As if the latest COVID restrictions were not confusing and concerning enough, local restaurateurs are now trying to handle limited indoor dining while increasing outdoor seating.

Billy Ramirez, owner of PB Shore Club and the Fish Shops in PB and Point Loma, said coastal restaurants are being hit hard.

“Obviously with all the hard times hitting the restaurant industry, businesses are being forced to get creative,” said Ramirez noting he and the Waterbar next door to PB Shore Club on Ocean Boulevard, jointly decided to explore outdoor dining options.

“We decided that maybe we could grow out more toward the beach, instead of into parking lots in the alleys,” said Ramirez, noting that effort culminated in 26 parking spaces next to the lifeguard tower and fire station on Ocean Boulevard between Grand and Thomas avenues being temporarily converted to outdoor dining.

Up and running for a couple of weeks now, Ramirez said the new outdoor dining option has hit something of a snag.

“Some of the locals are upset about the temporary loss of parking,” he said. “I understand their concerns. But businesses have to survive. This is a way to help us stay open. This is something the City needs to be forward-thinking about, perhaps extending this even beyond the shutdown, if they want to support businesses and help us grow and also survive.”

Further complicating matters are Uber and Lyft threatening to ultimately withdraw from California, which Ramirez noted really crimps local restaurant and bar owner’s efforts to keep a lid on DUIs and irresponsible behavior.

In response to an August court order requiring both rideshare companies to reclassify their California drivers as “employees” instead of independent contractors, they both threatened to leave the state. Subsequently, the California Court of Appeal issued an order temporarily permitting Uber and Lyft to maintain their current employment status. The court has also given the companies until early September to come up with plans for how they would comply with the law.

“If we were to lose Uber and Lyft, that is going to impact business, something I don’t think the public is aware of,” argued Ramirez. “It’s a public safety issue because DUIs have declined with ridesharing. The government needs to rethink some of the unintended consequences of its actions a little bit better.”

The expanded outdoor seating by PB Shore Club and Waterbar has temporarily eliminated parking spaces on Ocean Boulevard.
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Noting Mount Soledad and the Highway 52 Corridor canyon are among those targeted pre-fire plans in targeted areas in the City.

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NEWS

La Jolla Town Council holds forum on fires, health and safety

By Dave Schwab

A st the Valley Fire raged, La Jolla Town Council Sept. 10 held a public forum with police and fire officials discussing fires, health, and safety. Local community planners also vetted ongoing problematic beach fires in La Jolla Shores and Beach-Barber Tract neighborhoods.

“Most fires happen in the fourth quarter of the year,” said LJTC trustee and forum moderator Tara Hammond, pointing out fire season typically falls in October-November due to infrequent rains, Santa Ana-driven winds, and dry conditions. “We’ve seen those (conditions) increase over time,” said Hammond. “We’re also seeing record heat right now. This intense heat is something that can’t be ignored. Eight of the last 10 years we’ve had record heat.”

Emergency calls for fire go first to San Diego Police Department and then to San Diego Fire-Rescue.

“We’re getting the first-hand information,” said San Diego Fire-Rescue Battalion Chief David Pilkerton. “We have wildland, pre-fire plans in targeted areas in the City.

Noting Mount Soledad and the Highway 52 Corridor canyon are among those targeted pre-fire plans, Pilkerton said, “It’s a tool that we have. It gives us analyzed data, and computerized technology as things evolve. If there was going to be a fire at a certain point in time, we can pretty much project where it may go, what canyon, or what finger it can travel into.”

Added Pilkerton, “Fires travel uphill and fast. Our main goal is to protect life over property. This (pre-fire) plan has an evacuation plan and the route for us to take in the first six hours in an emergency on Mount Soledad. PD is going to be the first one in the event of evacuations.”

Noting technology helps predict the route fires take, Pilkerton said that’s good because “Our fire season is year-round. It used to be May to September or October, but this will now go all the way to January.”

Regarding illegal beach fires, San Diego Police Community Services Officer Brandon Brodous discussed police protocol on the issue.

“We currently have a task force set up to deal with this. It’s one of our top priorities,” said Brodous. “We are out there quite a bit issuing citations and giving education. What we’re finding is a lot of people starting fires on the beach, quite a few of them are actually out of town and don’t know the regulations.”

Added Brodous, “We still use a progressive enforcement approach. What that is is that when we first initiate contact, we give them education. Then after that, if we don’t get compliance, then we go into an enforcement mode. So it’s more of a de-escalation situation where we educate people from out of town.”

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Residents clean up with new Don't Trash Mission Beach advocacy group

By DAVE SCHWAB

For a decade, Cathy Ives has been combing Mission Beach daily picking up trash. Now she has some help.

Approached by fellow Mission Beach residents Tony and Tim Sanfelice, the trio has launched a new citizen advocacy group, Don't Trash Mission Beach, dontrashmissionbeach.com. The new group held its first volunteer beach cleanup for South Mission Beach on Sept. 12.

That cleanup saw another community first: A Beach Trash Art Exhibit—Installation crafted of disposed of items, to bring awareness of beach trash and its impact on the environment. Don't Trash Mission Beach promotes ‘Pack It In and Pack It Out’ along with personal responsibility and hopes that a community visitor trash awareness campaign can precipitate change.

The Sept. 12 Beach Art Trash Exhibit featured rescued items such as hundreds of shoes, towels, toys, and personal items. In addition, there were scores of other items like bottle caps, cigarette lighters, vaping materials, and other things carelessly left behind or purposefully left on the beach every day.

Speaking from a local laundromat where she was busy doing her regular routine washing towels she’d collected from beachcombing, Ives said of the Sanfelices, “They contacted me directly after they’d started picking up trash and realized how bad it was and that it’s a global issue, not just here.”

Noting she considers herself a “rescuer,” Ives added, “I pick up the big stuff, towels, beach toys. My goal is to get as much that’s reusable and recyclable off the beach.”

Ives arises before dawn at 4 a.m. to begin beachcombing. She starts in South Mission Beach and works her way up the boardwalk.

Tony Sanfelice said he and Tim were inspired by Ives.

“We were blown away by her commitment to the community and decided to help out, but also to bring the experience of our brand—marketing and company, the Felice Agency, feliceagency.com, to amplify her voice and turn her passion into a movement. Tim and I started picking up trash on our own after seeing so much of it carelessly left behind or purposefully left on the beach every day.”

Ives said of the Sanfelices, “They contacted me directly after they’d started picking up trash and realized how bad it was and that it’s a global issue, not just here.”

Tony said he and Tim daily collect about 100 pounds of trash. “Cathy probably collects 300 to 500 pounds,” he said. “Last year, she picked up 53,238 items including 8,000 cigarette butts, 570 lighters and 509 pairs of shoes, as well as styrofoam boogie boards and single-use plastic water bottle tops that are so dangerous to the environment and kill dolphins and sea turtles.”

Asked why she’s taken it upon herself to pick up other’s trash, Ives responded, “I hate waste. I hate the fact that so many people in need could use these things, which are just thrown away by our disposable society. I donate to animal shelters that need towels and blankets and to the homeless who deserve to have a warm place to sleep. I do it because it’s the right thing to do.”

“Cathy probably collects 300 to 500 pounds,” he said. “Last year, she picked up 53,238 items including 8,000 cigarette butts, 570 lighters and 509 pairs of shoes, as well as styrofoam boogie boards and single-use plastic water bottle tops that are so dangerous to the environment and kills dolphins and sea turtles.”

Tony Sanfelice said they’re also developing another cleanup program where “you can adopt a court in Mission Beach. Eventually, when we have enough sponsors and donations, we’ll be able to get people grabbers and trash bags. We also have T-shirts that you can buy now on our website to help us out.”

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Restaurants figuring out new guidelines, working to stay open

By DAVE SCHWAB

Coping. For restaurants in Pacific Beach like Bub’s at the Beach and Point Break, that’s what doing business has been all about the last six months since COVID struck.

Some of this stuff (metrics) just doesn’t make sense,” lamented restaurateur Todd Brown, who owns Bubs at the Beach at 1030 Garnet Ave., Bub’s at the Ballpark, and The Blind Burro, as well as being co-owner of Waterbar at 4125 Ocean Blvd. “It’s hard to believe this isn’t political. The impact has just been phenomenal.”

“We need something (more),” said Mike Lee, whose family-friendly eatery Point Break, at 945 Garnet Ave., combines a bowling alley with a late-night bar and dance club. “I do not see how restaurants will not go out of business and landlords be left with empty space. They’re (government) saying you can have 25% occupancy inside, which is a joke in terms of sustainability.”

Pointing out he’s done parklets to survive, Brown of Bub’s noted he has to deal with blowback from outside parking spots he’s had to displace. He said people would be surprised by what sometimes goes down in PB parking spaces near restaurants.

“In front of Waterbar we lost 12 parking spaces, which did not have time requirements,” Brown said. “Eight of those spaces, the same people parked there every day, and they didn’t move all day. We had a guy practically living in the parking space who used to get a campfire going there. There was another guy in a van who used the parking space four or five days a week as a mobile barbershop cutting hair. The loss of parking there is very overstated.”

Lee questioned many of the mandated pandemic restrictions.

“These arbitrary rules are just damaging to the restaurants and they are just creating liability in so many ways,” he said, adding that doesn’t even begin to address the cost of compliance to right, you can lose it. We’ve lost more equipment in the last six months than in the last five years. It’s just another burden that’s been financially difficult for us.”

Lee questioned many of the mandated pandemic restrictions.

“They want us to collect the names of every person that comes into the restaurant,” Lee said. “And then they want their phone numbers. You should see the names we’re getting. And the overwhelming phone number we’re getting is 867-5309. Do you think someone is really going to give me their phone number? It’s ridiculous.”

The peak summer season is now over, which doesn’t bode well for restaurants trying to hang on.

“Right now, I don’t know if we’re going to make it, it’s bare-knuckle brawling,” Brown said. “I’m praying I’m going to be able to keep the place open. But it’s going to be very tough. We finally opened back up on Memorial Day weekend, finally got enough traction, then boom, they closed us down again.”

Added Brown: “The first-time closure was so sudden, we had loo in the walk-in we had to give to employees and we got zero dollars back from that. Another thing people don’t realize is restaurant equipment is meant to work continuously. If you don’t shut it down
La Jolla Village Merchants Association discusses its annual report

By DAVE SCHWAB

In September, La Jolla Village Merchants Association detailed how it is coping with COVID-19 while continuing to promote the Village in its annual report. The merchant group also previewed its annual October board election.

“Together we were able to get parking lots turned into expanded dining areas, and made sure merchants had access to the most reliable information about everything from protests to funding, as well as promoting the Village in visible, engaging ways with print, digital and social media,” said LJMA executive director Jodi Rudick.

Among accomplishments listed in LJMA’s strategic plan: used media assets to connect merchants to resources, funding opportunities, programs; created a 501 c(3) to qualify for grants, donations; brought on policy intern to negotiate changes; prepared draft 2021-22 budget based on 30% decrease in BID revenue; increased attendance at monthly meetings; developed webinar education specific to La Jolla Village merchant needs; created virtual outreach program; drafted Parking Communication and Wayfinding Program; assisted with Soft Streets City Plan for a street closure, and communicated design ideas to assist with social distancing.

Added Rudick, “We were able to bring people to the Village with to-go and curbside pickup for retail. We had to update the strategic plan to incorporate two major aspects this year: crisis management for COVID, and how to implement our diversity initiative for LJMA. Also, the key was working with other City business improvement districts and communities to get streetlets and make sure permitting was in place to do business in unusual times.”

Rudick noted the intern LJMA hired helped out logging 580 volunteer hours. “We also brought on a social media intern to make sure we were listening to more diverse voices and hearing from people who can report those voices,” she said.

Rudick added real progress was also made in implementing street banners and in laying the ground-work to initiate a comprehensive Village wayfinding program, as well as implementing some parking solutions that included running a merchant discount parking program.

Concerning upcoming LJMA board elections, the 1,236 businesses comprising the LJMA are eligible to cast one vote each for nine open board seats. Votes can be cast between now and election day on Oct. 9, with results to be reported at the next LJMA board meeting Oct. 14.

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Visit lajollavillagenews.com/blog for full list of restaurant hours.
 Spiro’s Mediterranean Cuisine opening in La Jolla

By DAVE SCHWAB

A retired orthodontist, Spiro Chiconas never contemplated one day successfully owning a 22-year-old Greek restaurant. Now he has two.

Chiconas purchased his new Spiro’s Greek Cafe, which opened at the Coronado Ferry Landing in 1998, is expanding into a new site in the old Hard Rock Cafe space at 909 Prospect St., Unit 100B, in the Village of La Jolla.

Chiconas purchased his new eatery site in December and has been remodeling it ever since. He is hosting a grand opening for Spiro’s Mediterranean Cuisine in La Jolla on Wednesday, Sept. 23, from 6 to 8 p.m. The opening will feature Greek Mezes, small plates of savory snacks, along with sips and sweets.

“We’re going to emphasize Mediterranean cuisine in La Jolla,” said Chaconas. “Mediterranean is the key word for healthy foods nowadays. We use a lot of olive oil, the healthiest oil there is. We’re also going to serve seafood items like salmon, halibut, and sea bass. We have organically grown products that come directly from Sparta, Greece, that we use in our foods and also sell as a product.”

Added Chaconas, “We’ve always been known for having top-quality food. For instance, we have seven different grades of gyro meat, and we’re the only Greek restaurant in California that provides chicken gyro meat, which is more expensive and has been a big hit. The prices are very affordable, and our portions are very large, to a point where most people have to take something home in a doggy bag.”

Chaconas said his new La Jolla menu will be similar to his old Coronado menu. “We’ll have a few other Greek delicacies like stuffed tomatoes and peppers, as well as (flaming Greek cheese) Saganaki that you pour brandy over,” he said.

Both becoming a restaurateur and expanding into the Jewel, are fascinating stories, as told by Chaconas. He actually has his son Michael, a Point Loma Nazarene graduate with a business major, to thank for his new La Jolla address.

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Scripps expert urges early flu shot before the season intensifies

Vaccination is critical during COVID-19 pandemic to reduce illness, strain on hospitals

Being vaccinated against influenza is a smart thing to do every year, but getting the flu shot this year is especially important because the illness will be circulating alongside coronavirus, which could strain health care resources across the country.

“If you normally get the flu shot each year, then now is the time to make arrangements for your vaccination, and if you rarely or never get a shot, then this is the year to start doing it,” said Shu Ming Geary, M.D., an internal medicine physician and vice president of primary care for Scripps Clinic Medical Group.

Symptoms for flu, such as fever, coughing, headache and fatigue, are very similar to those for COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus, and both viruses attack the respiratory system. It remains unclear how the two viruses might interact or affect each other completely when infecting the same person.

“We don’t yet know how bad this year’s flu season will be, but it is possible to get both the coronavirus and the flu at the same time,” Geary said. “Both can result in severe illness and complications, including hospitalization and death. While there is not a readily available vaccine for coronavirus, we do know that being vaccinated for influenza is the best thing you can do to protect yourself from getting the flu.”

Beyond the physical discomfort and schedule disruptions that a routine case of influenza can bring, the virus also can be deadly. Last year, 395 people died from the flu in San Diego County, while the virus killed as many as 62,000 nationwide. The 2017-2018 season was even worse with 343 deaths in San Diego County and 79,000 nationwide.

“When some experts may disagree about the optimum timing to receive the flu shot, most, including those at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recommend getting the shot by the end of October,” Geary said. “As for this year, with the coronavirus pandemic still in full swing, it’s not too early to get the flu shot right now.”

While flu vaccine supplies have sometimes run thin in the past, that shouldn’t be the case this year. Pharmaceutical companies have produced up to 198 million doses of the vaccine for the U.S. market, a record-setting amount that tops last year’s supply by an additional 20 million.

Flu vaccine is now available widely across San Diego County, including at most Scripps Clinic and Scripps Coastal primary care sites, which are open by appointment to all Scripps patients.

Drive-through vaccination is also available at selected sites by appointment. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, everyone is required to wear face masks while at Scripps facilities, including for the drive-through appointments.

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more than 6,000 ocean animals. Guests are encouraged to greet some of their favorites like the Weedy Seadragons and rescued Loggerhead Sea Turtles. They can also discover new species like the Ornate Boxfish, a unique fish that made a splash on social media during the temporary closure.

During this initial reopening phase, activities where large numbers of people typically gather, such as dog shows and feeding events, have been canceled. High-touch exhibit elements such as the water tables, playground, and touch screens have also been removed, though many exhibits have newly-registered QR codes to allow guests to engage in new ways from the safety of their cell phones.

Insofar, Birch Aquarium is planning to launch an outdoor Halloween-themed celebration that will continue even if the indoor areas of the aquarium have to close to meet state and local COVID-19 guidelines.

With the Halloween celebration, we are working to create a fun and engaging seasonal "spook-tacular" aquarium experience that will allow us to serve our community, even if our indoor spaces have to close, said Halling. "Continuing to offer the aquarium as a resource to the community is our goal. Details of the Halloween celebration will be announced soon.

During the temporary closure, various virtual programs are being offered to continue to reach students from different settings, including schools, homes, school groups, after-school programs, and scout groups. A Virtual After School Series will be offered in the fall, winter, and spring for individuals in kindergarten through grade 12 by registering through the San Diego Virtual Education Programs. Virtual Youth and School Group Programs will be available now to groups of students, including schools, homes, school groups, after-school programs, and scout groups. A Virtual After School Series will be offered in the fall, winter, and spring for individuals in kindergarten through grade 12. By registering through the San Diego Virtual Education Programs. Virtual Youth and School Group Programs will be available now to groups of students, including schools, homes, school groups, after-school programs, and scout groups.

Birch Aquarium is also exploring virtual field trips for adults, $15 for children (3-17). Annual memberships are also available.

READ MORE ONLINE at sdnews.com
Moonlight Lace virtual runway show to feature glowing bridal dress

Fashion Week San Diego is gearing up for a virtual runway show on Oct. 17. Leading up to this event will be an additional virtual fashion show on Sept. 18 with Kelly Leanne who is one of the eight designers showing this year. She will be presenting three pieces that were in her first launch collection called Moonlight Lace.

They consist of two wedding dresses and one evening dress that was all made with fiber optics. One garment even has lace made with fiber optics. Two other individual pieces will be shown. One is a knitted dress and the other is a metal corset. The corset is an upcycled piece, welded together from an aluminum shed and a water heater.

Look for these on the virtual fashion show on Sept. 18 at 2 p.m. by tuning in to @fashionweeksd IGTV, Fashion Week San Diego Youtube, or Fashionweeksd.com. Previously, Leanne was part of a project with FWSD that partnered with the Art Renewal Center and Sotheby’s and was called “Art and Beauty Behind Fashion.” Eight emerging designers were given a choice of eight fine art paintings that were part of the 14th ARC Salon Competition to inspire them to create an original couture outfit that would be one of their 10 looks for the FWSD Runway Show.

Originally, all eight designers were to fly out to New York for the exhibition where their designs would be on display next to their inspirational painting throughout July. They ended up doing a photoshoot here because of the pandemic. There was online voting and the winner will be revealed during the FWSD Runway Show. Leanne chose the painting “Moonlight Muse” by the Haitian artist, Philippe Attie and constructed the cape from a parachute.

Leanne is a graduate of San Diego Mesa College with an AA in fashion design. She went on to receive a bachelor’s in business from SDSU. She launched her first collection in 2018 and began a business named Kelly Leanne Apparel Designs. Look for her spring-summer 2021 collection with 10 looks on the FWSD Runway. The designs will have clean lines featuring her signature look incorporating the princess line which consists of long panels in the place of darts to shape the body. Each piece will be unique, upcycled, or incorporate fiber optics. The theme will embrace diversity.

I asked Leanne what was in the future for her and she said that she plans to design two collections a year. For more information, visit kellyleanneapparel.com.

To purchase tickets for the FWSD Runway collection on Oct. 17, visit fashionweeksd.com.

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How to get out of your own head when you cannot even get out of the house

By Natasha Josefowitz, Ph.D.

As we sit in our homes by ourselves month after month without in-person social interactions, we become acutely, even overly, aware of ourselves. Because we have only ourselves and our own responses, we have a tendency to become self-centered by default. And since there is no one to interact with, all of our ideas, thoughts, and feelings are experienced without feedback. This is where self-reflection can become dysfunction- al. Like cows ruminating their cud, we can become obsessive and compulsive, reexaming the same thing over and over, driving ourselves nuts. Without another person to assess and appraise the conclusions we come to, we may leave reality behind as we follow some increasingly irrational tangent.

Another problem with being alone is paranoia due to memory losses. I can’t find my wallet or my keys or my glasses, etc.; someone must’ve taken them. Our brains like to find reasons for things, and so, if something is missing, someone must have taken it. It is a knee- jer reaction that happens to me when I can’t find something. This is exacerbated when alone with no one to check on reality. The stress of isolation affects the brain as it is engaged in dealing with other stressors. As a result, the brain is less likely to be able to perform higher-level tasks or store memories.

Facing no one but ourselves all day, we also tend to exagger- ate every little glitch. We tend to overreact because there is nothing and no one to mitigate these feelings. Whether one feels bored or overwhelmed, it is all too easy to get off track and lose sight of what is important, as well as find it difficult to stay focused and recalibrate.

David Brooks, a columnist for The New York Times, once made a list of the six basic needs humans have in order to live a meaningful life. They are certainty, variety, significance, connection, growth, and contribution. As I look at these, I realize that all six needs may be missing while we are isolated due to the ongoing pandemic. We lack certainty in the political climate we are living in. I have a pervasive feeling of low-grade anxiety whenever I read the paper or watch the news on TV. Everything seems to be up for grabs these days. Variety is lacking in our daily lives; our days merge into one another with unavoidable sameness. Significance has to do with membership in a group in which we have a role to play, but many of those groups and roles are defunct. Connection to others, family and friends, is difficult to sustain when face-to-face interaction is not possible. Growth is the opportunity to learn, to become wiser; that is actually doable to some extent with Zoom, on-line classes, and reading. Finally, contribution is the possibility to be of service. This is challenging without the option of being around others, but it is possible to be helpful by reaching out.

How can we help ourselves in these times of being isolated? My suggestion is to connect with at least one other person not only on a daily basis, but even several times a day. This is to get away from an emphasis on one’s own life and become involved with someone else’s life, someone else’s thoughts and feelings. This can be done through phone calls, texts, emails, FaceTime, or Zoom—whatever is feasible for you and your friends and family. The frequency is important because we are then aware of the minutiae of someone else’s life. Decide to read the same book as a friend and then set aside time to discuss it. Watch the same TV show or video or attend the same Zoom event, anything to start a conversation and share reactions. For example, I sit every evening at sunset with two friends and their dogs: with each passing day, the conversations become more intimate, more revelatory, as we get away from only think- ing about ourselves.

For further mental stimulation, Zoom provides many wonderful opportunities to take classes, attend conferences, learn something new. I exercise via Zoom every day. Exercising sends endorphins to our brains which helps to calm us down. Challenging ourselves to get out of our complacency is really impor- tant. Each and every activity contributes toward a healthier, happier mental attitude. I could easily just sit in my recliner all day, but I asked Alexa to remind me every hour to get up and walk around.

I hope this column will help you, my readers, stay engaged and is ready to serve hungry San Diegans this National Cheeseburger Day.

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