City Council responds to report on May riots

At the La Mesa City Council meeting on Jan. 26, the firm Hillard Heintze presented their final after-action report based on the events of May 30, 2020. The report was already made public but this was the first time the City Council had an opportunity to discuss it with the firm and La Mesa Police Department Acting Chief Matt Nicholas.

The report was made based on briefings with the City Council, staff, LMPD, Heartland Fire, citizens, business owners and Citizen Public Safety Oversight Task Force members. In addition, Hillard Heintze held a community listening session and viewed video files and listened to dispatch recordings from the night in which two banks and an architecture firm's building were burnt down. In addition, resident Leslie Furcron lost an eye to a police beanbag round.

The report praised the police department for showing restraint during the protests and riots on the night of May 30 despite little training with crowd control. The citizens in charge of dispatch also received high acknowledgement for remaining calm while the windows near their desks were broken. However, the report also had scathing indictments of the department’s policies, or lack thereof, and the communication breakdowns during the night in which two banks and an architecture firm’s building were burnt down.

Gary Burt, who performs under the moniker ‘The Frank Guy,’ has been holding regular concerts for neighbors during the pandemic. (Courtesy photo)

SINGIN’ THE BLUES AWAY

Gary Burt, who performs under the moniker ‘The Frank Guy,’ has been holding regular concerts for neighbors during the pandemic. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

Local entertainer brightens neighborhood with weekly concerts

Gary Burt has weathered a particularly difficult storm during the pandemic. He lost a sister to COVID in October and over the Christmas holiday his wife was sick with heart trouble and he couldn’t visit her. Also, he couldn’t work his usual gig of singing Frank Sinatra songs under his stage moniker “The Frank Guy.” But through all of that, Burt has maintained a really upbeat attitude by sharing his vocal talents with his neighbors.

Stay home orders disrupt local restaurants

On Dec. 3 a statewide stay at home order was announced by Gov. Newsom. It went into effect Dec. 6. These restrictions have drastically impacted restaurant owners due to the closing of outdoor dining. On Jan. 20, San Diego County District 2 Supervisor Joel Anderson met with La Mesa restaurant and business owners in response to the Dec. 6 stay at home order that has impacted businesses statewide. They advocated for restricted COVID-19 enforcement actions until scientific data proves their businesses’ activities pose a health risk. Anderson said this was to encourage the distinction between “political science, or medical science.”

Mary England, president of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce, attended the meeting and said, “It’s easy to look at a

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Girl Scouts adopt COVID measures for annual cookie sales. Page 4

Smoky & The Brisket opens on Lake Murray Boulevard. Page 10

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I was frustrated with my weight

With snacking in the evening and feeling like it was too much work to change and I kept slipping back, focusing on the negative connotation of ‘diet’. I do not have the desire to snack at night and enjoy physical exercise!

-Diane S, La Mesa
Community garden receives grant

The San Diego Foundation recently awarded a $30,000 Age-Friendly Community grant to the La Mesa Community Garden. The Age-Friendly Communities Program promotes systems-level change to prioritize age-friendly initiatives in transportation, housing, outdoor spaces and buildings, community support and health services, respect and social inclusion, communication and information, and civic participation, and employment. The City of La Mesa is recognized as a Global Age-Friendly Community and in 2019 adopted the Livable La Mesa Age Friendly Action Plan with technical support from The San Diego Foundation.

This grant will help fund the remaining infrastructure needed for the first public community garden in the City of La Mesa, located at MacArthur Park, centrally located close to La Mesa's historic downtown.

Why Homeowners Leave Thousands Behind When Selling Their Homes

La Mesa – A new report has just been released which reveals 7 costly mistakes that most homeowners make when selling their home, and a 9 Step System that can help you sell your home fast and the most amount of money.

This industry report shows clearly how the traditional ways of selling homes have become increasingly less and less effective in today’s market. The fact of this matter is that fully three quarters of homeowners don’t get what they want for their homes and become disillusioned and worse financially disadvantaged when they put their homes on the market.

As this report uncovers, most homesellers make 7 deadly mistakes that cost them literally thousands of dollars.

The good news is that each and every one of these mistakes is entirely preventable. In answer to this issue, industry insiders have prepared a free special report entitles “The 9 Step System to Get your Home Sold Fast and For Top Dollar”. To order your FREE copy of this report, call toll-free 1-800-270-1494 and enter 1000. You can call anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Get your free special report Now to find out how you can get the most money for your home.
Korematsu Day
CONTINUED FROM Page 2
pronounce his name correctly with the proper Greek dialect.
Korematsu’s daughter, Karen Korematsu, who helped champi-
on the State of California declaring Jan. 30 Fred Korematsu Day alongside San Diego then-Assem-
by member Marty Block 10 years ago, also spoke.
“We feel now especially we need to teach and impart history so it leads to civic participation that is meaningful,” the younger Korematsu said.
The holding is meant to pro-
mote historical education as well as advocating for preserving civil liberties and upholding the con-
stitution even in times of terror.
The proclamation was brought forward by La Mesa’s newest City Councilman Jack Shu who is Asian American.
“History is not just dates, times and names. History is a tool — the story of Fred Korematsu to help us deal with racial tensions in our community, to look at how we can improve government, how we can move ahead and not just deal with hate and fear in our commu-
ities. This is our start to move our communities forward from all the com-
modation we had this last year,” Shu said.
“It ultimately seems fitting — Reach contributing edi-
tor Kendra Sitten at kendra@ut-
now.com.
George Takaï (Photo by Gage Skidmore, courtesy Wikimedia Commons)
Councilman, will declare Jan. 30 as Fred Korematsu Day,” Takaï said.
Nicole Ries says that La Mesa residents “are very welcoming and a

Girl Scouts adopt COVID safety for cookie sales
by MARY DOYLE
As a Girl Scout living in Clairemont and Santee, young Nicole Ries enjoyed the rituals of the cookie program: ringing door-
bells, setting up a card table at her church, and making a personal pitch to employees at her parents’ workplaces. Years later, when she discovered she was pregnant with her first of two daugh-
ters, Nicole began investigating Girl Scout volunteer opportuni-
ties. Now she leads Troop 5909, a group based at Clay Elementary in La Mesa and includes her daugh-
ters, Lily and Rosie, and their troopmates in grades K-2.
Last year, Lily topped the La Mesa Service Unit in number of cookie packages marketed by a Daisy Girl Scout. During cookie season, she insisted on wearing her sash everywhere and stocking the car with inventory at all times because — as she explained to her mother — encountering potential customers without have cookies available would be “rude!” This year, as an 8-year-old Brownie Girl Scout, the young entrepreneur is hoping to set a new personal best.
To ensure the safety of Girl Scouts and cookie buyers alike, troops are following the county health guidelines established to help reduce COVID-19 transmis-
sions. Therefore, Lily and other Girl Scouts are approaching the cookie program a bit differently this year, using both time-honored and in-
novative techniques in a social-
ly-distanced manner to provide a contactless cookie experience.
Girls are dropping flyers and door-hangers outside homes in their neighborhoods, a classic way to market their wares. They are also putting their tech badge skills to good use with digital market-
ning, ordering, and payment accep-
tance. Digital Cookie is an order taking website and app that helps Girl Scouts safely and effectively manage their cookie businesses online. Customers can opt for di-
rect delivery by FedEx or UPS. In some cases, girls will provide contactless delivery by dropping off orders at doorsteps or creating a safe pick-up point.
Cookie fans who know a Girl Scout can ask her for an invita-
tion to her secure and personalized Digital Cookie site. Otherwise, they can visit sdgirlscouts.org/cookies where, beginning Feb. 1, they can download a Cookie Finder app.
Nicole Ries says that La Mesa residents “are very welcoming and supportive of Girl Scouts. Surfrider Pizza, the Joann store, and many other fantastic businesses gra-

ciously host cookie booths for our local troops.” Booth sales are not permitted at this time, as the county is in the purple risk level.
Customers have a brand-new option this year. A national part-
nership that begins in February will allow people to order and pay for cookies through Grubhub’s website or app. Girl Scouts will gain hands-on experience, learn-


ing and utilizing e-commerce technology as they use Grubhub’s back-end technology to track or-
ders and manage their cookie businesses. Therefore, Lily and her troopmates who became Brownies this year are proud that their new uniforms were purchased with a portion of their 2020 cookie money.

Many San Diegans opt to donate cookies through ‘Operation Thin Mint,’ a program that sends “a taste of home and a note to show we care” to deployed U.S. service members and local veterans. Since it originated 20 years ago, military personnel serving our country in places like Iraq, Korea, Diego Garcia, and the Arctic Circle have received over 3.25 million pack-
ages of America’s favorite cookies. Nicole noted that La Mesans are particularly generous about donat-
ing Operation Thin Mint cookies.
Girls ages 5-17 are welcome to join Girl Scouts at any time. For information, visit sdgirlscouts.org or email customercare@sd-
girlscouts.org.

—Mary Doyle writes on behalf of Girl Scouts San Diego.
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COVID-19 vaccine is here, older adults should still take precautions

By Sharp Health News Team

By SIMONE VALANCIUTE

COVID-19 cases are surging across the U.S., a harsh reality that students, parents, teachers and staff feared would happen when many schools opened for in-person sessions. As a result, schools throughout the nation have closed and shifted to remote learning in recent weeks. What will it take to return kids to the classroom and keep schools open? Though vaccines have been approved, it will be months before children, their families, and school personnel are vaccinated. Until then, implementing a plan that includes processes for virus detection and response is paramount.

The problem that schools are facing is that there is still a significant prevalence of COVID in many communities. Schools need to do everything they can to prevent outbreaks. Otherwise it’s going to continue shuts down schools.

On top of that you have to deal with a tremendous amount of anxiety. The students, parents, faculty, and staff are all on pins and needles because they are feeling insecure about their health. The only way to address all of this is through a comprehensive health security strategy that can work when so many variables are in play. In my capacity as an expert in pandemic preparedness and experience delivering COVID-19 testing to K-12 schools in New York City through my company Inhouse Physicians (inhousephysicians.com), I offers these suggestions to safely open schools while navigating the continuing COVID-19 crisis:

• Daily temperature checks. They’re not a foolproof method, but it can help if the person has COVID. A significant number are asymptomatic, but fever is a common symptom, and because it is, temperature checks should be a fundamental daily procedure. I suggest two ways to organize the temperature checking process at schools:
  1. Designate some staff members, who can each scan about 600 students an hour; and
  2. use thermal scanners, a device that can scan 400-600 people an hour.

• Screening for symptoms and close contacts.

OPINIONS/LETTERS: La Mesa Courier encourages letters to the editor and guest editors. Please email submissions to jeff@sdnews.com and include your phone number and address for verification. We reserve the right to edit letters for brevity and accuracy. Letters and guest editors do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher or staff.

SUBMISSIONS/NEWS TIPS: Send press releases, tips, photos or story ideas to jeff@sdnews.com. For breaking news and investigative story ideas contact the editor by phone or email.

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POLITICS

GOP lies incite domestic terrorism, as Dems prepare to govern

By JEN QUINTAL

Jan. 6, 2021, will appear in American history books for generations, alongside dates like Dec. 7, 1941 and April 14, 1865 — days that became seared into our national psyche by events that both inflame the conscience and encumber the heart.

On Jan. 6, the world watched in horrified disbelief as a sitting U.S. president incited a mob of followers to attack the hallowed home of our democracy. Scores of mostly white people stormed the U.S. Capitol building, charging beneath flags that bore the sigil of the Marquis of Queensbury rules and surname of the object of their nihilistic idolatry. The sinister motivation of the riotous rabble was literal sedition: conspiring to interfere with the constitutionally required democratic process being conducted at that moment in the chambers of Congress.

What ensued was a sordid spectacle of vandalism, desecration, mayhem and murder. Throughout, Trump refused to seriously condemn the marauders, or to ask them to desist. And he could not have done so authentically, since the paroxysm of anti-patriotism was the logical conclusion of his years-long campaign of self-serving lies, and calamitous conspiracy theories. But Trump’s lies alone would have been insufficient fuel for that treasonous fire to burn. The configuration drew its oxygen from the cynical enabling of Republican senators and congresspersons. For months, GOP officeholders either expressly endorsed Trump’s ridiculous claims of election fraud, or coyly muttered limp ambiguities, never expressly condemning the lies.

Thus, on Jan. 6, a ceremonial recording of votes became a vehicle for political preaching by the wretched likes of Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley; both former clerks for U.S. Supreme Court justices, they knew that the outcome of the vote counting was not changeable. But they knowingly lied to Trump’s frothing supporters to fundraise, and to burnish their credentials for the lunatic vote in the 2024 presidential contest. The frothing Trump supporters heard lies, never expressly condemning the lies.

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To all of them, their names must be forever remembered for this sin against our nation. May their reputations be forever lashed with an iron cord to Trump’s repulsive legacy. And may history’s judgment of them be harsh and unforgiving. Their disgrace and ignominy will be well deserved.

Jan. 6 was momentous for another, more hopeful reason. That day the nation learned that Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock had won both of Georgia’s U.S. Senate seats. Critically, this gives the Democrats majority control, with Vice President Harris’ tie-breaking vote of the Senate. This provides the Biden administration the opportunity to achieve important legislation for all Americans. First priorities will be to correct the failures and underfunding of Trump’s COVID vaccine distribution, to provide much needed stimulus money to American workers and small businesses.

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Restaurant owners have been affected by the restrictions...that's when it really hits home.”

To give La Mesa citizens a better understanding of the “hit home effect,” England spoke of three restaurant owners vocalized the reality of the situation due to the second round of restrictions from the stay at home order.

Gy Kirk, owner of Sheldon’s Service Station, spoke about his business hardships.

“My experiences through the last year have impacted my business with loss of revenue on a daily basis,” he said. “We haven’t changed the [business] model from the initial hit. We have a strong positive following that keeps our hopes alive. Our time is spent on staying viable, while still being consistent to standards.”

The common thread among restaurant owners is this daily conflict to just maintain their services without sacrificing the dining experience. However, the dining experience has indeed changed with the stay at home order. Outdoor seating was shut down. While I am excited, I am also surprised to see how long it might last,” she said. “What people might not realize, especially our elected government officials, is what it takes to provide dining to our La Mesa Village community while keeping safety a top priority in order to stay viable. We can only hope that all of our restaurants will be able to reopen once it is deemed possible.”

Just five days after the meeting with District Two Supervisor Anderson, the state-wide stay at home order and it’s restrictions were lifted on Jan. 25.

Despite the return to outdoor dining options for area restaurants, Leek remained skeptical of how long it might last.

“We’re hours off of another reopening. While I am excited, I am also reluctant to get too excited and jump to the gun. We’ve been on this road so many times,” she said. “What people might not realize, especially our elected government officials, is what it takes for a restaurant to open and close. We have a model that we have to stay in compliance with and everything changes at the beginning of the year, I don’t just open a restaurant. I mean I am excited, but it’s an insult to the industry. You think it’s that easy to open up? There are so many rules and restrictions for us to follow.”

When asked how La Mesa citizens can do their part in helping local businesses upon reopening, Leek said, “The general public has already been overwhelmingly supportive. For Curbside or other restaurants, just be patient. You’re all starting over again. Give us a minute. It’s not just my staff but overall everyone. There are a lot of components in service. Everything is brand new.”

—Editorial intern Elaine Alfaro is a student at Point Loma Nazarene University.
New BBQ joint on Lake Murray

By ROBIN DORHN-SIMPSON

Why open a new restaurant in the middle of a pandemic? Because we need comfort. Comfort food calms the soul.

We have all been driving by this restaurant for months wondering what is going on behind the canvas walls. Now we know! Smokey & The Brisket has moved into the neighborhood and we are lucky.

BBQ is an art form and art takes time. No one knows that better than a pit boss. Smokey’s pit boss works around the clock for our enjoyment. He is busy smoking all the traditional meats and some unique sausages. Chef/owner Alberto Morreale, from the Farmer’s Table and Farmer’s Bottega, is all about feeding La Mesa residents good food.

Designers have been busy too, creating a clever motorcycle and automotive theme. The front counter is made of the red toolboxes that all of you gear heads have in your garage. Also, a 1960’s Dodge A100 van with the top cut off has been converted into a bar. The beer taps resemble motorcycle gas tanks. Booths and chairs have racing stripes and the armrests have illuminated taillights, and of course, an old gas pump and a motorcycle grace the dining area.

On the menu, you will find the full range of meats that everyone knows and loves brisket, pulled pork, rotisserie chicken, both pork and beef spare ribs and Texas smoked sausage links. If you just can’t live without a hamburger, you’re in luck — and it is good.

See SMOKEY & BRISKET, Page 11

Dine Local
Look Who’s Open For Business!

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Elazteca Taco Shop (Courtesy photos)

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Elazteca Taco Shop (Courtesy photos)

Elazteca Taco Shop (Courtesy photos)

Elazteca Taco Shop (Courtesy photos)
If you want a whole or half chicken, they have three different options: herb, habanero and Alabama chicken with a white Alabama BBQ sauce.

Lest you think the menu is all meat, there is a nice selection of salads such as Burnt Carrots and Cauliflower Salad with Arugula, goat cheese and cilantro-lime vinaigrette and a Smoked Pulled Chicken Salad topped with Fritos. The menu also includes an “Ooey Gooey” jalapeno mac ‘n cheese featuring brisket burnt ends. Try some of the delicious side dishes like Brussels sprouts, cowboy caviar, mashed potatoes and cornbread. They offer four different flatbreads with handcrafted 48-hour rising dough. Kids love BBQ too and they are not forgotten with cheeseburgers, chicken tenders, and other sandwiches. If you are feeding an army, they offer a meal for four to six and another for 12 to 14.

Currently all orders are to go, but you can sit on the patio and eat your food. When we are able to eat indoors again, you can enjoy televised motorsports such as NASCAR, motocross and monster truck events.

Smokey & The Brisket is open for lunch and dinner, Tuesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. or sold out, whichever comes first. You will find them at 5465 Lake Murray Blvd. Call to order food for pick up 619-439-6544. Check out their menu and order online at smokeyandthebrisketsd.com.

—Robin Dohrn-Simpson is a San Diego-based freelance travel and food writer.
A look back at Foothiller life in the ‘40s

Throughout the 1940s, articles in the Grossmont High School newspaper Foothill Echoes reveal the shifting emotions of Foothillers as they faced never seen before challenges.

Sept. 10, 1940, in the column “Pick-Ups” by Ben, the students’ lightheartedness is expressed in jokes such as this one: Coach Mashin, “Have any of you boys taken a shower?”

Jerry Kibbey (Freshmen), “No, is there one missing?”

A year later, the Oct. 14, 1941 column “Letting off Steam” by the editor Bob Nichols headlined “It’s a Record” begins, “Grossmont is keeping right in the swing this year. Not only winning its football games and keeping astride with the latest fashions, the school has taken to the ultra-modern “Platter Dances” — dance a la phonograph. Boy what a line up! Kay Kyser, Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw, Freddy Martin, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey … where dancers sway with Sammy Kaye. Yessir! Nearly every noon in the Quad. Let’s keep it up.”

Reality becomes inescapable in the Jan. 21, 1942 column “I Saw Pearl Harbor Bombed; Gael Keene Tells of Oahu Escape.”

Gael Keene, a newly enrolled student at Grossmont, who had recently moved from Oahu, stated:

“I was there when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The crash of bombs, the screaming of planes fighting high in the sky, the rolling roar of heavy artillery, and the wail of the fire sirens rudely awakened me on that memorable Sunday morning … Rushing from the house, I gazed down on a once peaceful Pearl Harbor. The bay was now almost hidden from view by the thick clouds of billowing smoke from the flaming USS Arizona.”

The article mentions that, “Killed in action in the Pearl Harbor raid of Sunday Dec. 7, were Howard Carter, Class of ’36; Frank Remick, class of ’37; Edward Estrada and Rowland Smith, class of ’39.” In a later issue of Echoes, Estrada was noted to be “still alive and kicking. ‘Lemme at em’ is the commentary of this pseudo ghost.”

Foothillers’ wartime patriotism was shown on the Jan. 20, 1943 front page with a large drawing of Uncle Sam rolling up his sleeves and the headline, “We’ve been in business since 1776 an’ we intend to stay!”

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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.
Helix application process announced

Interested families are required to attend the virtual meeting. The recording can be accessed by emailing helix2025@helicharterschool.net, and stating that you would like to start the application process for the 2021-22 school year. The team will email you a link to the recording. After viewing the recording, email the team for further instructions.

The Grade Level Team members will also host a question and answer session on Tues, Feb 2 at 6 p.m. for those who have viewed the recording and still have questions. Those wishing to attend the Q&A can register at helicharterschool.net.

HELIx HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION NEWS

The Helix High School Foundation is pleased to announce the return of the Highlander Open Golf Tournament. The tournament will take place on Saturday, May 22 at Carlton Oaks Country Club. This tournament is the Foundation’s biggest fundraiser, helping to fund approximately $50,000 in scholarships each year for graduating Helix seniors.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for as low as $100. Donations for auction items and prizes are also needed. For more information on participating as a golfer or a sponsor, visit the Foundation website at helicharterschoolfoundation.com.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Eight of the top competitors on the Helix Speech & Debate team were invited to represent Helix at one of the top competitions in the country, the MLK Invitational, hosted by James Logan High School in the Bay Area. Many of the top teams in California were there and several from other states. The students did very well. Results were as follows:

- Ruby Anderson – Fourth place in Dramatic Interpretation (73 competitors)
- Owen Dahlkamp – Semifinalist in Humorous Interpretation (68 competitors)
- Owen Dahlkamp – Semifinalist in Dramatic Interpretation (73 competitors)
- Laaila Del Rio – Quarterfinalist in Program Oral Interpretation (53 competitors)
- Stone Eastman – Fifth place in Original Prose Poetry (42 competitors)
- Lucas Osborn – Tenth place in Student Congress (83 competitors)
- Rachael Sharp – Quarterfinalist in Oratorical Interpretation (71 competitors)
- Rachael Sharp – Semifinalist in Original Prose Poetry (42 competitors)


Foothiller life

The April 2, 1945 Echoes sports section headline proclaims “Grossmont 23, Ohio State 21, In Rose Bowl Game.” It continues, “Roaring Crowd Witnesses Thriller As Grossmont Scores in Last Second.” The team finished the season undefeated after playing opponents such as Washington, Navy, Alabama, U.S.C., and Army. The article ends, “Hundreds of loyal Grossmont students carried four fearless Foothillers off of the gridiron after their heroic efforts during the game.” Yes, it is an April Fool’s Day column.

The March 2, 1948 column “Your Opinion” begins: “The crowded conditions of Grossmont’s halls tend to make them very noisy, as most of you realize. Therefore, this week we are asking, ‘What can be done to alleviate this situation?’ (A school built for 800, now has over 2,000 students.)” As you might imagine, humor pervaded the responses: Mickey McGuire (Junior): “Have a seven-day weekend.” Marvin Goodman (Senior): “Kick the freshmen out!”

Charles Banks (Junior): “Walk down the halls carrying a pitchfork.”

The GHS Museum’s collection of bound newspapers is a priceless “treasure trove” of memories and of history. We sincerely thank the newspaper advisors who had the foresight to preserve them as documents of Foothiller life.

Foothiller life

BECOME PART OF OUR HISTORIC CAMPUS

In honor of our historic 100 Years of Excellence Celebration, the GHS Educational Foundation is sponsoring a scholarship fundraising program, “$100 for 100 Years.” Donors will have their names, their families’, or their businesses’ names engraved on 2-by-4-inch gray tiles, which will be displayed on a wall near the front of the school.

To order your tile, visit donationbricks.com/ghs100year-scholarships. Or write a check payable to GHS Educational Foundation and mail to Connie and Lynn Baer, 5990 Avenorra Dr., La Mesa, CA 91942. On the check memo, please indicate “scholarship fund” and include the text of your tile with your check (up to three lines, 20 spaces each). Also, if you would like to order a GHS 100th Anniversary commemorative ornament, face mask, T-shirt, hoodie, and more, please visit foothillerfoundation.com and download the 100th Anniversary Newsletter on the home page and make your purchases.

Due to the coronavirus restrictions, the GHS Museum is currently closed, but we are checking our emails at ghsmuseum@guhsd.net and our phone messages at 619-668-6140.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum
Council adopts climate change emergency resolution

By KENDRA SITTON | La Mesa Courier

La Mesa City Council newcomer Jack Shu is already working to meet his campaign promise of improving the city’s Climate Action Plan. At his very first meeting as a city councilman on Jan. 12, Shu brought forward a resolution to declare climate change an emergency.

The proposed resolution was approved by all five members of the City Council, so city staff and relevant commissions will review it ahead of the Feb. 23 City Council meeting. At the next meeting, Shu and supporters hope the draft resolution will be approved. In order to speed the approval along, the Council created a sub-committee with Shu and Council member Bill Baber to move the resolution forward.

The goal of the resolution is to ensure all city departments and commissions are treating climate change as a dire crisis the city’s decisions affect.

“I really see it as a way to move our city forward together,” said Shu. “All elements of the city need to work together to make sure we meet our climate action goals.”

He explained many actions are already taking place. This would elevate the emergency of it and make sure all parts of the city are helping implement the Climate Action Plan.

Over 20 people called or wrote into the City Council to share their opinion about the resolution.

Several members of the La Mesa First United Methodist Church gave public comment in favor of the resolution.

“Our faith-based organization calls for sound stewardship of the earth and environmentally-friendly lifestyles that preserve creation for present and future generations. We applaud the whole resolution and especially item three to commit to ensure environmental, economic and judicial justice,” said Lois Norton of the United Methodist Women of La Mesa First UMC.

Norton is referencing a passage in the resolution that calls for environmental justice to be at the heart of the climate action plan being implemented, including by consulting race-based organizations about future steps. This is due to climate change adversely impacting marginalized neighborhoods.

All but one public commenter, former City Council candidate Laura Lothian, were in favor of the measure.

“The real emergency facing La Mesa is reopening La Mesa, not taking action to combat climate change,” Lothian said.

While the official proposal’s adoption could face delays, the Council, spearheaded by Shu’s efforts, is aiming to have the next draft on the Feb. 23 agenda of the City Council.

—Reach contributing editor Kendra Sitton at kendra@sdnews.com.

The City of La Mesa’s plan to implement the Climate Action Plan can be found at cityoflamesa.us/1488/Climate-Action-Plan. (Courtesy City of La Mesa)
Police report
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
the night of the riot. The firm noted that LMPD had no First Amendment clause, which is a best practice, and the crowd control plan was only a few pages long. By August when there was another protest in the city, policy expanded to fill a few three-ring binders. In addition, the firm found LMPD does not have robust written policies and strategies directly related to community policing, community engagement and biased policing.

“We are forming our oversight committee and it’s very clear our protocols and procedures are outdated and definitely need to be reviewed and brought up to standard,” Council member Dr. Akilaah Weber said. “One of the things I am disappointed about is the fact that the use of force policy and the community policing policies were not up to standards. They were out of standards. They were out of date. This was something I had addressed previously when I had addressed the incident that happened at Helix High and I asked the chief at that time about updating the use of force policy and I was told then that it was going to happen.”

In addition, the firm found that there was no clear central command on the night of the riot and people doing intelligence gathering did not have someone clear to report to. The firm found there was a lack of communication to rank and file police officers as well as the City Council. The command post that did exist was inside the police department building despite that building being the target of the protests. When other agencies came with mutual aid, radio communication was also disrupted.

Council member Bill Baber took issue with the lack of central command being blamed on a lieutenant left in charge for the night. He said someone of higher rank should have been in charge, especially the police chief who on May 30 was spending his time trying to be a diplomat between the agencies.

Acting Police Chief Nicholas said that is being addressed by naming a Public Information Officer and having an officer in charge of logistics during a similar event so the chief can be in command.

Council member Colin Parent praised the department for already improving ahead of the August protest. He was bothered by the San Diego Sheriff’s Office, who took command of the riot response after midnight on May 30, not cooperating with Hillard Heintze’s investigation. The department refused to hold full participation from our partners at the Sheriff’s Department.”

Parent said he requested the city manager send on the after-action report to the Sheriff’s Department in case it could inform their policy as well.

Council member Shu, the only council member who was elected after the protests, said he thought the report should have taken into account the Helix High School incident and at the very least the trolley incident with Amaurrie Johnson that led to the protests. He also noted that the perspective of the report was limited, something Mayor Mark Arapostathis later agreed with.

“There is a very good, credible report through the eyes of enforcement. Hillard Heintze is an organization made up of law enforcement experts and their perspective. They reviewed through the lens of law enforcement. There’s really nothing wrong with that and I welcome that but that is very limited,” Shu said. “This incident included lots of people. What would this report look like if we went to the fire department and asked them? What would it look like…through the eyes of business… the faith community? I think it would look quite different.”

Mayor Arapostathis said, “Although this was new to all of us, everything could have been done better. I think that communication is key.”

He noted in the future that he wanted to be better about releasing information when it was available and openly admitting when the city staff did not know something. He also called for another listening session so the community can respond to the report’s findings.

Acting Chief Nicholas said, “We are taking the recommendations seriously and we will use this report as a guide for our efforts in the future. We are committed to serving this community and we will strive for improvement as we move forward.”

— Reach contributing editor Kendra Sittin at kendra@sdnews.com.

Featured artist: Debbie Atkinson

Debbie Atkinson has been named the Featured Artist for the Foothills Art Association for the month of February 2021.

Atkinson began her art career in 2005 after “retiring” from her job in the computer software industry. She had always wanted to try painting in watercolors. Marilyn Grano, who shares Atkinson’s love of wildlife, mentored her as she explored painting. Eventually Atkinson expanded into oil, colored pencil, and scratchboard medium. Her award-winning art has been shown in galleries and at art shows across San Diego County. Atkinson has always loved to travel, exploring all seven continents and visiting over 75 countries with her husband Lee, over their 45 years of marriage. She applies her close attention to detail and keen eye for color and composition to artistically capture the memories of her travels. Her artwork highlights nature from locations worldwide.

Atkinson’s art expresses the feelings she experienced as a visitor among nature’s animals and natural beauty. The unique expressions, colors, and natural environment of her subjects are each carefully recreated in her art, providing us a visual reminder of the humbling experience we all have amidst nature’s true art.

Vie Atkinson’s art at foothillsartassociation.com.

— Bonnie Owen is editor of Foothnotes, the monthly newsletter of the Foothills Art Association.

ALL FURNACES ARE NOT EQUAL

Furnace technology has advanced recently, giving you more options for temperature control. Single-Speed Furnaces have improved, but are still louder with more temperature swings. Two-Speed Furnaces offer more gentle, even heating. The walls and furniture heat up so you feel more cozy. Variable-Speed Furnaces meet the gold standard and bring incredibly consistent comfort and perform quietly. Talk to an ideal heating and cooling specialist to get the comfort level that’s right for you.

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Memoirs for Black History Month

Celebrate Black History Month with the San Diego County Library! Check out these award-winning, honest and beautifully written memoirs that highlight the complex nature of identity and the diversity of the Black experience. All of these books are available upon request at sdcl.org and in eBooks at sdcl.overdrive.com.

“Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More” by writer, editor, director and activist Janet Mock gives readers an unflinching account of her life as a Black, Hawaiian and Trans woman. From her earliest memories, Mock is confident in her gender identity and she gives the reader a raw and candid account of life with her dysfunctional-yet-loving family, the abuse she endured, and the poverty and racism that were pervasive in her life. She acknowledges that she is one of the lucky ones: achieving an advanced degree, belonging to a family that eventually accepts and loves her, and finding her own voice and the man of her dreams. Mock’s story is a difficult but affirming account of what we can accomplish when we are unapologetic and fully accept who we are.

“Survival of the Thickest” by comedienne, actress and writer Michelle Buteau is a hilarious and heartfelt series of essays about growing up Black, Caribbean, Catholic and thick in New Jersey. She gives dating advice gleaned from her own — sometimes horrifying — experiences and gives the reader insight about what it takes to make it in the male-dominated world of comedy. Buteau talks openly about the challenges of her interracial and transcontinental relationship, her heart-breaking struggles with infertility and the importance of supportive friendships. You will walk away from this book wishing that Buteau was your bff.

Winning multiple literary awards, “Heavy: An American Memoir” by Kiese Laymon is ultimately a letter to his mother who appears as the ubiquitous “you” throughout the book. Laymon lays bare the abuse he suffered in childhood at the hands of his brilliant and troubled single mother and by others in her absence. Through the lens of his experiences, he considers what it is to be Black, male and overweight in America. Through his struggles with obesity, addiction and mental health, and his hard-won rise in academia, he seeks to meet the high expectations of his mother and exceed the low expectations set by society. This is a stunning and “heavy” book that is not to be missed.

“How We Fight for Our Lives” by award-winning poet Saeed Jones is a stunning coming-of-age memoir that examines the intersection of race and sexual orientation in the American landscape. Growing up Black and gay in the South, Jones must contend with family turmoil, outside prejudice and his own painful growth to realize his power. Jones is admittedly young to write a memoir but don’t let that stop you from reading this short outstanding book – it will leave you wanting more.

For the latest news on the San Diego County Library visit sdcl.org or follow the La Mesa Library on Facebook, @lamesalibrary. Visit sdcl.org or call us at 619-469-2151 to order books, movies, and CDs, and we will contact you when they are ready for pick-up.

—Haley Zamora is a librarian at the La Mesa branch of the San Diego County Library.
Are you caring for someone with memory loss, dementia, or Alzheimer’s? Then the REACH2CAREGIVERS program is for you! This series is offered FREE and virtually to family caregivers to better understand memory loss, develop communication skills, learn stress management techniques and how to better care for yourself and your loved one. You don't have to do caregiving alone! Sign up today for our REACH2CAREGIVERS online class at https://bit.ly/REACHprogram.

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“In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king”

TRANSLATION:
With almost no housing inventory, even modest listings can strut their stuff!

As of this printing:
La Mesa Village has 7 homes on the market.
Mount Helix has 10 homes on the market.
Windsor Hills has 1 home on the market.
Eastridge has 4 homes on the market.
All La Mesa has 31 homes on the market.

Only .1% of La Mesa Homes Are For Sale!
Historically low interest rates + meager supply + high demand = Sellers' Market!
LauraLothianRealEstate.com

LAURA'S SOLDS of 2020

SOLD!
MT. HELIX

SOLD!
MT. HELIX

SOLD!
MT. HELIX

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MT. HELIX

SOLD!
WINDSOR HILLS

SOLD!
LA MESA HIGHLANDS

SOLD!
LA MESA

SOLD!
LA MESA HIGHLANDS

SOLD!
LA MESA

SOLD!
ALPINE

SOLD!
BOULEVARD

SOLD!
DESCANSO

SOLD!
TIERRASANTA

SOLD!
BAY PARK

SOLD!
DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO

SOLD!
PONTIJA HISTORIC HOME

SOLD!
MISSION HILLS HISTORIC HOME

SOLD!
OCEANSIDE

SOLD!
BANKERS HILL