SD Natural History Museum shows off its living animals

The San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat) unveiled its latest exhibit in November, a “Living Lab” featuring snakes, lizards, ants, tarantulas and other critters. The creatures were included because they could be found in the average San Diegan’s backyard, but because of their behaviors (like being nocturnal or hibernation) or traits (like being reclusive), people rarely interact with them.

The animals are normally cared for in the Vivarium, located in the basement of the museum. Some are used for educational purposes but many never interacted with the public until being showcased in the exhibit. Part of the purpose is to let The Nat’s visitors learn more about the animals, as well as learn more about what the museum does.

Uptown’s LGBT+ women gain political strength

How Chris Kehoe and the local women politicians who followed are shaping the 2020 election — and each other

Toni Duran knocks on a town home door in Hillcrest. There’s no answer.

“In doing this campaign, I’ve actually talked to more people than I ever have for all the canvassing I’ve done,” Duran explained as she walked to the next house. In the wake of the passage of Prop 8 in 2008, Duran professionally canvassed. Her job was to go door-to-door in neighborhoods that voted to oppose marriage equality to give a face to the issue. Although funding for that job dried up, she kept canvassing for other campaigns in the years to come.

As she knocks on a second door, a tiny dog and a woman open the door.

“Hi, my name is Toni Duran. I am running for City Council for District 3. I’m coming out to my neighbors in Hillcrest today to chat and introduce myself,” she said.

The woman is embarrassed to be photographed in her sweats. She and Duran trade easy laughs before Duran starts in on her pitch.

Toni Duran introduces herself to a woman residing in Hillcrest. (Photo by Kendra Sitton)
“This race especially, some people look at it as ‘it’s gonna be a Dom, it’s gonna be a person from the LGBT community. I’ll wait it out,'” Duran said. (Since Duran’s interview, Nguyen, a Republican, pulled papers to run in the heavily blue district.) Duran has met people who only plan to get involved when the top two vote-getters face off in the general election. Right now, she needs to ensure she is one of the two who advance to November. While Nguyen is the only Republican, Kwiatkowski has positioned himself as a centrist and Olson has taken up the most progressive lane. Whitburn has steadily racked up endorsements from many of the top local political groups. Duran’s biggest asset in the race is her supporters. She has been endorsed by three of the people who previously represented District 3 on the City Council: Chris Kehoe, Sen. Toni Atkins and Asm. Todd Gloria. When Kehoe won the seat in 1993, she was the first openly LGBT+ person in San Diego County to hold an elected position. Since then, the area has undergone major change. San Diego now has more LGBT+ elected officials than any other city in California, including San Francisco. “We saw [San Francisco] as the mecca — the city that got it started. But San Diego has fast embraced it and I think that’s a lot because what they saw Chris do when she got elected. There was a fear she’ll be the gay person. It turns out she was — and she made some change in many ways there. We got domestic partners when she was on the City Council for city employees, but they also saw her being serious about everything else, which we always know is the case,” Atkins said about her former boss. “I’ve lived in San Diego since 1985 and I’ve seen a huge shift and I think it’s great.” Atkins explained at events nowadays not all the LGBT+ officials can ever be acknowledged. “It’s kind of cool that in San Diego, there are so many candidates to support who are LGBT. It used to be a big deal when you could ask for an endorsement. Now I’m afraid I’m going to miss somebody!” Kehoe believes in some areas, being LGBT+ is considered an asset to being elected, a major change from her first election. In Duran’s race, all four candidates are gay. Since Kehoe was first elected to the seat in 1993, every person who has held it has been LGBT+ (Atkins, Gloria, Chris Ward). “In San Diego, being gay has become just about a non-issue,” said prominent lesbian historian Dr. Lillian Faderman. “Before becoming a political trailblazer, Kehoe made her name campaigning against Prop 64, a referendum on quarantining AIDS patients that the LGBT+ community feared would be used to create ‘gay concentration camps.’ When she helped resurrect Pride in 1989 after years of financial disaster, she became a well-known local figure. Assisting her campaign was a young Atkins, who had left Virginia to find a more welcoming home in California. Despite Atkins’ own political wins — she has gone from City Council member to the Senate president pro tempore in California — she maintains that Kehoe’s first win was the biggest moment of her life. “The most exciting moment I’ve ever experienced, amazing — is not my election to the City Council. It was Chris’. To be in there the night that Chris got elected was an epiphany kind of moment, which is: we can succeed, we can work together and be successful,” Atkins reminisced. “And my second favorite moment was when I got elected to the City Council.” For her part, Kehoe said her first election win was thrilling and set the course for her life’s work. “The changes that have taken place are enormous,” Kehoe said. “When Senator Atkins decided to run for Council District 1 in 2000, it was not a foregone assumption that she would win. Toni Atkins’ victory confirmed again that a qualified, smart and hardworking LGBT+ candidate could win — that my ’93 race was not a fluke. Todd Gloria stepped up in the same manner in the next cycle and now we see qualified LGBT+ office holders serving all over the region. Council District 3 has had over 25 years of uninterrupted representation by openly LGBT+ elected officials.” For many years, Atkins’ trajectory has mirrored that of her former boss. Atkins won the City Council seat Kehoe vacated in 2000 to run for state Assembly. A decade later, Atkins won the same state Assembly seat that Kehoe held for four years until she ran for state Senate. Both women served as the Speaker of the State Assembly. In 2004, Kehoe became a state Senator and in 2016, Atkins did the same. Atkins only surpassed her mentor in 2018...
when she became the president pro tempore of the California Senate, a position Kehoe never held. Atkins, the first woman and first openly LGBT+ person to lead the California Senate.

"It’s not just that we’ve gotten behind these gay candidates, it’s that we’ve recognized talent that other people have recognized as well once they got to statewide office," explained LGBT+ studies professor and lead author, "Toni Atkins became the president pro tem which is really fantastic and a tribute not just to San Diego, but the residents of San Diego. It’s because those straight people in the state Assembly and state Senate chose Toni Atkins to lead them.

Like Atkins once did, Duran may follow in her boss’s footsteps as she seeks a position on the City Council.

With Kehoe no longer an elected official, her presence looms over San Diego and the state. Atkins appointed her to the California Transportation Commission and the California Coastal Commission. She also serves on the Parks Forward Commission and the Community Advisory Council at San Diego History Center’s LGBT+ exhibit.

In addition to her official roles, Kehoe is an important figure in local elections. Alongside Gloria and Atkins, she is a key fundraiser for the candidates she endorses. For many progressive Democrat campaign managers, her endorsement offers legitimacy and enough support to propel them into a win. In 2016, San Diego CityBeat’s Ken Stone pointed out that City Council candidate Chris Ward consistently touted the Kehoe-Atkins endorsement during his campaign. In 2018, Dr. Jen Campbell clipped City Council District 2 with the help of big-name Democrats.

Atkins was an early supporter of Georgette Gomez during her City Council District 9 race, whom she had previously worked with on environmental justice issues. Gomez is on her own quick trajectory to political stardom in San Diego. She was elected president of the City Council by her colleagues as well as the head of MTS. Now, she is in a primary race to replace Representative Susan Davis.

"Georgette Gomez’s success as a council member has impressed me so much. As chair of the countywide transit agency, Georgette had to win the confidence and trust of elected officials from all over the county. That is not easy — but she did it! As City Council president, again, she won support from all her colleagues and is doing an outstanding job," Kehoe said.

For her part, Gomez has come to consider Kehoe and Atkins as mentors. Gomez describes calling them whenever she is faced with a tough decision at City Council. She said Atkins is helpful because unlike many people who approach her as City Council president, she doesn’t have an agenda.

“When I succeeded in winning my election, I called her to get advice: OK, I just won. Now what do you do? Do she’s been very supportive in all different levels, without an agenda, which I really appreciate. It’s about just helping me be the best that I’m able to do,” Gomez said.

Gomez sees Atkins as someone who has helped her in her own evolution by advising her on how to carry her values into each new position she holds.

"Gomez noted much later, when she approached her about an endorsement. Kehoe’s support continued after she made it into office and Gomez appreciates calls with Kehoe because the former politician poses intentional questions to help her think through her decisions, instead of telling her what to do.

“I feel that it’s a safe space. It’s a safe conversation that I can have for ultimately helping me to make the best choice,” Gomez said.

“When I made the decision to run for Congress, [Kehoe] was one of the first people that said, ‘I know you have to go through your process, but if you end up deciding, I’m 100% with you.’ She was encouraging me, but at the same time, acknowledging that what ever decision you do, it’s going to be the right decision. I respect that a lot.”

Duran trusts Atkins’ judgment so much that when she informed her boss she hoped to run for District 3, she said if Atkins did not endorse her, she would drop her candidacy.

“I said ‘I want to do this, but it’s not something I’m gonna do unless I have your support. If you’re saying to me as your staff member, you won’t support me, then I won’t do it.’ If Toni Atkins says this is something you’re not going to be able to do — that was her job. She did that,” Duran said. “She said, ‘If this is what you want to do, I’ll support you.’”

Like Gomez, Duran never had any initial plans to run.

“I never thought I’d be doing this. I never thought I was gonna meet politicians. I never thought I was gonna work in a political office, much less run. That’s just how it all flowed,” Duran explained. As a young adult in St. Louis, she was mostly closeted and not involved in public advocacy. After moving to San Diego in 2007 and then getting involved in the push against Prop S, Kehoe, Atkins and Gloria were the first politicians she met in her whole life. “It blew my mind that they were gay, people liked them and they elected them to represent them.”

Kehoe, Atkins, and Gomez

ADMINISTERING YOUR TRUST UPON YOUR DEATH

By: Dick McEntyre and Chris von der Lieth, Attorneys at Law

You may wonder what is involved when your successor trustee administers your revocable living trust after your death. You may also wonder what your successor trustee will need to take.

1. Arrange for the on-going care of your pets; secure your home; and notify the local authorities of the death of your pet or of your home.

2. Order several Death Certificates through the mail; try to be used in connection with closing financial accounts and transferring titles to real property.

3. Send out "Notice to Beneficiary/Heir" letters as required by California law.

4. Obtain preliminary value of your estate to determine whether a federal estate tax return may be required to be filed for the estate with IRS (generally within 9 months from the date of your death).

5. Notify the California Department of Health Care Services as required by California law if you received or are entitled to receive Medicare.

6. Open a new checking account in the trust name (or name of your successor trustee). All trust distributions (including income and principal) will be made from this account.

7. Open a new savings account in the trust name (or name of your successor trustee).

8. Open a new checking account in the trust name (or name of your successor trustee) for the trust bank account, or divide the proceeds into the trust bank account, or divide such proceeds into the account referred to in Para 6 above.

9. Make claim for any death benefit(s) payable on your life insurance policies and notify your insurance companies of your death.

10. As to any personal property in your estate, have an inventory made by an estate appraiser. You may have received any benefits from Medi-Cal. You may have received any benefits from Social Security. You may have received any benefits from any other governmental agency.

11. Obtain date of death values of all other property (real property and personal property) as of the date of your death (if the property is not insured).

12. The trustee should keep a good record of all trust accountings and transferring title to real property.

13. The trustee should pay to himself or herself the reasonable compensation for the time and services performed.

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23. It is important to file for purposes of California Estate Tax and Inheritance Tax and to have the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration make the appropriate filing. It is also important to file for purposes of Federal Estate Tax and Inheritance Tax and to have the Internal Revenue Service make the appropriate filing.

The above statements are generalizations only and are not to be taken as legal advice for the reader’s particular situation.
I never believed it. Growing up I aspire to do all these things. have to give a kid hope that they have to create it and you can work with other people to create it.”

Without Kehoe’s successful election, Atkins would likely never have run herself or seen a city on the verge of sending a queer Latina to Congress or electing a “It blew my mind that they were gay, people liked them and they elected them to represent them.” — Toni Duran

You did it, San Diego. More than 600,000 of you are thinking about energy differently. By using less electricity from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., you’ve helped save energy and contributed to a cleaner environment for us all. Because of you, when is truly in. Visit us online for tips on how to continue your success with Time-of-Use.

Find tips at sdge.com/whentowork
From Page 4

LGBT community.

After her wins, Kehoe chose to spend her political capital helping other candidates succeed.

“There are many reasons to help others, especially women candidates, be successful in elections and in elected office,” Kehoe said. “So many San Diegans helped me not only in my first campaign but to learn about and understand our experience as women, as lesbians and as activists. I’m mindful that I must help and pass along what I have learned.

She brought up the slow change of the last 25 years on the City Council to be more progressive has had positive impacts, even as more needs to be done for poor families, communities of color and homeless San Diegans.

“We still need to press further and elect gender non-conforming candidates and many more candidates of color, especially African American candidates, in San Diego.

“When women, LGBTQ and candidates of color enter politics, the conversation changes; it broadens and goes deeper to address issues that are important to those communities. We are seeing it here in San Diego and on the national stage right now,” Kehoe said.

Gomez said representation is essential in changing conversations.

“We go through life and either we get rejected because of who we are or who your partner is. There’s a story there and that story is based on either rejection or oppression. If you experienced that, you want to break through that and you want to create a different environment. So, bringing that experience to whenever policy is being crafted or adopted is critical and you only are able to create a good outcome if you’re at the table,” Gomez said. “If it’s just all males at the table, that outcome of that policy is going to be based and shaped by that. So for me, being a woman, being a woman of color, being a woman that is part of the LGBTQ, I bring those perspectives to the table.”

While Gomez is glad harder conversations about issues such as the trans community, domestic violence, and police accountability are being had in City Council, she hopes the result will be action.

“I’m very hopeful that [in] 2020, even if I’m not there, conversations can lead to shaping new policies that are more inclusive and really reflective of [the] community,” Gomez said. “We have come a long way and we’re having better, more difficult conversations, but then sometimes it’s the same. It’s a mix of both. But I do think that by getting a new mayor, that’s going to be pretty significant.”

Atkins and Kehoe, as well as San Diego’s LGBTQ+ community at large, have not just worked to change the conversation at home. They mobilized to support Tammy Baldwin as she became the first openly LGBTQ+ person in the U.S. Senate and have helped other LGBTQ+ candidates.

“I can’t tell you what it felt like to see Danica Roem be the first transgender person elected in the country from my home state of Virginia. I would’ve never thought I could get elected in my home state, which is why I love California,” Atkins said.

This hope for the changing conversation in San Diego is coupled with a fear of what is happening at a federal level.

“What’s so sad is, in the face of all of [us showing] the world that we could be the leaders and that we cared about everything everybody else cared about, is to see what’s happening now at the federal level with this administration trying to come at us as if we shouldn’t be full citizens entitled to the protections, the respect, the dignity. It’s just shocking,” Atkins continued.

Kehoe is also worried about what is happening federally. “It’s getting better all the time at the local level, but at the federal level I have never been as worried about our country as I am now. Political action is a process. There is no finish line. When you win an election, the work is just beginning. We must all be ever vigilant and take our responsibilities as citizens seriously.”

Gomez is not afraid of the harsher political environment she will face if she is elected to Congress.

“I’m going to do the work and I’m going to find ways to push things regardless of what the environment is. To me, my commitment is to the community. My commitment is really to create a government agency, no matter which agency it is. To be responsive to the people; that, to me, is my commitment and I’m going to work towards that. I don’t look at things from, ‘I have a better environment here locally, so I should stay because it’s safe,’” Gomez said. “To me, it’s about delivering a government at the local level, at the state, at the federal level, to be responsive to the people. I will do the work no matter what.”

— Kendra Sitton can be reached at kendra@sdnews.com.

Rain, Wind, and Fire...

“The three menaces to any chimney, fireplace, or stove.”

Every year there are over twenty thousand chimney / fireplace related house fires in the US alone. Losses to homes as a result of chimney fires, leaks, and wind damage exceeds one hundred million dollars annually in the US.

CHIMNEY SWEEPS, INC., one of San Diego’s leading chimney repair and maintenance companies, is here to protect you and your home from losses due to structural damage and chimney fires. Family owned and operated and having been in business for over 30 years, Chimney Sweeps Inc. is a fully licensed and insured chimney contracting company (License # 976438) and they are certified with the National Fireplace Institute and have an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau.

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.

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Ward: City of San Diego should invest responsibly

"Budgets are moral documents," is an oft-used expression in governing. What money are we spending where and how does that reflect the values of the leaders who created the budget? Are we prioritizing our children? Public health? Working families? Or is there money going into the pockets of billionaires and corporations? I would argue that government investment tells the same story. These are our tax dollars. They should not be funding existential threats to our planet and our democracy. Full stop.

That’s why I proposed that the city of San Diego divert our public investment from fossil fuels.

In fighting the climate crisis head on, it is our responsibility as a national leader in combating climate change to take a holistic approach to promoting and supporting the green economy.

Investment activities made by the city should support a future where all people can healthily live without the negative externalities caused by fossil fuel companies.

Elected officials have been given a significant charge by the leaders protecting San Diegans from the threat of climate change while making fiscally sound decisions with taxpayer dollars. These two things intersect heavily in everything from paved streets to where we invest our pension dollars while we navigate through the new realities of a post-Prop B San Diego.

San Diego won’t be alone. At least 18 other cities in California divested from fossil fuel interest. However, San Diego can and should take a leadership role in the state and take things a step further.

That’s why I have also proposed that the city establish a Socially Responsible Investment Committee, which will fully support the city’s obligation to manage taxpayer funds in a way that supports the priorities of the people we serve. We need to divest from investment in fossil fuels, single-use plastics, palm oil, tobacco, private prisons, expansion of a U.S.-Mexico border wall, and firearms or ammunition for a recipient other than the United States military.

I would also like to see this policy taken to the state level. The University of California system has divested from fossil fuels. SB 185 (DeLeon), requiring the California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS) and the California State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS) to divest from coal companies, passed in 2015. But more progress is needed on the state level.

Why are we still investing in oil companies? The legislature outlawed private prisons this session, so why are they still in our investment portfolio? We have to continue the effort to ban single-use plastics — while we’re at it, we should divest from those companies too.

The problems we need to solve are big ones. Working families have it harder than ever. The ocean is gaining on us every day. Fires rage out of control. Communities are being torn apart by a criminal justice system that makes profit from locking people in cages. Children are dying in schools. We cannot afford to be timid in these times.

We can and should be fiscally and morally responsible. Our tax dollars should build the kind of future where every Californian can be safe, healthy, and have opportunities to thrive.

— Council member Chris Ward serves District 3, which includes Hillcrest, University Town, Mission Hills, Normal Heights, Bankers Hill and others. He is also the chair of the Select Committee on Homelessness and vice-chair of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless.
A look at the next legislative session

Notes from Toni
Toni G. Atkins

Happy New Year! January is a good time to regroup, recover, and recharge after the busy holiday season. While the state Senate, January also means returning to Sacramento for the second year of our legislative session.

During the legislative recess, I enjoyed taking part in dozens of meetings and events in the 39th Senate District, which focused on everything from affordable housing to human trafficking to celebrating the achievements of local businesses and community leaders. Now, I’m eager to join my colleagues for another productive year in the state Capitol.

Our annual deliberations on the state budget begin this month after Governor Newsom announces his initial proposal. Then, the Senate Budget Committee moves forward with its review. Last year, we enacted a bold and responsible budget that included record funding for education, strong reserves in case of economic downturns, and addressed several important projects in our region. I believe this year’s budget will be equally beneficial.

Two areas where we made major investments last year — health care and housing — will again be the subject of legislation in 2020. While we increased the number of Californians with access to health care and reduced the cost of health care for middle-class Californians, the Legislature must continue to work with the governor on the path toward health care for all.

Because there is not enough affordable housing construction to meet the need, we have to fix that by being thoughtful about building homes in places that will increase access to jobs, reduce the time people have to spend in their cars, and help us meet California’s greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Our region has a strong recreation and tourism industry, and is home to the largest concentration of military facilities in the world. Because these vital sectors of our economy all face threats from climate change, especially sea level rise, I am particularly pleased that the Senate will be advancing a $4.1 billion bond measure that will help communities invest in climate resiliency — including addressing sea level rise, preparing for droughts, and preventing wildfires.

In fact, wildfire preparation will continue to be one of our highest priorities in 2020 — and beyond. In November, the Senate held a hearing to examine issues involving the power shutoffs Californians have endured during our ever-expanding fire season. Another hearing is scheduled later this month to focus on tele-communications issues that arise during wildfires. San Diego’s experience in establishing recovery and prevention protocols after the 2003 and 2007 fires was basically learn-as-we-go. Having been through that reinforces my belief that California needs a comprehensive wildfire action plan, implemented in a timely and transparent manner so Californians know what to expect, and when.

No doubt it will be a busy and challenging year ahead, but one filled with many opportunities to make California an even better place to live.

I hope 2020 will also be a year of health and happiness for you and your loved ones.

— Toni G. Atkins represents District 39 in the California Senate. Follow her on Twitter @SenToniAtkins.

Support and a safe place for victims of domestic violence

The California Senate floor (Photo courtesy of the Office of Sen. Toni Atkins)

The Nov. 16 murder-suicide in Paradise Hills illustrates the critical importance of early action to protect domestic violence victims and their families before violence escalates. A 29-year-old mother and four of her children — ages 1, 5, 9 and 11 — were shot and killed in the culmination of a father’s ongoing campaign of harassment and terror.

The tragedy has re-focused the community’s attention on domestic violence and highlights the importance of a safe place where victims can go for help in San Diego County. It should also remind us all that police should be called when there’s violence or a direct threat of violence.

The San Diego County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team tracks all domestic violence-related homicides— our county averages 13 a year. Even one homicide is too many. That’s why we must remain vigilant in our efforts to spread awareness around this public health and safety issue.

Last year, more than 17,000 domestic violence reports were made to law enforcement. In the face of this ongoing threat to our families, friends and neighbors, two entities stand together to prevent domestic violence and protect victims and their children. The San Diego City Attorney’s Office and the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office want victims to know there are life-saving resources available to them.

One incredible resource is the San Diego Family Justice Center. Every year, thousands of San Diegans, working through the Family Justice Center, a safe place where domestic violence victims and their children can reclaim their lives, seek safety, and begin healing.

The Center, part of the City Attorney’s Office, brings together community partners, including therapists, pro bono attorneys, forensic medical nurses, domestic violence advocates, military liaisons, prosecutors, and the San Diego Police Department all under one roof.

The District Attorney’s Office is a strong partner in the Family Justice Center. Its on-site advocates work side-by-side with community partners to support victims fleeing violent relationships, to help victims understand the criminal justice process, and to bring abusers to justice.

Among the services the Family Justice Center provides are referrals to emergency housing and help in creating a safety plan for victims of, or people threatened with, domestic violence. A good safety plan is critical and should be in place before seeking a restraining order. Typically, the first 72 hours after a restraining order is granted can be the most dangerous for victims of domestic violence.

Part of a safety plan includes:
• Thinking of a safe place to go if an argument occurs – avoid rooms with no exits (bathroom), or rooms with weapons (kitchen).
• Thinking about and making a list of people to contact.
• Teaching your children how to call 911.
• Memorizing important numbers (friends, SSN, etc.)
• Establishing a “code word” or “sign” so that family, friends, teachers or co-workers know when to call for help.

Another tool available to victims of domestic violence is the Gun Violence Restraining Order, which was pioneered by the City Attorney’s Office. A GVRO can be ordered against a person who poses a clear threat to himself or others, preventing him from possessing, accessing or purchasing firearms or ammunition.

Health care professionals have also been recruited to help recognize victims and refer them to law enforcement or services. Last month, the District Attorney’s Office and the County’s Health and Human Services Agency launched San Diego County Health CARES to bring greater awareness among health care see Domestic Violence, pg 11
Pershing Drive

Named to honor those who served

Do you know the name of the major road in North Park that honors a World War I general and all San Diegans who fought in that war? Hint: It is a freeway exit from Interstate 5 to North Park.

Pershing Drive, named for General John Joseph Pershing, it isn't surprising that few know the answer — the naming and the war itself happened more than 100 years ago.

North Park started growing in the early 1900s when the streetcar — called the "University Avenue Electric road" in a 1907 San Diego Union article — connected the area to Downtown San Diego along University Avenue that year and along 30th Street soon afterward. These streetcar routes extended the public transportation network initiated in 1906 by extension of the San Diego Electric Railway line from Mission Cliff Pavilion in University Heights to the eastern boundary of Normal Heights along Adams Avenue.

After World War I ended in 1918, housing in North Park began to boom. Although the streetcar continued to serve faithfully until 1949, there was an increasing demand for better roadways to satisfy the desire for transportation by personal automobile. In "North Park: A San Diego Urban Village, 1896-1946," Donald Covington wrote, "The ideal became the sanitized, all-electric, stucco hacienda, a romantic amalgamation of Edison, Bell, Ford and Zorro with radio aerial intact. The patio succeeded the veranda; the tiled breakfast room challenged the paneled dining room; the screened sleeping porch gave way to the two-tray laundry porch; and the motor car became the new house pet with its own attached garage."

Many North Park businessmen could see that everyone's new "house pet" required a better connection to Downtown for North Park to thrive. A possible connection was the existing road through Balboa Park — still known only as the "Big Grade" — that snaked from 18th Street to the northeast corner of the park at 28th Street. But that road was steep, narrow, and unpaved. The cost to change the hazardous roadway into a 25-foot wide paved boulevard was initially proposed to come from public donations.

Richard Allen Chapman — president of a real estate and insurance company at the time — presented the proposal to improve the Big Grade and name it Pershing Memorial Drive to city officials in November 1918. The San Diego Union's Nov. 15, 1918 issue reported that he intended the project to include "suitable monuments or slabs at both ends of the drive giving the names of the general staff in command of the American forces in France, together with the names of all men from the city of San Diego who died on the field of battle in the cause of liberty."

The Board of Park Commissioners unanimously supported the concept. Soon afterward, the City Council approved the project and promised matching funds.

Throughout 1919, prominent San Diegans including North Park residents Jack Hartley, Will Stevens and Charles Small contributed. The world-renowned opera singer Mrs. Ernestine Schumann-Heink — a beloved figure in San Diego — gave a concert in the Spreckels Organ Pavilion which was advertised in the San Diego Union's May 24, 1919 issue as "the biggest musical event of the year."

The newspaper article noted that the entire proceeds would be "donated to a fund to Build Pershing Paved Road and Monument to the San Diego Boys who died in the service."

John Joseph Pershing (1860-1948), the road's namesake and the representative for all San Diegans who had been killed in the war, was born on a farm in Missouri. He attended the United States Military Academy (West Point) from 1882 to 1886 and served in the U.S. Army through multiple military campaigns prior to World War I.

He served as the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) on the Western Front in World War I from 1917 to 1918. As AEF commander, Pershing was responsible for a fighting force that started as 27,000 inexperienced men and grew to more than 2 million soldiers.

Sufficient funds for the project finally were raised by mid-1922 with the help of G. Aubrey Davidson, president of the Southern Trust and Commerce Bank; George Marston, president of The Marston Company department store; and Charles Small, manager of the Bishop Cracker and Candy Company. In January 1923, paving was completed, and Pershing Drive was opened to travel. It does not appear that the proposed monuments were ever constructed.

In April 1923, the name of the road continuing north to University Avenue was changed from Oregon Street to Pershing Avenue in response to a petition supported by residents, although residents along 28th Street also petitioned for their street to have that honor. At this time, spurs of newly improved Pershing Drive lined up with both streets. In 1992, nearly 70 years later, the Pershing Spur was closed to accommodate plans for Bird Park, which opened officially in September 1997.

"—Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at info@northparkhista-
ry.org or 619-294-8990."
The Golden Gear Awards honors
San Diego's bicycle advocates

DAVE SCHWAB | Reportert@sdnews.com

The bicycling community’s answer to the Oscars, the Golden Gear Advocacy Awards, were dispensed in December by San Diego Bike Coalition to top mobility leaders in numerous categories. 2019 awardees were:

• Advocate of The Year: Matt Stucky
• Bike Friendly Business of The Year: Quartary
• Elected Official of The Year: City Council member Chris Ward
• Public Partner of The Year: City of Encinitas
• Community Partner of The Year: Nook East Village
• Volunteer of The Year: Katie Crist
• Educator of The Year: Michelle Laufen

The awards ceremony was held Dec. 12 at Balboa Park following the ninth annual Holiday Joy Ride fundraiser, sponsored by the bike coalition through the park and Uptown neighborhoods with bikes adorned with lights and tinsel. Participants enjoyed drinks, appetizers and prizes at a post-ride celebration where biking advocates were honored at the Golden Gear Advocacy Awards ceremony.

The Holiday Joy Ride/Golden Gear Advocacy Awards was the culminating celebration for progress made in San Diego County for better biking, like the newly installed protected bike lanes in Downtown San Diego. Funds from the fundraising ride benefit the bike coalition’s education and advocacy programs.

“We look forward to presenting our Golden Gear Awards every year to these outstanding leaders, volunteers, elected officials and communities who have really stepped up their efforts to support and promote safety and more accessible biking for all,” said Andy Hanshaw, executive director of San Diego Bike Coalition.

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“Quartary is proud to be an ally to the SD Bike Coalition,” said Justin Navalle, Quartary managing partner. “We share the same passion in creating positive community activations and we will always do what we can do to help the SD Bike Coalition reach more San Diego citizens. Our collaborations in East Village and beyond will only get stronger.”

“I’m extremely honored to be recognized by the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, although I don’t usually think of myself as an advocate,” said advocate of the year Matt Stucky, who was recognized for first bringing the idea of a 30th Street bike lane to the city. “I’m proud to be part of the broad partnership between the community and organizations like the bicycle coalition to push for our city to reimagine our neighborhoods to be sustainable, healthy, and safe for all residents, regardless of their age, ability, or transportation choice.”

“At the Nook East Village, we want to create an urban-living experience that keeps sustainability in mind,” said David Allen, founding principal, Trestle, developer of Nook East Village. “Our accessible bike parking encourages our residents to ride to work every day and enjoy city living at a pace that allows them to enjoy their neighborhood. We are honored to be recognized by the bike coalition with this award and we look forward to building a community where everyone has more transportation options.”

“Since taking office, I’ve been a strong proponent of ensuring a robust network of bike lanes in San Diego and District 3 to protect experienced cyclists and casual riders,” said San Diego City Council member Chris Ward. “I am proud that Downtown has the first protected bike lane in the city and have consistently advocated for its continued funding to complete all three phases. In addition, I welcome upcoming projects in my district including on Pershing Drive, 30th Street, Howard Avenue, Fourth and Fifth avenues and Landis Street.”

San Diego Bike Coalition is a nonprofit that advocates for and protects the rights of all people who ride bicycles, promoting bicycling as a mainstream, safe and enjoyable form of transportation and recreation.

For more information, visit sd-bikecoalition.org.

— Dave Schwab can be reached at reporter@sdnews.com.
Two food establishments in Uptown have landed on Yelp’s “Top 100 Places to Eat in the U.S.” in 2020. Topping the entire national list is Shawarma Guys, a food truck that operates from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Sunday in a South Park parking lot (3012 Grape St., sheshawarma-guys.com).

Launched about a year ago by Michigan transplant Bryan Zeto, the mobile kitchen specializes in Halal Mediterranean fare, and has become a major draw for its coveted waguu beef shawarma used in sandwiches, bowls, wraps and customized plates. Coming in at No. 9 on the list is Soichi Sushi in University Heights (2121 Adams Ave., sochisushi.com). Noted for its use of fresh ingredients, the restaurant specializes in multi-course omakase as well as a la carte items such as steamed egg custard, monk fish liver, and various sashimi.

Founder/owner Micah Goldfarb opened his first location eight years ago in Sorrento Valley after working in the sound industry for such well-known artists as Elvis Costello, Jason Mraz, Rage Against the Machine and John Legend. “I’m the only person who ever opened a restaurant to spend more time at home,” he quipped when pointing out he used to spend up to nine months a year when pointing out he used to spend up to nine months a year in the U.S. that offers food, local craft beer, wine and specialty cocktails.” Essentially, while customers sip on “kittytinis,” they can interact with adoptable cats occupying the lounge. 2856 Adams Ave., whiskersandwinebar.com.

Green Spot Salad Company lands in Mission Valley. (Courtesy photo)

A third San Diego location of Green Spot Salad Company has sprouted in Mission Valley in place of a Subway shop. Located in a strip plaza shared by Rubio’s and Taco Bell, the eatery specializes in salads, bowls and wraps—available in preset form or customized to personal preferences.

A combined “cat lounge” and cocktail bar is slated to open in the next four to five weeks, will complete “Whiskers & Wine Bar.” According to its Facebook page, the establishment they can interact with adoptable cats. This local food truck has rolled into the national spotlight. The mobile kitchen specializes in Michigan transplant Bryan Zeto, the mobile kitchen specializes in Halal Mediterranean fare, and has become a major draw for its coveted waguu beef shawarma used in sandwiches, bowls, wraps and customized plates. Coming in at No. 9 on the list is Soichi Sushi in University Heights (2121 Adams Ave., sochisushi.com). Noted for its use of fresh ingredients, the restaurant specializes in multi-course omakase as well as a la carte items such as steamed egg custard, monk fish liver, and various sashimi.

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Upstaged by trendy restaurants and bars in the area of 30th Street and Adams is Senor Mango’s, a small Mexican eatery where you won’t find tacos, burritos, quesadillas or enchiladas. The focus is instead on torta sandwiches, fresh fruit salads, smoothies and escamochas. The latter is what originally drew me here a couple of years ago after learning about them. Along with the cheap prices and some of the springiest, liveliest tortas in Uptown, I’ve come knocking several times.

Escamochas were a novelty to me back then. They’re a Mexican dessert made with cubed pieces of tropical fruits piled into tall glasses, and with sweet cream or condensed milk poured in. On top are fluffy nests of sliced almonds and shredded coconut.

Beautiful to the eyes and refreshing to the palate, they are common to Tijuana popsicle shops or paleterias. And because of their simplicity, I’m astounded it had taken me so long to discover them, and that they continue evading American kitchens.

The establishment’s humble exterior leads into a cramped dining area with only four or five tables. There are a couple of high tops out front, as well as picnic tables next door at Leon Produce. Customers are welcome to sit there since both businesses supposedly share the same ownership.

A cornucopia of fruits occupies the order counter in a festive display of bananas, pineapples, mangos, papayas and more. If you weren’t craving something sweet and juicy before walking in, you certainly will after entering.

But eat a torta first.

Their fresh, airy rolls are sourced from a local Mexican bakery. They envelope fillings such as chicken salad with Provolone, avocado and lettuce; tuna salad with minced celery and onions; and for vegetarians, one that is stacked with avocado, lettuce, tomato, onions and buttery panela cheese.

The “lomo” torta is my hands-down favorite thanks to a filling of fast-addicting pork loin accented with guajillo chili peppers. Expect a fair amount of heat with each bite. Also, if the yellow American-type cheese that comes on it isn’t your thing, ask for the panela instead.

Fruity things ultimately dominate the menu — agua frescas, licuados (smoothies made with low-fat milk and shaved ice), salads, yogurt cups, the escamochas, and even a hefty banana split that comes with the addition of granola. I’ve only seen it, but the visual told me to never attempt it alone.

Though summery in flavor, the “pico de gallo” salad consisting of watermelon, oranges, mango, jicama, and cucumber dressed in lime juice is available year-round. It skewers your seasonal clock when eaten in the winter because of its sweet and citrusy components. It also offers an unexpected kick from chili seasoning residing on some of the fruit.

Traditional smoothies are in abundance here. They range from “sunset peach” and “very berry” to “tropical treat” and “vanilla mango.” They’re pure, thick and filling, I buy one only when I’m able to resist eating a whole torta. Should you do the same, boxed, leftover tortas hold up remarkably well in the fridge for a couple of days.

Either way, Senor Mango’s is a healthy alternative to traditional Mexican eateries. And yet I come away each time with the same level of satisfaction I get from eating a big, meaty burrito.

— Frank Sabatini Jr. is the author of ‘Secret San Diego’ (ECW Press) and began his local writing career more than two decades ago as a staffer for the former San Diego Tribune. You can reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.
Rainbow Crosswalk
Join City Council member Chris Ward, elected officials and community members in celebrating San Diego's first ever rainbow crosswalk! The crosswalk will activate the creativity, legacy and diversi- ty of the LGBTQ+ movement. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the corner of Nor- man Street and Street Avenue.

Rainbow Crosswalk

CEPTUCA CALENDAR
San Diego Pride is teaming up with the San Diego region to build bridges by building homes and supporting Habitat for Humanity. Volunteers will be provided with an official Habitat for Humanity T-shirt, lunch, and water throughout the day. Specific details regarding logistics for shifts will be provided for reg- istered volunteers as event ap- proaches. Register by signing up at sdpride.org. 9 a.m.-noon.

San Diego Uptown News
By Jeff Zlot 7-8 a.m. on 107.3 at 1444 Campus Ave. Also held on Thursday afternoons from 1-2 p.m. at the library.

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providers to signs of strangulation crimes and help them identify victims of strangulation who might not otherwise report abuse.

Domestic violence is still the No. 1 killer of women when it comes to violent crime in the U.S. and causes a ripple effect that directly harms children, takes a toll on victims’ mental health, and — as we saw last weekend — can shake a community.

As a society, we must stand up to it and make sure victims have a safe place to go across the region where there are professionals who care and can provide the tools to stop violence from escalating to murder. Victims of domestic violence often feel like they are in a dark tunnel alone. We want them to know that we stand with them and are ready to provide your real-time help to guide them into the light and to safety.

The exhibit also helps people understand more about the local ecosystems in San Diego and what the less “cute” critters contribute to it.

“We want to show everybody that these are all our neighbors and they’re not necessarily the warm and fuzzy critters people might want to see more, but once you see them and their natural environments and see that they’re not threatening, they’re actually doing an important part in the ecosystem,” Vielma said. “Hopefully you’ll get to like them more and maybe you’ll protect them as well.”

All the creatures are native to the area, except the honeybees and green anoles. Their enclosures are carefully stocked with the sand, leaves, and rocks were used in a Tupperware tub at the time explained. The rattlesnake was actually confiscated in a drug bust, Vielma said. “The big red diamond rattlesnake was actually confiscated in a drug bust,” Vielma said. “Even the crickets are pampered until they get fed to the other animals,” Vielma said. “We make sure that everybody’s happy.”

One of the joys Vielma has in the new exhibit is watching kids search the nooks and crannies of each enclosure to find the hiding critters. She said the kids are almost as excited as her about all the animals, insects and arachnids in the lab.

To see them go crazy in the exhibit — it’s very fun,” she said. “Plus, I just love all the critters.”

Vielma does not have a favorite critter, but she likes checking up on the ants because they change every day, as well as the gopher snake and scorpions, who redecorate their enclosures all the time.

She can also recount some of the origin stories for the creatures on display, including the ant colony that started out as just a queen and six eggs a staff member at The Nat found in the desert. He brought them back on the ants because they change every day, as well as the gopher snake and scorpions, who redecorate their enclosures all the time.

The Living Lab exhibit will be on display until Sept. 1, 2020.

More photos of the Living Lab exhibit can be found on Page 15.

Call Mike Today to Advertise! Mike Rosensteel (619) 961-1958 mike@sdcnn.com
The ants were found by a Nat employee who discovered the queen and a few eggs in the desert and brought them back to the museum. Vielma said they are one of the most interesting creatures in the exhibit because they change their enclosure every day. (Photos by Kendra Sitton)

A kid interacts with the Baja California rat snake.

The Baja California rat snake stretched up to greet new visitors. A lizard at the front entrance eats lettuce.

The ants are one of the most interesting creatures in the exhibit because they change their enclosure every day. (Photos by Kendra Sitton)