted by the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce was added in October. And for the Nov. 1 market, Morales expects to see at least 10 additional vendors taking part.

For now, the partnership between Grossmont Center and Vegan in San Diego is in a tri- al three-month contract. But Morales is certain it will continue beyond that.

“This is the first time a vegan market has come to La Mesa,” noted Mary England, president of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce, which is no stranger to hosting beer gardens. “We did six years of the big beer garden at La Mesa’s Oktoberfest, from 2008 to 2014,” added England, who was selling a variety of cold, canned beers from Mike Hess Brewing.

Outside the fenced-in beer area, Christa Maier sat eating at a table with her husband and young son. They were enjoying sambusas, collard greens, eggplant and lentils from the vendor, Flavors of Africa.

Residents of El Cajon, the trio used to drive to the market when it was in North Park.

“This is so much closer and has tons of parking,” said Maier. “There’s not many places in East County to get good vegan food. This has a nice variety all in one place.”

The monthly event is free and features live music. For more information, visit veganinsandiego.com or lamesachamber.com.

—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 staff- er for the former San Diego Tribune. You can reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.

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For a limited time, readers of this paper will receive a special discount on our full chimney cleaning and safety inspection package with special attention to chimney water intrusion points in preparation for the rainy season.
Overcoming male breast cancer

By ANDY VELEZ | La Mesa Courier

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and throughout it, various health care providers around the world advocate their services and the importance of following up with your doctor each year. For the most part, the advocacy for October is focused on women getting a mammogram, but women are not the only ones affected by breast cancer as it was in the case of La Mesa resident David Smyle.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women, regardless of ethnic background. It is reported that 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer throughout their life, but for men, 1 in 1,000 are said to be affected by breast cancer throughout their life.

After noticing an awkward lump and an inversion of his left nipple, Smyle decided to seek medical attention and it was in July of 2015 when he was diagnosed with breast cancer. Afterward, Smyle underwent a double mastectomy, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and has taken tamoxifen (a drug used to help prevent and reduce the risk of breast cancer) for five years.

“I was not shocked or surprised, was not upset or in panic mode. My overall health was good and I assumed I would beat it. No one said I had six months to live,” Smyle said, “I was initially stage 2 and ended up stage 3 — much better than stage 4. My attitude was, ‘What do we need to do to fix it?’”

ABOUT BREAST CANCER

The female breast is composed of three different parts: Lobules, ducts, and connective tissue. Lobules are glands where breast milk is produced, ducts help carry milk to the nipple, and connective tissue is what holds the breast together. The male breast has the same components as the female one, the only difference is that males do not produce as many lobules or ducts in their breast. For men and women, important signs and symptoms to look out for are rash, a lump or lumps around the breast region, inversion of the nipple, or even a discharge from the nipple. One specific to women is a change to the size of their breasts.

Breast cancer can arise from different parts of the breast, but the two most commonly reported are ducts or lobules breast cancer. This occurs when carcinomas (cancer cells) begin to replicate out of control, which further leads to the development of cancer. Cancer affects people emotionally, physically, and economically. Preparing to battle cancer is not something people do, but with proper guidance and treatment, one can overcome and recuperate much faster.

Breast cancer is determined through a screening process, and a goal of October’s month-long awareness campaign is to remind women and men, especially women over 40, to get screened for breast cancer. When breast cancer is not diagnosed on time, cancer cells grow out of control and can metastasize (travel) to other parts of the body. What once started as breast cancer can later result in a different type of cancer, all for not diagnosing it on time.

EDUCATION, DETECTION AND BEATING CANCER

Education is key to not only detecting but preventing diseases much faster.

“My overall health was good and I assumed I would beat it. No one said I had six months to live,” Smyle said, “I was initially stage 2 and ended up stage 3 — much better than stage 4. My attitude was, ‘What do we need to do to fix it?’”

“Breathing cancer is 50% attitude. It can be scary and some cancers are worse than others but you must go into treatment with a positive attitude for both yourself and loved ones around you,” Smyle said. “The more positive you are, the easier it will be for you and family members and others to not worry.”

October may be the month for breast cancer awareness, but health awareness in general is year-round. It is important to educate, identify, and prevent diseases.

—Andy Velez is a San Diego-based freelance reporter.
Taking military funds for border wall hurts military families and national security

By REP. SUSAN DAVIS

San Diego has long been considered a military town. We understand how important it is to take care of our military families and their economic impact. We also understand the importance of national defense spending in supporting our service members and the economic impact it has on our region.

Our strong military presence is part of the reason I chose to serve on the House Armed Services Committee. Ensuring that our men and women in uniform and families have the resources and support they need has always been a priority. The Trump administration’s effort to take money from our military to build his border wall puts that support in jeopardy. Nearly $3 billion in military construction projects are targeted to lose funding. The administration’s crash budget with our troops, national security, and violate the Constitution, which expressly gives Congress the power to determine how tax dollars are spent.

Military construction projects certainly may not get as much attention as other parts of the defense budget, but they are a critical component of our national security.

Our service members would simply not be able to do their jobs without the infrastructure of bases, hangars, operation facilities, training centers, water supplies, and housing. Each year, Congress allocates billions of tax dollars on projects around the globe to build up and improve military infrastructure. The appropriations process for military construction projects is a rare act of bipartisanship in Congress.

But the process has been thrown into uncertainty with President Trump’s attempt to circumvent Congress and the Constitution by diverting funds for military construction to fund his border wall. We know the President is desperate for his border wall. It was a campaign promise to his base. He shut the government down for weeks to force Congress to provide funds for his border wall. A wall he said Mexico was going to pay for. Instead, it looks like our military is going to pay for it.

The Trump administration’s effort to take money from our military to build his border wall is a clear violation of our Constitution, which expressly gives Congress the power to determine how tax dollars are spent.

Military construction projects are not the only thing being affected. Certain military construction projects are on the chopping block, but that doesn’t mean it might not impact our region or our service members and their families. The Trump administration’s national emergency declaration and his attempt to divert funds from defense projects is a clear act of a national emergency.

By pretending that a national emergency is on our doorsteps, the administration is circumventing Congress and the Constitution by diverting funds while the lower courts take the case to the Supreme Court. The administration may be able to take funds from non-emergency projects to pay for his border wall. We know that the Supreme Court will hear the case.

The Trump administration’s attempt to divert funds from military construction projects to build his border wall is an attempt to circumvent Congress and the Constitution. It is a violation of our Constitution and a flagrant violation of the rule of law. It is an attack on our democracy and our constitutional government. It is a clear violation of the rule of law and the Constitution.

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Impeachment, foreign affairs headline talk at Dem meeting

By TINA RYNBERG and JEFF BENESCH

What better time to welcome popular and longtime political pundit and scholar professor Ric Epps to the November general meeting of the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club?

Epps is particularly knowledgable about Middle East and Russian politics, and given the start of the impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump’s latest instigation of foreign interference in our electoral process, it should be a fascinating talk indeed!

Trump has not only upset political norms time and again, this time he readily admits asking foreign leaders for dirt on his political opponents. If not treasonous, it certainly rises to high treason.

“Impeachment, but endeavor to make a difference in 2020.”

“Professor Ric Epps”

Professor Ric Epps, a former Air Force officer, will it be particularly salient for Epps to comment on the president’s disdain for our service members by siphoning allocated defense funds for his ill-fated border wall; the FBI and the entire intelligence community; the corruption of our departments of Justice and State; and the certainty that these actions threaten our national security and our standing in the world.

In addition to Dr. Epps presentation, club president Tina Rynberg will give an update on GO-team efforts and recruitment in the coming election year. If you are not yet part of the solution, you can join the GO-team and make a difference in 2020.

And to round out a great evening of teaching and discussion, as always, we look forward to hearing her headline talk at Dem meeting.

Conservative comedian at Republican Women meeting

By PAT BOERNER

Eric Golub, a nationally known comedian and author who has spoken in all 50 states, will be the featured speaker at the Nov. 12 meeting of the California Republican Women-Navajo Canyon.

Golub has 25 years of radio experience behind him and he has been a radio guest of Sean Hannity, Dennis Miller and Hugh Hewitt. Golub is known as one of the country’s preeminent politically conservative comedians. He describes himself as 100% alcohol, tobacco, drug, and liberalism free. He speaks in synagogues to show how Judaism meshes perfectly with conservatism. He also wants you to know that if he ever says anything that offends you in any way “you probably deserved it.” We look forward to hearing Golub and promise that it will be an entertaining and light touch to the tumultuous political scene we are experiencing.

Please join us for this lunch meeting Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 11 a.m., with check-in beginning at 10:30 a.m., at the La Mesa Brigantine. Cost is $25 and a full course lunch is served. These luncheons can sell out quickly so be sure to make your reservation early at RSVPwrc@gmail.com to guarantee your seat. You will receive a confirmation of your reservation.

Any questions, please call or text Marjie at 619-990-2791. Cash and checks are accepted, but no credit cards. Please visit our website, RWCNavajo-Canyon.org to learn more about our activities and also visit us on Facebook at Republican Women of California.

Navajo Canyon has a reputation for having informative and inspirational speakers, and September was no exception. Our members and guests were spellbound as we were told the inside story of politics and life in China by Sophia Fang. She shared stories of her life in China and her immigration to America. She now writes for the Epoch Times, a multi-language newspaper founded in 2000 responding to the media censorship in China. The newspaper focuses on human rights issues and freely expresses its support of President Trump. We thank Sophia Fang for speaking to our group and look forward to hearing her again in the future.

On Dec. 10, Navajo will be kicking off the season with our annual Christmas Holiday Party. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and mingle with our members and preview the 2020 events Navajo has planned. There is nothing more exciting than a presidential election year and 2020 will be filled with opportunities to become an active and engaged volunteer. This is the time to get educated on the issues, learn about the candidates and discover ways that you can participate and be a part of the drive to keep America great.

President Trump is doing an incredible job of keeping his promises, all while the media is doing its best to create and foster distractions. Let’s show President Trump that we appreciate what he has done to make the economy strong, get the unemployment numbers to record lows, increase middle class wages, propose immigration reform and legislation, and make free trade fair trade. Volunteers are always needed to help register voters, walk neighborhoods for candidates, help with mailers, make phone calls, and get out the vote!

—Pat Boerner writes on behalf of California Republican Women-Navajo Canyon.
The community an opportunity to continue the visioning process for the future of the 22-acre MacArthur Park with this master planning effort.

The plan will build upon feedback and an existing conditions analysis from a 2018 opportunities and constraints study to advance the short-, intermediate-, and long-term plans for the park’s redevelopment as community public space. Community and stakeholder engagement will play a major role in recommending priorities for future amenities and facilities.

The public is invited to participate in the workshop, which will be held at the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Drive, located within MacArthur Park. Healthy snacks and refreshments will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact Sue Richardson, director of Community Services at srichardson@cityoflamesa.us or call 619-667-1300.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOMEBOUND SENIORS PROJECT

The La Mesa Chamber of Commerce encourages residents to join them and make a difference in the lives of La Mesa homebound seniors. Each year, the chamber has assisted homebound seniors and this year will assist 24. The chamber is now beginning to gather items for these seniors with a goal to collect, purchase and assemble items and place them in large gift baskets and gift bags. All of these gifts will be delivered.

Chamber of Commerce encourages residents to join them and make a difference in the lives of La Mesa homebound seniors. Each year, the chamber has assisted homebound seniors and this year will assist 24. The chamber is now beginning to gather items for these seniors with a goal to collect, purchase and assemble items and place them in large gift baskets and gift bags. All of these gifts will be delivered.

See News Briefs, Page 14

News from your County Supervisor

By DIANNE JACOB

Affordable housing: The county is now offering free, pre-approved floor plans for granny flats and other accessory homes.

The incentive program is expected to save property owners and others in the county’s unincorporated area about $15,000 per house. That figure comes on top of another $15,000 builders have been saving since we began waiving permit and development fees for accessory homes early this year.

At a time when so many people are looking for quality, affordable housing, we’re removing some of the red tape that can get in the way.

For more information, go to http://sandiegocounty.gov/ADU. You can also call 858-495-5182 or email ADUquestions@sdcousa.ca.gov.

Health crisis: The Board of Supervisors recently voted to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products and impose a 1-year moratorium on the sale of e-cigarette devices while their risks are fully assessed.

With the recent sharp rise in deaths and illnesses tied to vaping nationwide, it’s critical we do all we can to lower the risks to San Diegans while health officials continue to investigate.

The ban will not apply to flavored tobacco made for hookahs.

Huge win for ratepayers: The county is moving to establish a community choice energy program in the unincorporated area, and we continue to talk with other local governments about a possible joint choice initiative.

A recent study done for the county estimates the program will save 179,000 residential and business ratepayers $12 million a year. Ratepayers will finally have an alternative to what has been some of the highest utility rates in the nation. They’ll have freedom of choice!

—Dianne Jacob is chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and represents District 2. For more District 2 news, visit danniejacob.com or follow her on Facebook and Twitter. For assistance with a county issue, call 619-531-5522 or email dannie.jacob@sdcousa.ca.gov.

DIANNE JACOB

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—Dianne Jacob is chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and represents District 2. For more District 2 news, visit danniejacob.com or follow her on Facebook and Twitter. For assistance with a county issue, call 619-531-5522 or email dannie.jacob@sdcousa.ca.gov.
A spooky Ouija board display

formulating the plan for what we wanted our escape rooms to be like,” Shane Watton said. “We began designing and converting our haunted house sets and reopened as escape rooms in late 2016.”

Shane builds the different rooms, while Tiffany paints the spaces. Together they work on the games.

The main games now available are “Clownatorium – 2 Upside Down,” which is a creepy experience with a horror-themed carnival atmosphere; “Tut-Rut,” a game influenced by the Indiana Jones film series and the 1999 “The Mummy” movie; and “Fah-King Grail Game,” an adventure that pays homage to “The Goonies” and “Monty Python and the Holy Grail.”

Part of the reason the quests are 90 minutes in length, is to make sure that all players have enough time to properly participate in the adventure.

“We try to have the biggest and longest escape rooms in San Diego,” Tiffany Watton said. “It gives people extra time, and there are five or six rooms they are trying to get out of as well in each game.”

Nightwalker Caverns consists of four generation escape rooms, which is described by the owners as a “non-traditional escape game that is adventure based with Hollywood-style special effects.”

Some of the unique features include props, water effects, creative lighting and live performers as well.

Although he hates clowns, Shane Watton plays one in “Clownatorium – 2 Upside Down.”

“I’m a nice clown,” he said. “I’ve been told I’ve helped people get over their fear of clowns, because I’m so nice.”

Since the puzzles keep on changing, returning players are not able to solve the rooms in the same way twice.

“Every month, locks will be different, combinations will be different, and we’ll be adding rooms as well,” Shane Watton said.

The two owners want each of the rooms to be fresh ones that encourage visitors to not turn off their brains.

“You need to have a unique mindset to come up with new puzzles that people haven’t come up with before,” Tiffany Watton said. “The hardest part of building these rooms is figuring out what people have not done before in their rooms.”

At the same time, the owners don’t want the games to be overwhelmingly difficult.

“We’ve had groups that have escaped from over 40 rooms and others that have never participated in a game before,” Tiffany Watton said. “We’re gonna make the rooms easy for both of them.”

“The answers are always right in front of you,” Shane Watton said. “You just have to use common sense to figure it out.”

Although Nightwalker Caverns is already open, there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, Dec. 11, hosted by the owners and the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce.

Don’t expect this event to be just a traditional celebratory occasion. Attendees will get to play in the different escape rooms. And the ceremony is going to feature the reopening of “Clownatorium – 2.” You can make a reservation at rsvp@lamesachamber.com.

Other special events in the not too distant future will include reopenings of “Tut-Rut” and “Fah-King,” which are both guaranteed to have exciting new updates.

With more than 20 escape room venues to choose from in the county, Shane Watton and Tiffany Watton’s outside-of-the-box thinking helps keep things exciting and unpredictable. Regardless of skill set, the games appeal to anyone in the mood for something different than a typical game night.

For tickets or more information on Nightwalker Caverns, visit nightwalkercaverns.com or call 619-280-7029.

—David Dixon is a San Diego-based freelance arts and entertainment writer.

Nightwalker Caverns owners Shane and Tiffany Watton (Photos courtesy Nightwalker Caverns)

An Egyptian scene in the “Tut-Rut” escape room

Connecting generations through technology

Snapchat is another option for sending and receiving custom pictures or videos with a variety of fun filters and lenses. Snapchat is another option for sending and receiving custom pictures or videos with a variety of fun filters and lenses.

How to Help Your Grandparents

Only 44% of grandparents identify as tech-savvy.

Teaching non-tech-savvy family members how to use video chat and social media can be a bonding experience. You can also set your grandparents up with useful home features like the SURE Universal Remote, which allows them to control their TV and other devices from their smartphone. Less tech-savvy grandparents may not realize they can watch their cable TV content from their mobile device or schedule DVR recordings with apps like Cox Connect.

Giving your elders the power to connect helps build relationships with the people you love most, and that’s priceless at any age.

2. Video Chat

Video chat makes you feel as though everyone’s in the same room. Use apps like Skype or FaceTime to have a video conversation from virtually any device, and share life events such as graduations or weddings.

3. Gaming and Creativity Apps

Apps like Magisto and PhotoFunia allow you to personalize photos and videos. Looking for some friendly competition with your grandparents? Try a gaming app like Wheel of Fortune or Minecraft.

4. Social Media

Start a private Instagram account where you can post photos and videos. Grandparents have lots to share as well, so encourage them to make their own Instagram handles and record their stories. This can be a unique way to learn about your grandparents’ past, pass down family memories or share family recipes.
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**Sports**

**Grossmont High fall teams securing wins**

By DAVID THOMAS | La Mesa Courier

It does not take long for a scholastic sports season to fly by. That said, a number of Grossmont High teams are more than halfway through their respective seasons.

On the gridiron, the Foothillers under head coach Tom Karlo sit at 5-1 at the midpoint of October. According to Karlo, key players to date have included quarterback Jaime Odom (with more than 2,100 total yards and 23 TDs), running back Robert Tucker (with 1,100 all-purpose yards and 11 TDs), wide receiver Brody Schicker (33 catches for 485 yards and six TDs) and linebacker Chris Alba (who averages 10 tackles a game).

“With school and funds from a San Diego County grant, a new floor was installed. Phase II of this project includes new hoops, scoreboards, A/V system, and bleachers. This is being funded by the school, more county funds, and a Grossmont High School District bond measure.

“What we hope to have the entire project complete by late February 2020,” Chase commented. As with any major renovation/modernization project, people will be displaced for a period of time.

Such has been the case with the indoor sports teams at Helix normally relying on the gym for both practice and games.

“The scheduling challenges and inability to have home games has been an unfortunate situation for our school, community, and students,” Chase went on to say. “Fortunately, we have worked with the Boys and Girls Club to secure practice times.”

Chase added that as of now, all Helix teams normally using the gym for home matches will be on the road all season. Because of scheduling issues, Helix will be the away team. While they often say patience is a virtue, the long amount of time necessary to make such major renovations will hopefully be appreciated once the community gets the final look at what is being done.

“People like what they see with the renovations that have taken place so far,” Chase said. “It is disappointing that we are unable to host games at this time, but look forward to the opportunity to show off all the work that has been done as soon as possible.”

According to Chase, the school will have a ribbon cutting/grand opening when the project is complete.

—Dave Thomas is a freelance sports writer.

**Helix High School continues work on new gym**

By DAVID THOMAS | La Mesa Courier

With a goal of completion set for early 2020, work continues on gymnasium renovations at Helix High. According to Damon Chase, the school’s grade level principal (Class of 2020) and athletic director, things are moving along.

Built in 1960, the current gym can be displaced for a period of time in the fall, the school’s principal. More county funds, a Grossmont High School District bond measure, and A/V system, and bleachers. This is being funded by the school, more county funds, and a Grossmont High School District bond measure.

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—Dave Thomas is a freelance sports writer.

**Scarbrough fielding success at Helix High**

By DAVID THOMAS | La Mesa Courier

It does not take long for a sports season to fly by. This is especially true on the scholastic level.

That said, it is important to take advantage of the time given and the opportunities presented. One young woman taking advantage of her time at Helix High is senior field hockey member Paige Scarbrough.

As Helix High field hockey head coach Rhona St. Clair-Moore noted, “Paige has been the backbone of our team for the past three years. Brought up from JV as a freshman, she honed her skills quickly and is continually learning and passing on her knowledge. She has an amazing understanding of the field and is a good teacher for the younger girls. Off of the field, she is a shining example of an honor student with many outside interests and she beautifully balances them all. With Scarbrough (center defense/sweeper) competing in her final season of scholastic field hockey, St. Clair-Moore has wanted to make sure her senior takes advantage of everything in front of her at this moment.”

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**Alvarado Hospital Medical Center**

Oct. 25 – Nov. 21, 2019
La Mesa Courier
Since its beginnings, Grossmont High School has offered a varied educational experience for its students. Very quickly, the quality of Grossmont’s performing arts classes became a source of pride for the community as every performance was greeted by a full house. Today’s programs continue this historic heritage.

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC UPDATE FROM DIRECTOR RAY WEBB**

Your Royal Blue Regiment earned a top music score for all bands at the first field tournament of the year at Escondido High School on Oct. 5. This was our first opportunity to use the instruments that were purchased with funds donated from our amazing alumni, retirees, and the GHS Educational Foundation. Alumni from graduating classes ranging from 1949 to 1975 have participated. To date, $9,840 has been donated. Thank you so much!

In addition, $2,000 was donated by the La Mesa Community Welfare Association after reading about our need in the La Mesa Courier. Beyond these monetary donations, a very valuable trombone was donated. The new price of the instruments purchased with donated funds would have been $27,000. These instruments were purchased from private parties and instrument resellers at a cost of only $8,070.

Again, thank you to everyone that has given to help our students play with excellence and produce the vaunted “Grossmont Sound.” If anyone has a musical instrument to donate, please contact Ray Webb at 719-312-1832 or rwebb@guhsd.net. Also, the program welcomes additional donations of used guitars (broken strings OK) or the $100 needed to purchase a guitar. Please contact Jeremy Cooke for information on how you can help at jcooke@guhsd.net or 619-6190.

**GUITAR CLASSES**

The most exciting news for the guitar program this year is that due to demand, a third section has been added for the first time in over 10 years! There are currently 140 students enrolled in guitar. With the additional students, we have 50 students without his or her own guitar. We welcome donations of used guitars (broken strings OK) or the $100 needed to purchase a guitar. Please contact Jeremy Cooke for information on how you can help at jcooke@guhsd.net or 619-6190.

**VOCAL MUSIC UPDATE**

The Vocal Music Department held their fall concert on Oct. 17, 7:30 p.m., at Santa Sophia Catholic Church.

They are currently preparing for the American Choral Directors Association’s Fall 2020 Festival and are excited to see the growth and improvement of our vocalists.

**STRING ORCHESTRA’S EXCITING NEWS**

Director Karen Childress-Evans recently shared the news that the Scottish Rite Valley of San Diego and Scottish Rite Masons of California recently donated $5,000 to the Grossmont High School Orchestra to help defray expenses for an exciting Disney musical workshop for all GHS orchestra students in spring of 2020. Scottish Rite Masons strive to improve their communities through personal service to others and financial support.

Because of their generosity, beginning, intermediate and advanced orchestra Foothillers will visit Disneyland to participate in a performing arts workshop entitled “Music 101: Inside the Soundtrack of Disneyland.” This workshop will provide a Disney entertainment professional who will help students discover the integral role that music plays at the Disneyland resort.

Students will test their knowledge of the storyline with various interactive exercises as they explore areas of the resort together during this two-hour workshop and explore the powerful role music plays in creating the immersive lands and attractions at Disney parks.

Through artistic sound analysis, a musical scavenger hunt throughout the park, and a deeper look into the storytelling power of music, students will gain a hands-on understanding of how music can create emotion, atmospheric tone and a vivid sense of time and place.

The Grossmont Strings began a serious regrowth six years ago under the direction of then-Band Director James Llamas. In the past four years under the direction of Band Director Ray Webb and the support of volunteer and string specialist, Dr. Karen Childress-Evans, this group of dedicated musicians has grown from six to about 40 students. There are no regular middle school feeder string programs into GHS yet, so the majority of students begin their orchestra experience as ninth graders.

For free enrollment help, call (619) 515-2363 or visit fhcsd.org/covered-california.

Family Health Centers of San Diego is the #1 enrollment center in San Diego County.

EXCITING NEWS

Grossmont High School 2019 guitar class (Photos courtesy GHS Museum)
2020 enrollment plans underway at Helix

All other Students who are excited about what we do and partnering with the community is an important piece of that excitement. Here are just a few items from the Helix wish list:

- Provide internship, community service, or student employment opportunities.
- Provide educational field trips.
- Service as a community or parent representative on the Helix Charter Board.
- Fund scholarships for graduates entering the Helix Foundation.
- Fund students to attend the College 4 Me Tour.
- Serve as a judge for Senior Defense and or Senior Boards.
- Serve as a judge at local Speech & Debate tournaments.
- Provide schools supplies and athletic equipment for students in need.

Contact Jenn Osborn at josborn@helicharters.net if you are interested in helping out.


High School arts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Association Festival at Point Loma Nazarene University on Nov. 1. The Red Robe Choir will perform live on KUSI News Channel at a future date this year.

To see these talented students in person, come to their Winter Concert Dec. 6, 7 p.m., at the Foot hills United Methodist Church. From Feb. 14 to Feb. 23, 2020, the choir will be in France and Monaco on their annual concert tour.

Drama Department

Because the new Event Center, with its theater and black box, will be finished summer of 2020, join us to see the final shows in the Little Theater. The Foot Hill Players’ first show is “Failure: A Love Story” at 7 p.m., Nov. 6-9 and Nov. 13-16. Their spring show is “Freaky Friday,” playing March 11-14 and March 18-21 at 7 p.m.

The dance classes presented their fall dance concert on Oct. 17 in the Old Gym and performed again on Oct. 1, for fifth through seventh periods for the English and math classes.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum. To discover more about Grossmont historic performing arts programs from 1920 to today, visit foothillermuseum.com or visit the GHS Museum Wednesday, Nov. 22, from noon-3:30 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 22, from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; or by appointment. Contact 619-668-8140 or email ghsmuseum@guhsd.net.

High School arts

It’s hard to believe, but Helix staff are hard at work planning for the 2020-21 school year. The enrollment process is about to begin, and we are excited to welcome a new group of Highlanders to our campus. As a charter school, enrollment at Helix is open to any resident of the state of California; however, there is a priority system set up for our lottery. Acceptance into Helix is based on the following:

1st Priority Acceptance: Siblings of current Helix students in grades 9, 10, 11, 12

2nd Priority Acceptance: Residents of the former attendance area of Helix High School (refer to the searchable boundary map on the school website).

3rd Priority: Children of Helix employees.

4th Priority: Students who make a two-year commitment to be in the bagpipe program (limited-ed spaces available).


6th Priority: All other applicants.

Regardless of what your attendance area is, as determined by your local school district, families can choose to apply to Helix. To apply, you must attend an information meeting where you will receive directions and an access code for the online “Intent to Enroll/Application” form.

Information Nights will provide prospective students and parents/guardians with the opportunity to meet the Class of 2024 Grade Level Team and discuss the following important topics:

- The 5 A’s: Academics, Athletics, Arts, Activities, and Attitude.
- The application process/priority enrollment.

All interested families are required to attend one of the evenings offered. No reservation is necessary! Due to the importance of the information being shared, all meetings will begin promptly at the indicated start time. Families arriving late may not be admitted. Please plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early.

Please note that lottery position is not determined by which meeting is attended. Meeting dates and locations are as follows:

- Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 6 p.m. — La Mesa Arts Academy Auditorium
- Tuesday, Jan. 28 at 6 p.m. — Lemon Grove Academy Auditorium
- Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 6 p.m. — Parkway Middle School Auditorium
- Thursday, Feb. 6 at 6 p.m. — Vista La Mesa Auditorium
- Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 5, 6 and 7 p.m. — Helix Charter High School (specific location TBD)

PERFORMING ARTS CALENDAR

Helix Choir Halloween Concert — Haunted Helix: Oct. 29 and 30 at 7 p.m. in the Helix Mainstage Theater. Tickets are $10 for adults, $5 for children and students. Visit helix-choirs.ticketleap.com.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

There are many opportunities to become involved at Helix. We encourage students to attend Information Nights and complete the “Intent to Enroll/Application” form.

We are excited about what we do and partnering with the community is an important piece of that excitement. Here are just a few items from the Helix wish list:

- Provide internship, community service, or student employment opportunities.
- Provide educational field trips.
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- Provide schools supplies and athletic equipment for students in need.

Contact Jenn Osborn at josborn@helicharters.net if you are interested in helping out.

City Manager Yvonne Garrett

CITY MANAGER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

City Manager Yvonne Garrett has announced her retirement effective Dec. 30, 2019. Garrett has served in several positions with the City of La Mesa, starting as the Director of Community Services in January 2000. Garrett spent six years as the Assistant City Manager and Community Services Director prior to her appointment as City Manager in 2016. Garrett was the director of the La Mesa Park and Recreation concurrently with her position in Community Services and in the City Manager’s Department. The Foundation is a non-profit organization that raises funds through grants, events and facilitates recreational, education and cultural programs in La Mesa.

“Yvonne Garrett’s exemplary craftsmanship, entrepreneurial spirit and vision have served the City of La Mesa for two decades. Her priority of helping create a livable community has helped elevate La Mesa as one of the top cities in the county. Her willingness to solve problems is only surpassed by her knowledge of the city and the challenge to find her successor,” said Mayor Mark Arapostathis.

Garrett, in her tenure with La Mesa, led several capital projects including the award winning PARKS Project, the La Mesa Teen Center, and has been instrumental in promoting walkability in the city of La Mesa. She handled special projects for the city including funding and developing a Health and Wellness Center, completion of the Parks Master Plan, and oversight of the implementation of the citizen initiated moratorium on cannabis. She has done all this and more while helping the citizens across the city including funding and development for the La Mesa rec center, and help develop a Climate Action Plan. She led the city’s re-branding efforts which have resulted in a new interest in La Mesa as an attractive place to live, shop, and explore.

“I have relished working in the city of La Mesa,” she said. “Its residents have a deep attachment to their city and there is a generational appeal where folks who were born here often strive to come back home. I have grown to love La Mesa as if it was my hometown too. I will certainly miss the privilege of working for a City Council that is respectful and appreciative of the employees and who also clearly love their city. La Mesa is in good hands with an excellent executive management team and a dedicated and conscientious professional staff.”

The council unanimously directed City Manager Garrett to engage the Human Resources Manager to begin a search for an interim City Manager. Greg Humora as the Interim City Manager upon Garrett’s retirement.

OASIS HOSTS TECHNOLOGY EVENT FOR OLDER ADULTS

In October, leaders at San Diego Oasis, an organization serving people age 50 and better throughout the county, hosted an immersive technology event designed to help ease frustration with technology, including smartphones, computers, tablets, apps, telemedicine, and much more.

The “Get Connected: Technologies” event delivered more than 1,000 San Diego County residents at the Reading Cinemas at Grossmont Center, just steps away from the San Diego Oasis City Manager’s Department. Get Connected is the region’s largest tech event for older adults, and is designed to be upbeat, involving, and helpful. Organizers took great care to curate the best presenters and satisfy attendee needs.

“Get Connected: Technologies” was an inspiring event that delivered new tech to older adults and satisfied attendees’ needs, including TV Apps You Should Have On Your Smartphone.”

In mid-October, Grossmont was 3-15 (.067 in league play) for head coach Peter Phillips. Top players to-date, according to Phillips, have included senior libero Kate Seely, senior setter Cierra Hopper, junior opposite Gabby Jones, junior middle Amanda Heil, senior middle Aiy Ee and opposite hitter Sarah Oung.

“The girls have shown great character and commitment throughout a tough season,” Phillips remarked. “The good news in moving forward to next season is that we are a fairly young team. Five or our six starters will be returning.”

In girls tennis play, the Lady Foothillers under head coach Hilary Parker, have included an overall record of 6-9 (.444 for third place in the league). According to Park, key players have included the top two doubles team of freshmen, junior Tanner Larsen (initiating the offense and being the team’s top perimeter defender) and senior goalie Travis Keating (averaging 10 blocks per game).

“We have a young team after losing a lot of seniors last year,” McLaughlin commented.

“Our focus throughout the season is to gain experience and work on getting better every day. If we do that, we will put ourselves in a position to compete for the Division I CIF championship.”

In girls volleyball action, the Lady Foothillers have been working their way through a coaching change.

—Dave Thomas is a freelance sports writer. If you are a fall or winter sports varsity head coach at Helix High, head an athlete you think would make a good feature story, email hopthomast@yahoo.com.

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Newsbriefs CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

along with a turkey dinner with all of the trimmings, to the selected seniors by the La Mesa Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol.

Due to delivery schedule, the deadline to receive the gifts for seniors is Friday, Nov. 29. This will allow time to wrap all of the gifts. Donations are all welcome to donate gift baskets and purchase the items needed. Donations may be delivered to the La Mesa Chamber office at 8080 La Mesa Blvd., Suite 212, or next door to Fran Smith in Suite 214, Monday through Friday between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Mary England is also available seven days a week to meet donors and pick up those items from you. Contact Mary England on her cell (619) 251-7730.

Donated items from your pantry should be double-checked for expiration. Suggested items you should donate to this year’s gift baskets include: canned soups, canned vegetables, canned fruits, packets of creamers, dry and wet macaroni & cheese, bars of soap, tubes of tooth paste, packs of tissues, bottles of hand soaps, bottles of hand sanitizer, pens and pads of paper. Gift cards in any denomination from the following locations are also appreciated: Walmart, Target, or any grocery store.

In the news... Helix softball seniors Yvonne Garrett and Taylor Clauson (averaging 10 blocks per game), junior Tanner Larsen (averaging more than three goals per game), and senior libero Kate Seely (averaging 10 blocks per game), have included an overall record of 6-9 (.444 for third place in the league). According to Park, key players have included the top two doubles team of freshmen, junior Tanner Larsen (initiating the offense and being the team’s top perimeter defender) and senior goalie Travis Keating (averaging 10 blocks per game).

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The new policy was presented to council by Robert “Trip” May, a partner at Telecom Law Firm PC, which represents individuals and city governments in matters relating to telecommunications infrastructure. May began his presentation with an explanation of the new regulations.

Under federal law, cities cannot outright prohibit or effectively prohibit the installation of wireless facilities. In addition, cities must treat all providers equally — cannot regulate facilities based on environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that the emissions comply with FCC rules; have to act (approve or reject projects) within a reasonable amount of time; and must issue written decisions to reject based on substantial evidence in the record — something already in local law.

“There has to be a basis,” May said of that last provision. “For example, a standard that says it’s too tall, or it’s not in the right location, or it’s too bulky in a particular area. Without those types of regulations, denials would have on their face.”

In addition to those federal laws, the FCC has also recently issued new orders regarding cell towers, including an order which prohibits moratoriums against cell towers, either expressed or de facto.

The FCC also issue a “small cell” order that has “broad and significant changes and impacts on local governments” that defines small wireless facilities and redefines what an “effective prohibition” against them means. Under the small cell order, the fees that cities charge carriers for installing small cells have to be objectively reasonable, and aesthetic limitations cannot be more burdensome than applied to other infrastructures — cities can’t use zoning to block where small cells are installed or block their installation because they are not compatible to community character because the FCC views those reasons to be subjective. The new FCC order also expands “shot clock” rules — the time frame in which cities must accept or reject small cell proposals — with new classifications and restrictions.

“All these rules are under appeal and courts are expected to rule on them by the end of 2020,” May said. The FCC is also considering more rules that could take effect as soon as six months from now. May said the ever-changing rulebook for cell towers makes it difficult for cities to keep up with rules to regulate them.

“What we do, it’s probably going to be wrong six months to a year from now, so we need to take a flexible approach,” he said.

May then laid out a recommended proposal for La Mesa based on the existing code which allows cities to adopt standards for anything that encroaches on the public right of way. He said La Mesa could use that code to draft a policy that includes:

• A review process that is tailored to meet the shot clock deadlines.
• Failure to meet those deadlines means you lose your ability to say ‘no,’” he said.
• Maintains public notice and appeal rights.
• Provides detailed objective locations and design standards.

Under the new city policy, the city has a list of preferred locations for cell towers and requires carriers to use those locations that are technically feasible. To set up a cell tower in an alternate location, carriers must show the city that no other feasible preferred locations exist within a reasonable distance.

The preferred locations are based on a two-step analysis. Step one, the city looks at what road type the cell tower would be near, like collector roads, main thoroughfare, cul-de-sacs, etc. Step two is to look at the cell tower installation. He also advised the council that citing health concerns is an invalid reason to deny a cell tower installation. He also advised that without a plan in place, cellular providers would have less restrictions on where to place small cell towers and what they would look like.

During public comments on the new plan, cellular industry representatives asked the city to table the vote to give them time to look over the proposed policy.

Opponents of 5G cellular also asked the City Council to delay the vote, over what they said are the potential health risks caused by radio frequency radiation put out by cellular towers. Before the council voted to adopt the policy, May advised the city that citing health concerns is not a valid reason to deny a cell tower installation. He also advised that without a plan in place, cellular providers would have less restrictions on where to place small cell towers and what they would look like.

The council adopted the new policy with only Vice Mayor Bill Baber voting against it.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemenson at jeff@sdnews.com.
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Double pleasure, Himalayan style

Restaurant Review

**By FRANK SABATINI JR.**

Only several years ago if you proposed going out for Himalayan food to family and friends, they’d look at you with crossed eyes and ask: “What the heck is it? And where do we find it?”

San Diego County today has a small handful of Nepalese-style restaurants. Turn of the year, they fall under the same ownership, with one located in the La Mesa Crossroads Plaza. (The others are in Mission Gorge and Chula Vista.)

It was only recently that I learned of Himalayan Cuisine’s lunch deal, offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays. So I quickly set out to the La Mesa outpost and came away with a full gut of spicy fare (my choice) and a palate lingering with exotic flavors for under $10.

The lunch special is $8.99. It’s particularly attractive because you get a choice of two entrees from a select menu, plus lentil soup, grilled naan bread, and basmati rice. Based on dinner visits to the Mission Gorge location, the portions of those bargain entrees are only a notch smaller in comparison.

When chatting last year with owner Khem Kharel about the differences between Himalayan food and dishes common to its neighbor India, he noted: “Our food is lighter and healthier. It doesn’t have all the butter, oil and cream of Indian food.”

For newcomers familiar with popular Indian meals such as tikki masala and chicken vindaloo, the flavors won’t seem too alien. In fact, those dishes are among your lunch choices. But it is the spices such as green cardamom, bay leaves, cloves, nutmeg powder and others — and used in hefty measures — that will charm your taste buds.

My entrees of choice were “chicken chili” and chana masala. I could smell the aromas of the food when parking 50 yards from the entrance. Upon entering, images of Mount Everest and illuminated models of Nepalese temples whisked me away to some faraway land. Black-vested waiters wearing traditional topi hats further set the mood for cuisine that nobody can accuse of tasting bland.

My entrees of choice were “chicken chili” and chana masala, a vegetarian dish of Indian origin — both “medium spicy” by default. The chana masala offered the spiciest burn due to dried chilies hiding in a light tomato sauce, which envelops tender garbanzo beans. It was also the saltiest of the two entrees. Had it not been for the fragrant herbs and spices such as green cardamom and cilantro, the flavor won’t seem too alien. It was also the saltiest of the two entrees. Had it not been for the fragrant herbs and spices such as green cardamom and cilantro, the flavor won’t seem too alien.

For those of you aren’t counting carbs, a full order the tawsty bread costs $2.45. Other entrees from the lunch card include vegetable korma with coconut milk, mild curry chicken, and saag aloo, which consists of spinach and potatoes in a creamy sauce.

If jumping ship to the regular menu, the vegetable momo dumpplings are a classic Himalayan specialty with their generous fillings of minced cab and spinach, cashew nuts, onions and cilantro. Lamb lovers will delight in options showcasing the meat in different herbs and sauces. And there are also noteworthy shrimp and fish dishes as well as bone-in goat stewed in pepper.

Whatever your choice, the spirit of culinary exploration runs as high as Mount Everest in a restaurant that proves culinary adventure is the spice of life.

—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 staff writer for the former San Diego Tribune. You can reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.

**Himalayan Cuisine**

7918 El Cajon Blvd.
619-461-2503, www.himalayancuisineone.com
Lunch special: $8.99 plus tax for soup, bread, rice and two entrees (available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday)

**Vegetable moom from the regular menu** (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

The lunch special includes lentil soup and naan bread.

**BAKED BRIE WITH FRUIT AND NUTS**

*Photo by Julie White*

**What’s Cooking Julie**

Warm, gooey cheese covered with nuts and dried fruit to spread on crackers is the end result of this recipe — easy to throw together at the last minute. For a Halloween look, use raisins and dried apricots.

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 pound round of brie cheese
- 2 tablespoons honey and some spices (if you like)
- 1/2 cup of dried cut apricots
- 1/3 cup dried raisins and or cranberries
- 1/3 cup pine nuts and pistachios

• Simple crackers or toasted thin baguette slices

**DIRECTIONS:**

Heat oven to 350 degrees.
Place brie on a parchment lined baking sheet. Drizzle with the honey mixture.
Toss the fruit and nuts together and sprinkle over cheese round. Bake 10-12 minutes.
Transfer to serving platter and serve with crackers or bread.

“When black cats prowl and pumpkins glow, may luck be yours on Halloween!”

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La Mesa Couri...
The history of La Mesa Library and its Friends

By DONNE BARANOFF

The Friends of the La Mesa Library are a nonprofit organization of citizens who believe that a modern, effective library is an essential service for our community. The Friends promote local awareness and appreciation of the library as a valuable center of learning, education, and pleasure, a community benefit offering key information, services and programs in addition to book dispersal.

2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the Friends of the La Mesa Library, and Oct. 20-26 is National Friends of Libraries Week.

IT ALL STARTED WITH THE WOMEN OF LA MESA

You can’t have a history of the Friends of the La Mesa Library without first having a library they can support.

Over 100 years ago, the visionary leaders of the La Mesa Women’s Club established La Mesa’s first formal library, a community-owned and supported collection housed right inside their club house on the northwest corner of Third Street and Lemon Avenue. When their club ran out of space in 1915, the popular library moved to La Mesa’s City Hall, where eventually and once again, inadequate space became an issue. In 1932, the library found its first permanent home at Porter Hall, in the building’s first location on University Avenue, across the street from where it stands today.

But there were even more libraries in the La Mesa area at this time. San Diego city directories from 1936 include listings for satellite branches found in businesses around town — including Emmons Mercantile Store on El Cajon Boulevard in today’s College Area — suggesting a need for more space or at least more access points.

Resident demands for library materials and services continued to grow but following the Great Depression and leading into and following World War II, there just wasn’t enough city revenue to support building a new library, let alone anything else.

Thankfully for the citizens of La Mesa, Ben Polak — La Mesa’s mayor from 1936-1948 — was a man full of determination and imagination, helping develop a unique fundraising plan to build a new library as well as a number of other projects.

The “Tacky Wacky Carnival,” an annual event that amassed the money taking place on Nov. 6. Early supporters of the library and its Friends included County Supervisor Henry Boney (of Boney’s and later Henry’s and Sprouts grocery store fame).

1946, the Friends of California Libraries was established and later incorporated in October 1966. Encouraged by fellow library enthusiasts in El Cajon, an organizational meeting for forming a local Friends group was called to order on Feb. 4, 1969.

It comes as no surprise that the La Mesa Women’s Club was the Friends’ original sponsor; they organized the first meeting.

The Friends purpose, from the original constitution and by-laws, states: “The purpose of this organization shall be to foster closer relations between the La Mesa Branch Library and the citizens of La Mesa and environs: to lead in the development of a program for the extension and improvement of the Library services and resources; to promote knowledge of the functions, resources, services and needs of the Library; and to aid in the provision of adequate housing and other facilities for the Library.”

Early supporters of the library and its Friends included County Supervisor Henry Boney (of Boney’s and later Henry’s and Sprouts grocery store fame).

50 YEARS OF SUPPORT

In the years since the bookstore opened, the Friends have contributed more than $200,000 to the La Mesa Library to help pay for materials, programs, and services.

IF YOU GO

La Mesa Community Library 1100 Main St., La Mesa tion. By BONNIE BARANOFF

Original La Mesa Women’s Clubhouse on the corner of Third Street and Lemon Avenue around 1915. The club housed an early library collection.
In recent years, Halloween has transformed. No longer just plastic masks and candy for kids, we have come to embrace monsters and creepiness in our pop culture, and get pretty excited about this holiday. Here are a few recent works to get you into the Halloween spirit.

One of the creepier original premises I’ve heard of this year was for Adrian McKinty’s “The Chain.” Single mother Rachel Klein gets a phone call from a stranger to inform them that they have kidnapped Rachel’s daughter, and that her daughter will not be released unless Rachel kidnaps someone else’s child! It’s like one of those chain letters you were always warned not to break, but one in which you defeat your nightmare by becoming the monster in someone else’s. If you don’t want to sleep tonight, or want to try to scare your kids, read this book right away.

“Frankenstein” was essentially the world’s first science fiction novel, written by Mary Shelley. It was more of a tale of the folly of man playing God, than it was about the monster we’ve come to know. Roseanne Montillo’s “The Lady and Her Monsters” tells us about Shelley’s life, feminism and personal relationships, and how her book was informed by the science of her time. Apparently much more lurid than most of us would expect, these early experiments were a mix of alchemy, medicine, reason, despair and madness. Many of these early scientists could easily star in true crime stories!

“Lore” is a recent multimedia phenomenon by author and producer Aaron Mahnke. It began as a podcast looking at “true phobias” about myths, urban legends, hauntings and monsters. As the show became more popular, Mahnke started a “Lore” TV show and series of books. “The World of Lore” series has three books so far, focused on different topics: “Monstrous Creatures,” “Wicked Mortals” and “Dreadful Places.” However the books stick very close to the content of the podcasts, so reading and listening could feel a bit redundant.

H.P. Lovecraft has become all the rage in modern horror, and homages to his work are quite common. He is known for his “weird tales” in pulp magazines from the 1920s, which developed a bleak mythology about powerful gods and alien worlds that were so incomprehensible that any human who saw them was reduced to madness. But over time, Lovecraft’s works have been tainted by revelations that in his personal life he was a horrible and vocal racist. Which is why I was so interested in Matt Ruff’s novel “Lovecraft Country,” which promised to juxtapose the cosmic horror of Lovecraft’s mythology with the racist horror of African-Americans living under Jim Crow in the 1950s. In this book, the scares from white supremacy often outweigh the scares of evil cults and supernatural powers.

After Halloween, you can start preparing for the next batch of holidays with Healthy Holiday Cooking workshop on Nov. 2 at 2 p.m. And if cooking’s not your thing, you can come to our next Second Saturday concert, to listen to the talented jazz pianist Danny Green, Nov. 9, at 1 p.m.

—Jake Sexton is librarian at the La Mesa branch of the San Diego County Library. Call the library at 619-469-2151, visit in person at 8074 Allison Ave., or visit online at sdcl.org.
Wildlife in Art Show celebrates 30 years

The annual Wildlife in Art Show, hosted by Foothills Art Association, is one of the longest running open/juried art shows in Southern California. The opening of this year’s show in November at the Foothills Gallery in La Mesa will mark the show’s 30th consecutive year.

This year’s show has 100 entries from 55 artists. From those, the juror will select 65-70 pieces for exhibiting in the show and will award approximately $3,000 in cash and merchandise to award winners. The show includes fine wildlife art presented in oil, acrylic, watercolor, colored pencil, mixed-media, collage, pastel, graphics and non-functional sculpture. Awards will be presented at an awards reception on Saturday, Nov. 16, at the Foothills Gallery.

Foothills is honored this year to have noted wildlife artist Lee Kromschroeder as the show’s juror. Lee is recognized as one of the foremost artists in the wildlife genre. His work is represented in the finest galleries and can be found in many private collections. His illustrations have been presented on some of today’s leading publications.

The Wildlife in Art Show runs from Nov. 12 to Dec. 4 at the Foothills Gallery. Admission is free and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The gallery is located at La Mesa’s Porter Hall, 4910 Memorial Drive in La Mesa. For more information, call 619-464-7167.

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

Take the time to be mindful

Gen-X in La Mesa

By GENEVIEVE A. SUZUKI | La Mesa Courier

A mind is a wild thing that sometimes needs to be sedated when it comes to everyday dealings.

I’m not talking about medicating yourself to remove yourself from reality, but I am talking about holistic ways to calm the feral mind.

One of the things I’ve learned through my weight loss program at Kaiser is how important it is to reflect on our choices when it comes to food.

During the early stages of this weight loss journey, I was encouraged to keep a good diary for a week. Among things I needed to chart were what I was eating, how much of it I was eating, what time of the day I was eating it, and how I felt around that time.

I learned soon enough I used food as a reward, a comfort and as entertainment. When I had a good day, I would celebrate by eating 500 calories of chocolate. When I had a bad day, I would make myself feel better by swallowing 500 calories of chocolate. And when I was bored, I would munch on — you guessed it — 500 calories of chocolate.

I rarely ate because I was hungry or nourishing myself. Until the journal, I never realized how much food had become a crutch.

In addition to journaling, another suggestion for anyone looking to drop some pounds is to practice "mindful eating." Mindfulness is on the rise in all walks of life. Mobile app Headspace, an app that makes meditation accessible to anyone with a smartphone, features an easy-to-understand guide as to how to meditate. For me, a person who thoroughly enjoyed mindless eating, it’s hard to slow down when it’s time to feed.

Mindful eating comprises taking time with each bite. As you chew your food, you notice the flavor and its texture. You’re thinking about how your food makes you feel. I know it sounds like touchy-feely mumbo jumbo, but it has been surprisingly effective.

Now that I have been given the green light to have one meal a day with my fast, I decided to incorporate mindful eating into my life.

It’s not easy. The velociraptor in me once was, I keep to sometimes swallow bites whole, but the Zen practitioner I want to become calmly reminds my inner hungry beast to relax and eat slowly. Also, truthfully, there are only so many thoughts one can have about lettuce, cucumbers, chicken or salmon. Usually I’m thinking, “Why does it feel like it’s taking forever to get through this salad?!” Sometimes my thoughts become really dark, like, “Did this chicken realize it was going to be on my plate? Did it live a meaningful life? Did it even know it was a chicken?”

Mindful eating has also taken me into regular meditation. It’s helped me at work, when in court for a trial, and when my 4-year-old insists we play the same song for the 10th time in a row. When I need a soft reset at the end of a big day.

Zen Gen meditating (Courtesy Genevieve Suzuki)

It’s funny how mindful eating and breathing, two things we’ve taken for granted since birth, can make a big difference on one’s health. While I may not master mindfulness anytime soon, taking a step toward minding my health is surely more important than mindlessly noshing through life.

—Genevieve Suzuki is a local family lawyer and former La Mesa Courier editor.

Kromschroeder, as the show’s juror. Lee is recognized as one of the foremost artists in the wildlife genre. His work is represented in the finest galleries and can be found in many private collections. His illustrations have been presented on some of today’s leading publications.

The Wildlife in Art Show runs from Nov. 12 to Dec. 4 at the Foothills Gallery. Admission is free and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The gallery is located at La Mesa’s Porter Hall, 4910 Memorial Drive in La Mesa. For more information, call 619-464-7167.
Editor's Pick

**On Golden Pond**
Through Nov. 10

LaMplighters Community Theatre presents a play written by Edward Albee, 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, with her fiancé Billy Ray and his son Billy Ray Jr. The play explores the tenet-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, 535 Seavey Drive. Tickets are $23 general, $20 seniors, students, active military; $18 groups of 10 or more. Visit bit.ly/2kPmvMr.

**Halloween Happening**

San Carlos Preschool’s annual Halloween Happening is a fun event for children ages 3-7 and their parents. The carnival features games, food and games are available at the event. Contact Cindy Prodor at 619-464-4335 for more information.

**Saturday, Oct. 26**

**Poolooza!**
Come to a floating pump-kin patch on Saturday, Oct. 26, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Children will get to dive in, pick a pumpkin, and then decorate it! The whole family will be entertained by the inflatable obstacle course, rock-climbing wall, games, prizes, goodie bags, candy and more. Plus, stay for open swim after from 1-4 p.m. Children 6-months-12 years: $7 for members /$10 for community. Adults ages 13 and over: $1 with paying child. (Does not include pumpkin or goodie bag.) Space will be limited. Sign up began Sept. 23 at: st.xcroc.kenter.org/poolooza.

**Staff The Jeep**
Join the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce and support military children and families living in La Mesa military housing. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Barnes & Noble at Grossmont Center. Crafts, activities, special story time, and raffle prize drawings andending with stuffing a Jeep with the donated books for children and families of military personnel. For details, contact the La Mesa Community at 619-4657700 or chamber@lamessachamber.com.

**Sunday, Oct. 27**

**Ed Kornhauser Live at The Table**
Pianist/keyboardist Ed Kornhauser is one of the busiest artists on the San Diego music scene. From performances at Normal Heights’ go-to neighborhood pub, Rosie O’Grady’s, to the vaulted ceilings and cedar walls of Madison on Park and from the upscale Westgate Hotel to the retro cocktail lounge of Golden Hill’s Turf Supper Club and the peace of Unity Way, the “Little Church on the Hill” in Vista, Ed’s music is heard and celebrated. Also a major force at work backing such noted vocalists as Leonard Patton and Whitney Shy, he holds the piano chair in the drummer-led Matt Smith Neu Jazz Trio, sharing with them the credit for two albums of original music. 2 p.m. At The Table: United Church of Christ, La Mesa Village Center, La Mesa. For more information, visit tableucc.com. A freewill offering will be collected.

**Monday, Oct. 28**

**Blood Drive**
Cuyamaca College is hosting a blood drive in partnership with the San Diego Blood Bank Oct. 28 and 29 from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 900 Rancho San Diego Parkway, El Cajon. Join us for the Bloodmobile Parked in the Quad. Anyone 17 and older, who weighs at least 114 pounds and is in good health may be eligible to donate blood. A good meal and plenty of fluids are recommended prior to donation. All donors must show picture identification. Donors are encouraged to schedule an appointment to donate, but walk-ins are welcome. To schedule an appointment or for more information, visit sandiegobloodbank.org.

**Thursday, Oct. 31**

**Halloween Walk-through**
Free walk-though scary house featuring the scariest movie characters and villains. Starting at 6:15 p.m. at 4814 Kappa St., La Mesa.

**Saturday, Nov. 2**

**Historical Society Home Tour**
The La Mesa Historical Society presents its 14th annual Home Tour, “Space Age to Space Age.” Featuring the rural suburban neighborhoods of Grossmont/Mt. Helm, the breathtaking views, the period decor, inspiring architecture, and the beautiful landscapes. Check in at 8:30 a.m. at San Miguel Fire District Station 21, 10105 Vivera Drive, La Mesa. $40 tickets for non-members and discounted tickets for members available at bit.ly/2Be8Vsr.

**Craft & Bake Sale**
St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church and Lake Murray Community Church have joined together to present an annual Craft & Bake Sale. It will be held Nov. 2-3, from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 8335 Lake Murray Blvd., San Diego, CA 92119. The crafters have been working very hard to sew, design and create many new crafts to be sold at the event. Proceeds go to local and global charities. All are invited to join us for the fun festivities.

**Friday, Nov. 8**

**Joan Evands One-Woman Show**
Art reception for Joan Evands. Free and open to the public. Wine and hors d’oeuvres served. 6-8 p.m. at Nainsoo Framing & Art, 8510 La Mesa Blvd.

**Saturday, Nov. 9**

**La Mesa Park Appreciation Day**
La Mesa is proud to hold the honor of being called Free City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for the past 39 years! To continue our efforts, the city will host the 14th annual Park Appreciation Day at Harry Griffin Park on Saturday, Nov. 9, from 8 a.m.-noon, where 200 trees will be planted. Before the planting begins, there will be free snacks, information booths, open comments and a tree-planting demonstration. Funding is provided through a grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) Urban and Community Forestry Program. All ages are welcome! Register online and sign the waiver at cityoflamesa.us/CalFire or at Harry Griffin Park on the day of the event at 9550 Milden St., La Mesa. For more information call 619-667-1300. Please contact 619-667-1322.

**Wellness Wednesday**
Wellness Wednesday is a health series normally held on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Herrick Library, 9001 Wakara St. in La Mesa. Admission is free and advance RSVP is not required. Light refreshments and informational handouts will be available. For more information, call the library at 619-825-5010 or visit herricklibrary.org.

**Grossmont Center Farmers Market**
Grossmont Center hosts a produce-only farmers market, 2-6 p.m. in front of the Macy’s, 5101 Freeway Blvd. in front of the Macy’s.

**Monday, Nov. 4**

**Note Catchers**
California Note Catchers, four-part harmony chorus, invite ladies of all ages to their rehearsals 7-9 p.m. Performances throughout SD. Located in Social Hall of La Mesa First United Methodist Church, 4940 Palm Ave, 619-646-3727.

**Editor’s Pick**

**La Mesa Park Appreciation Day**
Saturday, Nov. 9

City of La Mesa offers senior women’s support group, every Wednesday 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center, 8450 La Mesa Blvd. Please contact 619-667-1322.

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**Falls Festival**
The Casa de Oro Foundation presents its annual Fall Festival, featuring games, food trucks, live entertainment and prizes. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Spring Valley Academy, 3030 Orland Drive, Spring Valley. Free.

**Saturday, Nov. 12**

**Genealogical presentations**
The preeminent speaker and researcher on the topic of Eastern Europe, Lisa Alzo will be presenting “Ten Ways to Jumpstart your Eastern European Research” and “Crossing the Pond: Successful Strategies for Researching Eastern European Ancestors” at the San Diego Genealogical Society (SDGS) meeting at St. Andrews Church, 4815 Glen St., La Mesa on Saturday, Nov. 12 at 10 a.m. The San Diego Genealogical Society meetings are open to the public. Register via casdgs.org to plan to attend and for a complete calendar of events.

**Thursdays**
**Movie Matinee**
The La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center hosts a series of modern and classic films every Thursday at 1 p.m. in the center’s main hall. Cost is $2 per ticket. For movie listings, visit bit.ly/2y5VoSQ.

**La Mesa Farmers Market**
La Mesa’s farmers market offers fresh local produce, florals, pastries, live music, and arts and crafts each Friday. 3-7 p.m. along La Mesa Boulevard. Free.

**Saturday**
**Shop Local Market**
Last Saturday of the month at Grossmont Center, participating shops set up tables outside and offer markdowns and new product showcases. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 5500 Grossmont Center Drive, La Mesa.

**McKinney House Museum**
The McKinney House Museum, 8369 Ave., is open Saturdays from 1-4 p.m. Fall 2019 exhibit is “La Mesa’s Hospitals: A Brief History of Local Healthcare Institutions.”

**Sundays**
**Traveling Stories**
Visit Grossmont Center each Sunday for an interactive story time for kids. Visit the St...
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“Conquering Your Passwords,” and “Money and Tech: Is Your Digital Wallet Ready?” Presenters were multi-generational, diverse, and have varying perspectives.

“Weer-to-peer learning creates a comfortable, non-threatening environment,” Valanupte, said “Students leave our event feeling motivated and empowered to further use the smart technology they have at their fingertips.” Attendees also had an up-close look at a Tesla Model 1 and Model 5 vehicles, learning about charging options, federal tax credits, and state rebates on electric vehicles. Opportunity drawings for some exciting tech-related gifts were held throughout the day.

San Diego Oasis hosts technology classes and workshops throughout the year at their locations in Grossmont Center, Bay View, and across the county. Visit SanDiegoOasis.org for more information.

**COUNTY PROPOSES CRACKDOWN ON VAPE PRODUCTS**

So far, 12 people have died from a spike in vaping-related illnesses and deaths, on Sept. 30 County Supervisors Dianne Jacob and Nathan Fletcher called for a crackdown on products associated with vaping.

They proposed a ban on the sale and distribution of flavored tobacco products, along with a moratorium on the sale and distribution of the e-devices.

“Vaping-related illnesses are a grave concern and we must take local action to address this fast-growing public health crisis,” said Jacob, chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors. “Teenagers and young adults have been the focus of much of the e-devices. Parents are preying on them for profit.”

According to federal officials, since Aug. 23, there have been at least 2 confirmed deaths nation-wide associated with e-cigarette use, along with more than 800 related lung injury illnesses, most of them since late August as well.

As of Sept. 26, there have been 22 confirmed and probable vaping-associated pulmonary injury (VAPI) cases reported among San Diego County residents.

Nearly 2 out of 5 of those affected are 18 to 24 years old. Sixteen percent are under 18.

According to the state Department of Public Health, teenagers and young adults make up about half of the people hospitalized in California as a result of e-cigarette use. In 2018, 1 in 5 high school seniors reported vaping in the past month – almost double the number reported in 2017.

**SDG&E PROPOSES PLAN TO END BILL SPIKES**

San Diego Gas & Electric’s (SDG&E) residential customers could see lower electric bills next summer under a proposal the company filed today with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to eliminate seasonal pricing changes, which often creates bill spikes during hot summer months.

If approved by the CPUC, a typical residential customer would see their summer bills reduced by about $7 per month. Under the existing seasonal pricing structure, the pricing per kilowatt hour is adjusted twice a year. During the summer months, June–October, rates are adjusted higher to encourage conservation because energy demand tends to be higher during hot months. Winter rates are lower and in effect from November to May.

By eliminating seasonal changes in pricing, SDG&E’s proposal is intended to reduce bill volatility in the summer and provide customers with more consistent bill amounts throughout the year, so it's easier for them to budget for household energy expenses.

The company’s request builds upon previous efforts to stabilize bills and create pricing structures that minimize burden on customers. After extreme bill volatility in the summer of 2018, SDG&E heard the concerns of its customers and filed a request to eliminate the state-mandated High Usage Charge, which led to higher bills for customers who used more than 400% of their baseline allowance. Prior to this summer, the CPUC denied SDG&E’s request to eliminate the High Usage Charge.

“We remain committed to helping our customers and will make every attempt possible to create fair, transparent and reasonable energy rates,” said Scott Crider, SDG&E’s vice president of customer services. “While we were disappointed in the commission’s position on the High Usage Charge, we respect their decision and look forward to working with them to eliminate seasonal price changes to benefit our customers.”

SDG&E’s proposal to eliminate seasonal pricing changes would apply to all residential customers, including those on time-of-use, non-time-of-use, and electric vehicle pricing plans. Today’s filing is the first step in a months-long process for the CPUC to issue a decision on SDG&E’s request. Pending approval, the company hopes to eliminate seasonal pricing changes prior to the start of next summer.