Hotelier Elvin Lai named Honorary Mayor of Pacific Beach

Hotelier and entrepreneur Elvin Lai was recently named Pacific Beach Honorary Mayor by Pacific Beach Town Council for 2021, succeeding back-to-back winner and elementary school teacher Cathie Jolley.

Lai is the owner-operator of the independently owned Ocean Park Inn boutique hotel at 730 Grand Ave. The hotel was founded by his family four generations ago.

As the beach community’s 61st honorary mayor, Lai is continuing a time-honored tradition.

“I am extremely honored and humbled to be named PBTC Honorary Mayor for 2021, and be part of that legacy, be a catalyst of change for the better,” said Lai. “I strive to better our community so that all of Pacific Beach can thrive as one harmonious ecosystem. “We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided,” noted Lai, quoting author J.K. Rowling. “We need to come together and get it done. We have a lot of strength here in PB. I really hope people see that and act on it. We have so much power here in PB to be the change that we want to see, if we’re willing to do the work.”

“The Pacific Beach Town Council has long supported the ‘shop local’ theme, so it seemed a natural idea to have a business person be the 2021 Honorary Mayor,” said Marcella Bothwell of PBTC about Lai’s selection.

“Elvin, however, also has volunteered in the PB community most importantly working diligently on the Clean and Safe Program by Discover PB. Elvin has a natural easy demeanor, but also knows how to get things done in the City, which I think will help the PB community move forward after the pandemic lockdowns are finished.”

HOTELIER ELVIN LAI NAMED HONORARY MAYOR OF PACIFIC BEACH

By DAVE SCHWAB

PHOTO BY JOE ORELLANA

San Diego police officers separate groups on Mission Boulevard during the political rally that turned violent on Jan. 9.
What went wrong at the Pacific Beach political protest?

By DAVE SCHWAB

San Diego police attempt to move people out of the area during the protest on Jan. 9.

COLDWELL BANKER

FRIDAY · FEBRUARY 5, 2021
BEACH & BAY PRESS / LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

By DAVE SCHWAB

(Editors note: This newspaper does not condone violence and destruction property by any group or their supporters. Though we support peaceful protests for all views, insurrection of violence and staged extreemist groups are not welcome in our communities and should not be tolerated.)

In the previous edition of this newspaper, residents and local leaders commented on how they felt about the large political gathering in Pacific Beach on Jan. 9, which turned violent.

But what happened on that sunny afternoon in early January? How did a planned assembly by Trump supporters go haywire? Eyewitnesses to the rally-turned-scuffle say it was Antifa and Black Lives Matter supporters who were responsible for the violence. The politically charged protest ultimately left several people injured, three arrested, and lingering questions about what actually happened and why.

Witnesses at the scene, including local photographer John Cocozza, event promoter Mike Spangler, and two bystanders (who, fearing reprisals, requested anonymity), recounted firsthand accounts given by eyewitnesses to investigate. The complex located a pool, gym, sauna, gated parking & private storage. Pacific Towers is one of only two high rise buildings in Pacific Beach. The amenities include basic internet capable, pool, small gym, newer exercise room, sauna, bike storage and an on-site manager.

New 78th Assembly District member Caryn Blanton of nonprofit Shoreline Community Services working with the homeless received the new Ellen Citroni Caring and Compassion Award. Citrono, a retired Navy nurse, has done extensive volunteer work in the beach community.

COLDWELL BANKER

PB Town Council honors community volunteers

NEW 78TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT MEMBER CARYN BLANTON

New 78th Assembly District member Chris Ward administered the oath of office to incoming members at Pacific Beach Town Council’s Jan. 14 Zoom meeting.

Marcella Bothwell, installed as new PBTC president, handed out community awards including one to this year’s Honorary Mayor, hotelier Elvin Lai, owner-operator of Ocean Park Inn.

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The path forward: 2021 economic outlook for San Diego region

By LYNN REASER

Housing is booming, spurred by low mortgage rates and people wanting more space.

Even as firms have failed, new ones are being formed. In California, 2020 saw new business applications up by 42% at year-end. The region’s economy is slowly clawing its way back. As of year-end, four major sectors had reached employment levels equal or greater than their pre-pandemic totals: construction, business and professional services, retailing (boosted by e-commerce), and utilities.

Housing is booming, spurred by low mortgage rates and people wanting more space. Home prices ended the year up 12% relative to a year ago. Stocks soared in 2020, with the S&P 500 Index ending the year up 16%. Congress passed more COVID relief in December, raising unemployment benefits and sending out $600 checks to most adults. Mayor Todd Gloria has announced the receipt of $42 million of federal funding for the purpose of rent relief.

What to Expect in 2021

Boats of optimism and pessimism will define the next several months as San Diegans struggle to emerge from the pandemic’s scourge. Following are questions and answers to some of the key issues facing us.

- How much further will the economy suffer?

Vaccination rates need to be accelerated well beyond one million per day or it will take until mid-2022 before “herd immunity” can be restored. In the meantime, new vaccine-resistant mutations of the virus could appear. Without a major pickup in San Diego’s vaccine rollouts, the economy will remain substantially shuttered. The first quarter could see further job losses and the second quarter looks like it will begin with considerable weakness.

- How will President Biden’s economic policies affect the outlook?

President Biden wants to provide urgent additional stimulus, proposing an additional spend total of $1.9 trillion. While Congress may not approve full funding, it may pass more than half of the total. Another $1,400 of direct individual payments, more help for the unemployed, and some additional assistance for state and local governments are likely to be included. While some of this money will go into savings accounts, the amount spent will help backstop parts of the region’s economy that are still suffering.

- Restaurants, hotels, and entertainment recovering?

Economic lockdowns have slashed more than one-quarter of payrolls in San Diego’s leisure and hospitality industry. The toll has been severe when you realize that the industry employs nearly one of every seven of the region’s workers. While restaurants recently saw operating rules relaxed, a broad reopening of the entertainment industry is likely to wait until the second half of 2021 or when approximately 75% of the population has been vaccinated.

- How will consumers and businesses respond?

After more than a year spent primarily in home-confinement, consumers will be eager to return to their pre-pandemic lives. They may retain some of their new habits by working only part-time at the office and continuing their streaming subscriptions. Many may have to start paying for student loans, rent, or mortgages where various forbearance programs have been in effect. The release of pent-up demand will dominate, however, as consumers flock to restaurants, entertainment venues, and even shopping malls. Confidence over a return to “normal” will soar, accompanied by a rebound in spending.

Businesses will need to ramp up hiring to meet the resurgence in demand.
Added Cocozza: “The police inaction initially gave these people more cause to up the violence making things even worse. The police should have identified the troublemakers, zip-tied them and arrested them, just got those people out of the crowd. We were told [police] were ordered to not get involved. We need to hold the police accountable for this, if that came from higher up. If that’s a policy-level decision, the policy needs to be changed.”

Added Takeuchi: “We will investigate all crimes brought to our attention, but we need to hear from victims to ensure a crime was committed and prosecution is desired. Also, police reports don’t confirm events. They are merely allegations made by a victim that need to be corroborated with evidence.

The department would like any victim of a crime that occurred during this incident to contact our Northern Division substation at 858-552-1700.”

Concluded Cocozza: “You don’t go to a protest with blunt-force objects. The police should have said, ‘Nope, this isn’t happening.’ The cops should have just put that down. They had more than enough personnel.”

Another anonymous observer said they were attacked while photographing the event with their iPhone by Antifa members who stole their bike and destroyed it. They added, when they reported that to police on-scene a short time later, they were told, “We can’t leave our posts. Call a dispatcher.”

Cocozza made another claim about what he’s convinced caused the fracas.

“When word got out that Trump supporters were going to rally in PB, Antifa and BLM people got the word out,” he said. “They created fliers saying, ‘Come down to PB and stop the rally, the Nazis, the racists and the white supremacists.’ That in itself is just nonsense, because the Trump demographic is every single race.”

Cocozza added it his belief the anti-Trump camp brought people down to film altercations during the protest, then selectively manipulate and edit the film footage to misrepresent that it was Trump supporters who had instigated the violence.

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Covered California is a private health insurance exchange that was established through Affordable Care Act legislation for individuals and families not eligible for Medi-Cal. The program allows California residents to purchase quality health insurance plans to fit individual and family needs. The cost of each insurance plan is based on certain factors, including family size and income.

Covered California has extended its Special Enrollment Period from February 1 to May 15, 2021 without a qualifying life event.

Health Plan Benefits
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1. Preventive, wellness and chronic disease management services
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4. Mental health and substance use disorder services, including behavioral health treatment (this includes counseling and psychotherapy)
5. Rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices (services and devices to help people with injuries, disabilities, or chronic conditions gain or recover mental and physical skills)
6. Prescription drugs
7. Ambulatory and emergency services
8. Laboratory services and hospitalization (surgery and overnight stays)

For free enrollment help, call (619) 515-2363 or visit fhcsd.org/covered-california.
El Avocado vegan restaurant fills a need in La Jolla

By DAVE SCHWAB

Established for just a month, vegan restaurant El Avocado is already firmly planted in La Jolla Village. There’s a need for healthy fast-casual food with good ingredients that are prepared mindfully: It makes a difference,” said Shanti Claydon, co-owner and chef of the new plant-based, ground-level eatery at 1025 Prospect St., Suite 130.

“My lease on a vegan restaurant in Escondido was up around the time of COVID anyway and one of my friends, Danielle La Salle, who is Jewish, wanted to be my business partner. He saw the need for kosher and vegan restaurants. Our goal is to franchise these (El Avocados).” Vegan refers to food free of all animal products including meat, fish, milk, cheese, or eggs.

Billing herself as the “queen of green cuisine,” Claydon talked about her conversion to vegetarianism. “Do you know where this meat came from?” was the question a co-worker asked Claydon once that initially set her on a meatless culinary path. “We have this picture you see on labels of happy animals on farms. That’s how it used to be. But it’s not like that anymore. When I realized the way it really was (factory produced), I decided I didn’t want to contribute. You vote with your money. It’s the only way you make a difference.”

Claydon started selling vegan soups at farmers markets, before being invited to do vegan-style cooking for families. “Eventually, I got a restaurant up in Escondido, all-vegan,” she noted, adding she also owned a catering business. El Avocado’s chef-driven menu, currently serving 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays for lunch and dinner features a healthy assortment of wraps, soups, salads, toasts, and sandwiches.

El Avocado vegan restaurant at 1025 Prospect St. in La Jolla.

PHOTO BY DAVE SCHWAB

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San Diegans urged to be patient to get vaccinated against COVID-19

By JOSE A. ÁLVAREZ

The number of San Diegans wanting to be vaccinated against the novel coronavirus significantly exceeds the total doses that have been shipped to the region to date. That’s why County health officials are urging San Diegans to be patient and get vaccinated when it’s their turn.

The County has opened four vaccination superstations and operates 15 smaller community points of dispensing or PODs. While combined they have the capacity to vaccinate 20,000 people daily, the County doesn’t have access to that many daily doses yet to be able to vaccinate everyone who wants one.

“Due to the limited number of COVID-19 vaccine doses in the region, County community clinics are continuing to vaccinate only health care professionals and people 65 and older,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County public health officer. “We’re asking San Diegans to be patient and to get vaccinated when more doses are available.

Vaccination appointments are only available for the number of doses we have on hand or we know are coming.”

Doctors, pharmacies, community clinics, and other health care providers are also working to provide vaccinations to San Diegans in the priority groups.

To make the COVID-19 vaccine available to more people who qualify, local paramedics and emergency medical technicians are administering vaccinations in rural communities.

These rotating vaccination clinics are part of Operation Collaboration, an effort involving about two dozen fire and emergency services agencies including CAL FIRE and San Diego County Fire Protection District. Fire agencies are also helping to vaccinate people in long-term care facilities.

All County vaccination superstations and PODs require appointment and can be made at vaccinastations sdnews.com.

People 75 and over and who do not have access to a computer or someone to assist them may dial 2-1-1 for appointment assistance. Also, County-funded community health workers, known as promoters, will be reaching out to people 75 and older directly to help them make vaccination appointments.

The Metropolitan Transit System is offering free rides to people with proof of a vaccination appointment.

To date, more than 586,000 COVID-19 doses have been delivered to the region. Of those, more than 357,000 have been administered, including more than 58,000 San Diegans who have received their two doses and 10.2 percent of the population over age 16 who have received at least one dose.

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com
Like just about everything else, Valentine’s Day and weekend is going to be observed a little bit differently this year. But COVID or not, there are things to do, places to go and special deals for romantic interludes to be had in coastal restaurants from Pacific Beach to La Jolla. Jodi Rudick, executive director for La Jolla Village Merchants Association, had several ideas for what to do in “the Jewel” to celebrate the mid-February holiday classic.

“A romantic stroll through the art galleries is one of the most romantic ways to spend some time with the one you love,” Rudick suggested. “Art is a great way to get to know someone on a different level. Whether you’re enjoying the incredible photography of Peter Lik, Thomas Mangelsen, Jan Ely, or Nathan Myhrvold (Modernist Cuisine Gallery), or prefer the whimsy of Dr. Seuss, Keith Haring or Roy Lichtenstein, La Jolla literally has something for all. And don’t forget the wildlife. ‘Of course, La Jolla is famous for its seals, sea lions and sunsets — a trifecta of nature’s perfection,’ pointed out Rudick. “Nothing is more fun than watching seal moms teaching their brand new pups to swim and surf in the waves. It’s not only mesmerizing but a reminder of how lucky we are to access the coast.”

Added Rudick: “For those looking for incredible dining with a view, nothing beats La Jolla’s selection of restaurants, eateries and cafes. Whether you want to grab-and-go for a picnic at the Cove, or are looking for alfresco options, La Jolla literally has something for all budgets and tastes.

**LA JOLLA**

• La Valencia Hotel at 1132 Prospect St. is serving up love with a coursed meal prepared by chef Timothy Ralphs with specialty Valentine’s cocktails. Enjoy an amuse bouche starter, choice of beef or salmon entree, and dessert for $89 per person. Finish your romantic evening with a sweet take-home gift when you dine at the Pink Lady. Now accepting reservations through OpenTable.

• Order a La Valencia gift card online and treat the one you love to a La Jolla getaway with no expiration date,” said hotel marketing manager Annalise Dewhurst. Feeding San Diego supporters can make a donation and send a special e-card to a loved one this Valentine’s Day, with all funds helping to provide nutritious meals for people facing hunger.

• Beaumont’s at 5662 La Jolla Blvd. in is pulling out all the stops this year with it’s “Night In Paris” Valentine’s menu. The special menu includes choice of starter, entree, and dessert. Wine pairings available. Reservations encouraged.

• Roberta at Piazza 1909 will feature a special four-course menu, with choices for starter, taste of a pasta or gluten free option, entree and a dessert to share prepared by the pastry chef.

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• 1 teaspoon salt

For the filling:

• 1 pound ground beef

• 1 medium onion, diced

• 1 small can of mushrooms, drained

• 1/2 cup of milk

• 1/2 cup of flour

• 1/4 cup of butter

• 1/4 cup of sugar

• 1/2 teaspoon of salt

• 1/2 teaspoon of pepper

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.

2. In a large mixing bowl, mix flour and salt. Gradually add butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Set aside.

3. In a large skillet, cook ground beef over medium heat until brown. Drain excess fat. Add onion and mushrooms to the skillet and cook until tender.

4. In a medium bowl, mix flour, milk, sugar, salt, and pepper. Add to the meat mixture and mix well.

5. Pour the meat mixture into a 9-inch pie plate. Drop crumbly mixture over meat. Place in the oven and bake for 30-40 minutes or until brown.


**RIP Gene Blickenstaff**

Gene Blickenstaff died peacefully surrounded by family at home in La Jolla, California on January 22, 2021. Family and friends were his absolute passion and priority. As a highly sought after and respected Radiologist, he was extremely devoted to his work and patients. Gene is survived by his lovely wife Denise of 63 years, daughter Cathy Blickenstaff McAllister; son Mark Blickenstaff and wife Laurie, son Michael Blickenstaff; and five grandchildren: Cameron and Cayla McAllister, Steven Blickenstaff (Shelby), Gina Blickenstaff Clark (Cheyse), and Kelyn Blickenstaff. A virtual on-line memoriam service will be held at 1:15 PM on Saturday February 6, 2021. The feeding San Diego supporters generously matching all e-card funds to the Catamaran Hotel and back. This event is free and open to the public (wear something red).
Mission Bay rugby club gearing up for new season

By DAVE SCHWAB

Mission Bay High School has a new team sport...rugby. Actually, right now it's a club. "High school rugby in San Diego is rather new, but a quickly growing group," said Lisa Mandel, MBHS rugby team manager.

"Rugby is a youth club sport in San Diego and first went into the high schools as a club sponsored by the local club teams. Now we have two different leagues Southern California Youth Rugby (SCYR) and Southern California Interscholastic Rugby Federation (SICFR) hosting teams in more than 30 high schools in San Diego County alone and growing."

Rugby is a collective name for the family of team sports of rugby union and rugby league, from which Australian rules football and gridiron football evolved. Canadian football, and to a lesser extent American football, were also broadly considered forms of rugby football.

Distinctive features common to both rugby codes include the oval ball. Throwing the ball forward is also not allowed so players can gain ground only by running with the ball or by kicking it. Unlike American and Canadian football, the players do not wear body protection.

"Rugby football started about 1845 at Rugby School in Rugby, Warwickshire, England although forms of football in which the ball was carried and tossed date to medieval times. Rugby football was one of many versions of football played at English public schools in the 19th century. Why rugby?"

"My kids have been playing rugby since they were 5 years old with Aztec Youth Club rug- by and we have found that, more than any sport we have done, it creates a sense of teamwork and community that is incredible," said Mandel. "It is physical but the kids do not have pads on and are taught how to tackle low and safely. It is active. This is a game of a continuous running clock. Anyone can score. Everyone gets the ball and it is constantly moving until the end. It is fast-paced, active, and exciting."

Added Mandel: "After each game sportsmanship is seen in each team circling up togeth- er arm and arm and picking an MVP of the opposing team."

Top row, from left: Samuel Arevalo, Carson Wisdom, Grant Palmer, Jackson Huntley, David Estrella, Jake Lingoi, Jessie Amador, Jake Cameron, Collin Hayward, Liam Kane, Paz Reyes, James Ward, Coach Benjamin Lebeaupin. Bottom row from left: Layne Northcutt, Lennox Crosley, Nathaniel Jarrett, Travis Knight, Jacob Mandel, Nikolas Mendez, Alec Walwer, Keau Santos, Giovanni Frank (not pictured Jake Kepner). COURTESY PHOTO

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paths to power and experiences during the publicity book tour

By Natalie Joesell, PhD

My book, “Paths to Power: A Woman’s Guide from First Job to Top Executive” was on the bestseller list. In the 1980s, publishers would arrange book tours for their authors. It was grueling. I would take a plane to a city where I would be met by an escort to take me to a hotel, or, more often, she would take me straight to the TV or radio station where I would be interviewed. Then several publicity stops would follow where I would sometimes get an hour or sometimes just a few minutes, enough to tout my book. There was always an evening event.

My next day would start with a 6 a.m. newscast, followed by additional interviews running from morning to late afternoon. My escort would drive me from place to place with interview details arranged beforehand. After the last evening interview, she would take me to the airport. I boarded a plane for the next city, where I would be met by another escort who drove me to my hotel. This worked well when the cities were located close to one another, such as one day in Providence, Rhode Island, and the following day in New York City or a day in Washington, D.C. and the next day in Toronto, Canada. Other times I would fly back to San Diego, teach on Wednesday and Thursday, and fly off to Cincinnati or Boston or Chicago for the day.

Not everything went smoothly. Towards the end of one of my tours, I woke up in my hotel room and looked out the window. I was in Phoenix, Arizona, or so I thought, looking at a large body of water. I called the front desk and asked about the water outside my window; it was San Francisco Bay. Obviously I was very exhausted.

Even after the book tour was over, my publisher continued to book me at local events. One of the more rewarding experiences was being a weekly guest on Sun Up San Diego. The show host, Kaitli Diamant, was my interviewer; we became good friends. I was called their poet-philosopher in residence. I often used the materials that I was teaching in my management classes at San Diego State University. In addition, I did a lot of radio shows: these were called “bathrobe interviews” since I could be home in a bathrobe. For many years, I appeared as a weekly guest on PBS Radio as well as NPR’s All Things Considered. I enjoyed these opportuni- ties, especially when there was time for questions. They mostly centered around nug- gling work and family, discrimi- nation in the workplace, and unfairness in promotions (often given to less-qualified males). Meanwhile, I continued to teach and write. I received a grant from the Navy to study the personnel at the local naval base. I interviewed people from different countries with their spouses. Out of this research, my book, You’re the Boss: Managing Diversity with Understanding and Effectiveness was published by Warner Books in 1985.

A challenging experience was being hired by Ray Blair, the then-manager of the City of San Diego, to run work- shops on sexual harassment. I became their expert for three years, produced a video, and wrote a manual entitled Sex and Power. The American Management Association then hired me to run these sexual harassment workshops in ma- ny parts of the country.

In 1988, I co-authored “Fitting In: How to Get a Good Start in Your New Job” with my husband, Herman Gadon. I also had several books of poety published by Blue Mountain Arts. Upon retiring in 2005, I wrote “Retirement: The Next Great Adventure.” Then after Herman died in 2009, “Living Without the One You Cannot Live Without” was released.

One of my greatest pleasures today is being a columnist. This allows me to write about ideas I am mulling over and re- searching. I have been writing a weekly column since 1985, first for the San Diego Business Journal, followed by the San Diego Daily Transcript, then syndicated with Copley News, then on to the La Jolla Light, and now with the La Jolla Village News, which publishes every other week. This makes over 1,000 columns written to date. What is fun for me is being published in a local paper. Often people stop me in restaurants or email me and mention reading my columns. I like getting comments, which are mostly positive, but not always. I actually appreciate negative feedback, because it usually has some truth to it for me to learn from.

Natasha Josewotiz is the author of 21 books. She currently resides at White Sands Retirement Community in La Jolla. Copyright © 2021. Natasha Josewotiz. All rights reserved.
The streets in Pacific Beach were renamed several times before receiving their current designations in 1900. The primary north-south street running parallel to the beach is Mission Blvd., with the streets named after late 19th century federal officials, then incrementing in alphabetical order as they move further from the coast.

PB Fun Fact:
The streets in Pacific Beach were renamed several times before receiving their current designations in 1900. The primary north-south street running parallel to the beach is Mission Blvd., with the streets named after late 19th century federal officials, then incrementing in alphabetical order as they move further from the coast.

Here is what your North PB neighbor recently had to say about our service:

“Scott and Nicole were simply outstanding. They helped us sell our home in Pacific Beach and buy a condo. During both transactions they were easy to communicate with, provided excellent advice, and made difficult to deal with situations easier. The marketing of our Pacific Beach home was wonderful with great photos and handouts. They were at our home for every showing and pointed out some of the features that a buyer might miss. During the negotiations they helped us get the best outcome and were the voice of reason to help guide us. During the purchase of the condo they were easily accessible even though we were no longer in the area and in a different time zone. Simply put they made buying and selling homes an easier process and were a pleasure to work with. We highly recommend them for any real estate transaction you have.”

- Art & Andie L.

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