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**Foodie food court**

Oleri Cultura brings vegan delicacies to La Mesa. Page 11

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**LA MESA VILLAGE TO HOST ‘UNPLUGGED’ EVENTS**

National Day of Unplugging (NDU) has announced its 11th year series of Unplugged Events, beginning March 6 and 7. Over the past decade, NDU has been at the forefront of the movement to educate people about the dangers involved with over-reliance on technology — especially as it pertains to handheld devices.

**A church divided?**

Pastor explains news of denomination split

The headlines in the news about the big Methodist church split has made quite a few heads spin. “Where do we go? What do we do?” church members ask among themselves.

Elbert Kim, pastor of the La Mesa First United Methodist Church, says the news is really not as grim as what people suppose. “Unfortunately, many of the news [sources] have been misinformed. The United Methodist Church, as you and I know it, is not splitting,” he stated.

So what is going on? What’s the deal?

“Many of the news media are reacting to two events that recently occurred. One is that the decisions from last year’s General Conference officially went into effect on the first of January,” Pastor Kim clarified.

That decision was a proposal made last year by a diverse, 16-member group of United Methodist bishops and other leaders. The proposal would preserve the United Methodist fiscal approach to everything we do.”

“I think it’s a great blueprint for the rest of District 2,” he said and added that he is endorsed by current District 2 Supervisor Dianne Jacob, who is leaving the seat after 28 years due to new term limit rules.

Kenya Taylor is a licensed marriage and family therapist running for a District 2 seat. She is a graduate of San Diego State University with a degree in marriage and family therapy.

According to Taylor, many members of the congregation she serves have been affected by the denomination split.

“For some of our older members, they have been a part of the Methodist Church since they were children,” she said. “As the denomination split, they have had to find a new church and are looking for guidance.”

The La Mesa First United Methodist Church is located at 3925 Jackson Drive. For more information, call 619-464-1607. See La Mesa Courier, Page 2

**SEE DISTRICT 2 FORUM, Page 2**

**SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 5**
for the seat. She said her profession gives her the experience to monitor the county’s health and human services issues, which are the bulk of the county budget.

Lakeside rancher Brian Sesko said his experience as a home builder in the area for 30 years qualifies him for the seat. “I know something about the housing problem out here,” he said.

Sesko also has served as chair of the Lakeside Planning Group. He vowed to only serve one term in office and to reform the county bureaucracy.

Former state Senator Joel Anderson also expressed disappointment with the county – specifically its homeless problem, roads.

“All these problems have grown and grown, yet 51 years ago, we sent a man to the moon with a slide ruler. Today, we have high-speed computers and we can’t find any political courage to get things done correctly,” he said. Anderson touted his record of working with Democrats in the state Senate while retaining a conservative voting record.

The audience-generated questions mostly dealt with housing and development and issues of dealing with homelessness and mental health in East County.

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

All the candidates said they would protect rural and open spaces in District 2, while promoting new housing developments.

Vaus pointed to Poway’s recent construction of housing in its downtown area. “At the same time that we approved those 200 homes, we’ve expanded our open space by 342 acres,” he added.

Vaus also said that building affordable units doesn’t have to diminish a city’s character and that low-income housing in Poway hasn’t caused higher crime.

Answering a question about campaign contributions from developers, Vaus stated that owning a home is a piece of the American dream. “That’s only possible thanks to builders,” he said, adding that he doesn’t have a litmus test for who can contribute to his campaign and that no one can buy his vote for a campaign contribution.

Anderson also said he takes contributions from developers but his voting record shows he has voted for and against their interests.

“I remember one time somebody else asked this and I said, ‘Well if you think I can be bought, then why haven’t you donated to me?’” he said.

Anderson said low-income, high-density projects “make zero sense” in backcountry. In Sacramento, he said, he worked on bill to lower cost and streamlining approval process to build density projects within a half mile of public transportation.

“SB 35 provided high-density, low-income housing near trolley stations,” he said. “[Housing] takes planning and sticking to the plan, but the plan keeps changing [and that is the problem].”

Taylor, who said she does not take campaign contributions from developers, said she supports a “housing first” approach for lack of affordable housing.

“But it is important for us to remember that everyone doesn’t make less than $30,000 a year or less than $10,000 a year,” she added. “We need to make sure we have a plan for the middle class.”

She said she is against development sprawling into the backcountry because “we need to make sure we’re not the next Paradise, California.” She suggested accessory dwelling units could be a solution to adding housing in East County without taking away open space.

Sesko said housing problems stem from mandates coming from Sacramento that “make no sense for those of us that live in the backcountry.” He said he feared the state will remake all neighborhoods to be more dense and decried affordable housing as “a way for people to look to government to solve the problem.”

“I don’t think every taxpayer wants to be paying every nickel and extra dollars to accommodate all the wishes and pleasures of people that need affordable housing,” he said. He suggested less regulations to lower cost of housing.

All the candidates supported developing around Gillespie Field to spur economic activity in the region.

HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

While all the candidates acknowledged a growing homelessness problem in East County, they differed on solutions.

“One thing that we can do quickly is give the sheriff the tools so he can start arresting these people, getting them into housing to get them off our streets, to get them out of our parks,” Sesko said. He suggested public housing can be done easily by building military-like housing with cots and storage.

Taylor said her experience as a therapist has taught her that “everyone who is homeless doesn’t have mental health issues,” and stressed that economic issues are a primary factor that impacts mental health and wellness.
said, “We need that mental health money to triage the homeless.”

Anderson acknowledged that not all homeless are mentally ill, “but we’ve all seen people talking to themselves. We know that that’s a big portion.” He said it is important to not “warehouse these people, but address their issues.”

He said there are only 100 beds for mental health patients in a county with 3.5 million people and that he would expand beds by working with Supervisor Nathan Fletcher to fix problem.

San Diego Vintage Flea Market

Local residents nostalgic for the days when strolling through La Mesa’s Downtown Village meant popping in and out of the plethora of antique stores in search of the perfect vintage knickknack or piece of furniture will soon be able to enjoy a new vintage shopping experience when the San Diego Vintage Flea Market moves to Grossmont Center at the end of March.

Held every fourth Sunday of the month, the San Diego Flea Market began in 2012 with 12 vendors at the Masonic Lodge in El Cajon, said market founder Michelle Enders.

“We were there for just about a year and outgrew the space very fast,” she said. By the time the market moved to its next location, the lot behind what is now the Observatory Theater in North Park, there were 76 vendors and it eventually grew to average between 95 and 100.

“But our biggest was last month when we penned to squeeze in 110 vendors,” Enders said. “The space was quite small for having that many vendors so we knew that it’s been time for us to seek bigger venues where there’s room for us to grow.”

Size restraints, coupled with the fact that the lot behind the Observatory will soon be cleared to make a pocket park for North Park residents, prompted Enders to look elsewhere, eventually landing in Grossmont Center.

“After knowing the history of Grossmont and working closely with the family that owns it, I am really excited for the move. I think it’s going to be a great transition for shoppers, for sellers, for everyone,” Enders said, adding that the space for the market — the lot between Chula Vista Fitness and Fuddruckers — has the potential for 500 vendors.

“The vendors at the San Diego Vintage Flea Market are more “upscale” and are carefully curated by Enders.

“When you hear ‘flea market,’ people think of more of a swap meet, but that’s not the way we are,” she said. “This is people’s livelihoods, this is how they make money. They’re bringing items that people necessarily seeing anywhere else.”

Items typical of flea market vendors include vintage clothes, furniture, pottery, and “a little bit
La Mesa becomes home to a first-ever pudding shop

By FRANK SABATINI JR., La Mesa Courier

If you do a Google search for “pudding shops” or “pudding cafes,” you won’t come up with anything except for hundreds of results related to bread pudding. But we’re talking about classic North American-style pudding, the smooth and velvety kind we spooned from small glass bowls as kids while nestled on the couch in front of our favorite TV shows.

San Diego native Toran Grays is doing what no culinary entrepreneur to our knowledge has ever done anywhere in the country. He’s opening a retail business that primarily sells pudding made in small batches.

Grays was lucky to grow up with the homemade version opposed to ready-made puddings or those originating from powdered mixes. The family’s top flavor was banana, a recipe authored by his late great-grandmother, Agnes White, who is precisely his inspiration for opening Extraordinary Banana Pudding in La Mesa on March 14.

The shop will spotlight her signature scratch recipe in conjunction with other flavors that Grays developed such as pistachio, red velvet, lemon, chocolate, coconut and more. For the holidays, pumpkin spice will enter the lineup.

“My great-grandmother and I were very close. She lived in Mississippi and passed away when I was 16 years old. It was her dream to someday open a pudding place,” Grays recalled.

While that never happened, White always made the pudding for Grays when he visited her in the South, or when she traveled to San Diego.

“As I got older, it became a big thought of mine to open a pudding shop in her honor,” he added, noting that his roughly 800-square-foot shop will greet with a modern design and photographs of White and other family members.

Banking on the novelty of the business and the quality of the product, Grays is currently transitioning from working as a floor manager at Catalina Offshore Products to immersing himself full-time into the shop.

His small-batch puddings will be sold in rectangular plastic trays with snap-on lids from refrigerated units inside the store. They’re priced at $8 for 8 ounces; $12 for 12 ounces; and $30 for party trays that feed nearly 25 people. Though tailored for take-out, the shop features a few tables for enjoying the specialty product onsite.

Homemade pudding offers a particular decadence in both texture and flavor. It is simultaneous-ly creamy and airy — like a hybrid of mousse and crème brûlée.

Grays calls it “an American staple,” noting that “it brings me back to when I was a kid eating meals with my family.”

Adhering faithfully to his great-grandmother’s recipe, Grays uses whole milk as the base. He adds in light cream, whey protein, and a little corn syrup for sheen. For the holidays, pumpkin spice will enter the lineup.

For the banana pudding, slices of the fruit are added right before the admixture cools and thickens. It is then garnished with wafer cookies, which are also used as a light bedding to most of the other puddings.

Grays said he will eventually introduce to the menu cakes and cupcakes, frosted with none other than — pudding. Those too hail from White’s recipe collection.

For more information, call 619-642-6274 or visit extraordinarybananapudding.com.

—Frank Sabatini Jr. is the author of ‘Secret San Diego’ (ECW Press) and began his local writing career more than two decades ago as a staff-er for the former San Diego Tribune. Reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.
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At Legacy, your wedding will be as dazzling as your love. Our professional staff will serve your guests with excellence!

La Mesa resident Roy Woodall celebrated his 100th birthday at the Waterford Terrace Retirement Community where he lives on Feb. 7. Dozens of friends and family, as well as Mayor Mark Arapostathis, attended the event to wish him a happy 100.

Woodall’s “life well-lived” includes serving as a U.S. Army Sergeant during World War II, rising to the rank of postmaster at a Northern California post office, and traveling to all 50 states and Puerto Rico. He was also among the first to walk across the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937.

Woodall has been a resident of the San Diego region for more than 30 years, playing daily rounds of golf and swimming laps up until only a few years ago. Today, he still enjoys painting watercolors illustrating the beautiful vistas of the area.

Barnes began her tenure as Cuyamaca College president in October 2015. Under her leadership, Cuyamaca College institutional reforms that have markedly increased the number of students completing transfer-level math and English classes. The college was honored with the Dr. John W. Rice Diversity & Equity Award from the California Community Colleges and recognized nationally by Excelencia in Education. Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, said that kind of leadership is critical. “We know more than ever before about how community colleges can improve outcomes for students, both in and after college,” he said. “And the urgency for them to do so only increases – especially for students of color and low-income students. These fellows have shown they are fully, urgently committed to excellence and equity, and we look forward to working alongside them.”

Cuyamaca College President Julianna Barnes has been selected by the Aspen Institute to join the 2020-21 inaugural class of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship program.

The new initiative is designed to support community college presidents in the early years of their tenure to accelerate transformational change on behalf of students. Barnes is one of 25 college leaders selected from more than 100 applicants for the Aspen Fellowship, which is funded by JPMorgan Chase & Co. and run by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program.

The leaders, all of whom are in their first five years at their post, begin their seven-month fellowship in June. Their institutions span 15 states and vary widely, from a rural college with fewer than 2,000 students to a statewide system that educates more than 150,000.

“I am truly honored to be selected for this prestigious program that will benefit our students and, in turn, our community,” Barnes said. “The Aspen Presidential Fellowship’s focus on student success and equity resonates with the mission and vision of Cuyamaca College, which is a higher education leader. I cannot wait to learn all I can to make certain the college remains on the cutting edge in meeting student needs.”

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La Mesa Mayor Mark Arapostathis, Roy Woodall and Waterford Terrace Executive Director Melissa Dimayuga (Courtesy photo)
Primary election analysis at next Dem meeting

There are also very important congressional outcomes to examine, including our two local races, the 53rd Congressional District and the oh-so-contentious 50th in East County. Who will end up being Ammar Campa Najjar’s November opponent? We also have many local races of interest. The county supervisorial contests; the countywide measures A and B, which deal with building in the backcountry; the San Diego City Council race in District 7, which new。“

First for the political season, California’s March 3 primary election will have a significant bearing on the presidential race. With our state being the biggest part of Super Tuesday, at the end of the evening, the delegate count and prospective leader should be in much sharper focus.

In President Trump’s recent State of the Union address, he articulated many of the accomplishments of his administration which have improved the quality of life for every American. Record low unemployment, passage of the UAMCA trade deal, increased wages, reduction of taxes for the middle class, the killing of Islamic State group leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and 187 confirmed killings of Islamic State fighters in just two years. Of course, all of these victories, and many others, are due to the hard work sets those priorities, which is an investment in American workers and manufacturing, including steel production, and will lead us into the future.

In the words of President Trump, “In the 72% increase in funding for in Congress, The Mid-Coast extension, currently underway, is scheduled to open next year. The 72% increase in funding for mass transit will help our public transportation systems. Southern California has become synonymous with traffic and expanding public transportation. Of course, all of these programs will lead to better public transit options and will help people get out of their cars.

Let’s get clogging our roads will reduce carbon emissions, result in cleaner air, and allow San Diegans to spend more time with their families and less time stuck in traffic.

San Diego is a leader in renewable energy and working towards creating a clean energy system. The Clean Cities Coalition Network could help San Diego meet its goals under the aggressive action plan.

Support for the Move Forward plan is broad and popular, backed by Smart Move America, the National League of Cities, the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Roundtable. As Southern Californians, we spend an inordinate amount of time in our cars on the road. Bad, congested road can mean delays and auto repairs. And repairs mean money — a lot of it. San Diego has been known for having some of the worst roads in America, but we have made some improvements. In 2015, we ranked eighth in the country for poor road conditions. It wasn’t until 2018 that San Diego dropped out of the top 20 in cities with bad roads. This progress is certainly good news. The $760 billion infrastructure proposal recently unveiled by House Democrats and President Trump, provides a chance for regions like ours to build on those improvements and ensure a transportation system that is green, affordable, reliable, efficient, and provides access to jobs.

As address our nation’s most urgent infrastructure needs, this bold proposal will create 10 million good-paying jobs, take important steps to address climate change, improve safety, and spur economic activity. Equally important, this framework will give communities a greater say in how these funds are used to rebuild their neighborhoods. The National League of Cities, the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Roundtable are just a few of the organizations supporting the proposal. If you can get the chamber and Labor on board, you must be doing something right.

Rebuilding America should be a bipartisan endeavor. Democrats, Republicans, and President Trump might come together on behalf of Americans who are clamoring for an infrastructure that will lead us into the future. The cost of inaction is too great for our communities. An investment in our infrastructure is an investment in America’s future, which will bring jobs and prosperity to our communities.

The Move Forward framework sets those priorities, creates jobs, and will be a key component in the goal to address climate change. So, let’s get moving and push this plan forward.

—Rep. Susan Davis represents central San Diego, as well as La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley and parts of El Cajon and Chula Vista.

Let’s rebuild America

CA 53 BULLETIN
By REP. SUSAN DAVIS

As Southern Californians, we spend an inordinate amount of time in our cars on the road. Bad, congested roads can mean delays and auto repairs. And repairs mean money — a lot of it. San Diego has been known for having some of the worst roads in America, but we have made some improvements. In 2015, we ranked eighth in the country for poor road conditions. It wasn’t until 2018 that San Diego dropped out of the top 20 in cities with bad roads. This progress is certainly good news. The $760 billion infrastructure proposal recently unveiled by House Democrats and President Trump, provides a chance for regions like ours to build on those improvements and ensure a transportation system that is green, affordable, reliable, efficient, and provides access to jobs.

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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 editorials 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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Tackling homelessness: The Board of Supervisors recently joined me in approving a wide range of short- and long-term measures aimed at addressing homelessness in our unincorporated communities. These steps include moving to expand a new homeless outreach team, offering more motel/hotel room vouchers and seeking land for permanent, supportive housing and emergency shelters that would offer health services. Recent encampments at Lamar Park in Spring Valley, Lakeside and in other outlying communities underscored the need to address chronic homelessness in those areas. Many of those without homes have serious and chronic needs, and are stuck in a cycle of homelessness, addiction, medical emergencies and incarceration. Helping them break free of that cycle is tough. It requires more than quick fixes. What we need is a comprehensive approach that offers a continuum of care. The recent board vote opens the door to doing exactly that.

Our great outdoors: Park and recreation opportunities in East County just keep getting better and better. Thanks in part to funds provided by the county, SanTEE recently expanded Mast Park to include more parking and improved bathrooms and playgrounds. Congratulations to Mayor John Minto and all the folks in SanTEE. Meanwhile, park improvements are in the works at Lindo Lake in Lakeside, Estrella Park in Casa de Oro and in other unincorporated communities.

Stay in touch: Have questions, suggestions or feedback about your county government? Call me at 619-531-5522 or email me at dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov. Or, swing by my new community coffee. Want to hear about improvements underway in your unincorporated community? Come by one of my revitalization meetings. For locations and dates of these important meetings, go to www.diannejacob.com.

Dianne Jacob is chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and represents District 2.

News from your County Supervisor

News briefs

HELIX STUDENTS AWARDED $3,500 FROM BBB
Better Business Bureau (BBB) partnered with San Diego County Credit Union (SDCCU) and awarded $5,500 in scholarships to three San Diego students through the BBB Ambassador Scholarship program. Through presentations, ambassadors empowered high school peers nearing college and beyond with tools for navigating credit and budgeting, online safety, rentals and housing student loans, scholarships, and employment scams.

On Jan. 15, scholarships were awarded to students who presented the information they were coached on to the highest number of their peers during a reception at iHeartRadio. All BBB Ambassadors were celebrated for their success, reaching nearly 2,000 high school students through 100 presentations in San Diego, Orange, and Imperial counties.

Receiving a $2,500 scholarship, Sundus Hersi represented Helix Charter High School in first place. Kevin De Serra High School student, received the second-place scholarship of $1,500. Third-place scholarship recipient, Zubeyda Farah of Helix Charter High School, received $1,000.

“By supporting BBB’s Ambassador Program, SDCCU has helped to educate the next generation on issues of financial awareness, scam avoidance, and how to make the right decisions for their futures,” said Michael B. Davis, President and CEO of BBB of San Diego, Orange and Imperial Counties.

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LMFDC

CONTINUED FROM Page 5

affects many of our club members: the mayor’s race in San Diego with club favorites Barbara Bry and Todd Gloria going toe to toe; and San Diego city attorney, which pits incumbent Mara Elliott against Cory Briggs, among others. There are a host of state Assembly races of interest, including our own Shirley Weber in the 79th, and some key judgeships up for grabs, with many of the candidates appearing before our membership looking for support. The only race without drama appears to be for our state Senate seat in District 39, with club favorite Toni Atkins running unopposed.

On Wednesday night, March 4, the day after our California primary, the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club will lean on a team of experts to give us their best analysis of the ballot results, why certain races trended the way they did, and who will face whom on the November ballot. We’ve confirmed the appearance of the head of the county Democratic Party, Will Rodriguez-Kennedy, who should have keen insights as to what went right, or wrong for certain local candidates and whether county party-endorsed candidates and measures succeeded or failed slate recommendations.

We lined up the services of talented lawyer and pundit Matt Strabane to moderate our discussion, and if you’ve caught “In Progress,” you know he’s got a keen sense of the San Diego political scene and is a skilled interviewer. We invited our popular and returning political science professor Carl Luna to weigh in on the national, state and regional races. And also hope that past county chairs, and keen political minds in their own right. Jess Durfee and Jessica Hayes, will join the political gabfest.

The meeting starts promptly at 7 p.m. after our half-hour social time featuring snacks, salads, desserts and beverages supplied by the club and member donations. The forum will follow shortly thereafter and we generally adjourn by 8:30 p.m. We meet on the first Wednesday of every month at the La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Drive in La Mesa and everyone is welcomed. For more information about the event or about joining the club, visit lamesafoothillsdemocraticclub.com.

—Tina Rynberg is president and Jeff Benech is vice president of programming for the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club.

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Healthy Foods Satisfy

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See News Briefs, Page 12
Helix Charter High School has earned the College Board AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award for achieving high female representation in AP Computer Science Principles.

Schools receiving the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award have achieved either 50% or higher female representation in either or both of the AP Computer Science courses, or the percentage of female computer science examinees meets or exceeds that of the school’s female population.

Providing female students with access to computer science courses is necessary to ensuring gender parity in high-paying technology jobs and to drive innovation, creativity, and competition.

A 2014 Google study found that women are more likely to pursue computer science if they are given the opportunity to explore it in high school.

**CITY COUNCIL RECOGNIZES HELIX STUDENTS**

Alex Chau and Marvin Locke were recognized at the La Mesa City Council meeting held on Feb. 11, for their participation in a project of San Diego County’s Resident Leadership Academy Internship program at Helix.

There were 15 student interns during the spring of 2019 who were involved in activities that would make their communities healthy, safe, and thriving places to live, work, learn, and play. Chau and Locke conducted a walk audit and found that there were no public trash receptacles along University Avenue. They worked with the community group Envision La Mesa to advocate the city of La Mesa for trash receptacles to be installed. Thanks to their community advocacy, the city purchased and installed trash receptacles along University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard in December 2019.

**ACADEMIC COMPETITION SUCCESSES**

Helix’s Academic League team closed out a successful season with a victory over El Capitan High School. Academic League is a scholarly competition that requires a team of students to answer questions from a wide variety of academic areas, including math, literature, science, history, and more.

The team finished the season with a record of 7-4, tying with Grossmont, Grossmont Middle College, and Steele Canyon. Their victories included winning the inaugural award given to the winner of the match between Helix and Grossmont, sponsored by the La Mesa City Council.

“We had a strong varsity team, with several seniors new to Academic League,” said co-coach Jennifer Underwood. “It is such a joy to watch our players improve and develop self-confidence in the game.”

Underwood noted the growth of players Zain Shields, Lucas Osborne, and Delaney Leavitt, recognizing them as team standouts.

The San Diego County Department of Education broadcasts matches on ITV Cable 16.

Catch Helix’s team in action against Grossmont Middle College on April 2 at 8 p.m.

The Helix Sports Medicine students competed against 12 other schools in a Sports Medicine Quiz Bowl and advanced to the semi-final round.

The Helix Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) team competed against the San Diego State University competition on Feb. 22. All Helix teams placed in their divisions. The first-place teams will continue to regionals in April at the University of California Riverside.

Congratulations to the students and the Helix Sports Medicine team for their achievements.

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Voted #1 mattress store in La Mesa 2 years in a row!
Peer Listeners share the love on Valentine’s Day

Peer Listeners are carefully selected seniors, who are highly trained in peer support and mediation skills throughout their junior year. Peers must exhibit strong academic skills and personal/social decision-making skills. These seniors offer confidential, one-on-one support for students to create their own solutions to challenging issues: a safe space without adults or counselors; a judgment-free zone; and peer mediation.

Not surprisingly, the Peer Listeners are constantly seeking ways to support the entire Foothiller community, which was evident with the activities they planned for the week of Valentine’s Day by hosting week-long activities with the theme, “Where Is the Love?” To prepare for the week, they created and showed a video at the winter sports assembly featuring the importance of empathy.

Peer Listeners encouraged all students and staff to participate in this kindness movement by visiting every fourth period class to discuss what it means to have empathy and to encourage students to show kindness. They shared that studies show that kindness has many benefits including increased happiness and a healthy heart. It slows the aging process and improves relationships and connections, which indirectly boosts health. A little kindness goes a long way to help each other during the difficult challenges of life. Their hope was that everyone would look for opportunities to be kind and positive toward others and not just for one week.

During the week, bulletin notices shared statistics about how kindness can improve health and make the world a better place. During the week, they encouraged students to share a random act of kindness done to them or that they had done. Students posted stories of “Random Acts of Kindness” on the school’s ASB Instagram and then challenged students to continue looking for moments to give a random act of kindness.

The Peer Listeners offered free Valentine’s Day grams for anyone who wanted to send kind, supportive, or loving messages. 600 grams were delivered on Valentine’s Day. Also that day, students and staff could add a positive message to the “Love Meter” poster, displayed in the lower quad; small hearts with kind messages filled the heart meter.

Finally, the Peer Listeners challenged fourth period classes to a door-decorating contest to reflect the idea that showing love and kindness has more power than showing hate or negativity. History teacher Christina Alley’s period four class’ winning door celebrated the theme in unique style: the interactive door featured a student doing acts of kindness such as tying someone’s shoe, picking up a pencil dropped by someone else, and even student Sara Brooks swinging on the door.

Other inspiring doors included art teacher Susan Phillips’ “Kindness Tree,” in which kindness grew from roots of caring and the words “Foothillers nurture and grow kindness.” In the tree branches, “love,” “empathy,” “respect,” “happiness,” and “trust” grow.

English teacher Amber Garrett’s door’s theme was “Leave Footprints of Love and Kindness Wherever You Go,” and featured thoughts within hearts such as “Love for All. Hatred for None.” “You Are Strong.” “You Are Enough.” “What We Think We Become” and more.

Reflecting on such a wonderful week, Peer Listener co-advisor Foothiller Footsteps
A plant-based meal vendor takes root in Grossmont Center

Just when I thought vegan cuisine hit its creative zenith, along comes OleriCultura — and in a place where you’d never expect to find dishes using things like ancient grains and nutritionally rich legumes.

The food stall opened about a month ago inside Grossmont Center’s sunny food court, where mall shoppers typically give their feet a rest over gyros, pizzas and tacos. Yet for those seeking a purer alternative, OleriCultura is a gift. A plant-based meal vendor takes root in Grossmont Center

Owner Vanessa Corrales and Sergio Garcia (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

The food stall is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and until 6 p.m. on Saturdays. Garcia says he will eventually extend the hours and add signature items to the menu once the business becomes further established.

—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. Reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.

FOOD & DRINK

Feb. 28 – March 26, 2020

La Mesa Courier

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All participants received a certificate recognizing their contributions as official BBB Ambassadors and are encouraged to include their involvement on resumes and college admission applications, highlighting their experience in public speaking. For additional information on the program, please visit ambassador.bbbcommunity.org.

LA MESA SUMMIT ESTATES TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION
The Phair Company has announced it will soon begin construction on its La Mesa Summit Estates project. The gated community of 30 homes will feature three single-story and two-story floorplans with four to five bedrooms and three to five baths. Each of the 30 homes feature a multi-generational suite — a second master bedroom with a full bath, a kitchenette, a media center, a stacked washer and dryer, and a separate entrance. “This allows grandparents or a boomerang adult child to live in a supportive extended family environment, but at the same time have a feeling of independence,” the Phair Company stated in a press release. Situated in a 10-acre parcel atop Eastridge Drive, La Mesa Summit Estates will have unobstructed views of the ocean and the Coronado Islands, Downtown San Diego, Point Loma, Mt. Soledad, Cowles Mountain, the Cuyamacas, or Mexico. Each home will feature a great room living area with 12-foot sliding doors to optimize the views. The homes will also utilize “earth-friendly” design and construction: renewable/sustainable materials, energy-efficient HVAC systems with Wi-Fi remote control programmable thermostats, tankless water heaters, rooftop solar, plumbing for gray-water use in xeriscape drought-tolerant landscaping, Energy Star-rated appliances, fire sprinklers, non-VOC paints, and an electric car charging station in each garage. Prices will start in the mid $900,000s.
Lamplighters presents Christie’s ‘The Hollow’

By REBECCA J. WILLIAMSON | La Mesa Courier

Agatha Christie’s murder mystery play “The Mousetrap” is the longest-running play in modern history. It opened in London’s West End in 1952 and has not closed yet.

The up-and-coming production of Christie’s play “The Hollow,” put on by Lamplighters Community Theatre, may not run quite as long. Not because it isn’t popular, but their next play, “Company,” opens May 1.


“Almost every performance sells out,” said director Mark Loveless of their Christie productions. “We do Agatha Christie almost every year.”

A “British cozy cottage mystery” — as some reference the genre — involves cheating, romance, a murder, and characters that all might have wanted the victim dead. Or, a gathering of guests at a country house disturbed by an abrupt death.

“In the second act it won’t be clear who did it,” said actress Connie Terwilliger who plays Lady Lucy Angkatell. “People think they know who did it but then it changes.”

Christie is known for writing victims that very few empathize with. The victim in “The Hollow” is a philandering husband, Dr. Cristow, but still a murder victim.

“It is a play with changing romantic affiliations,” said Terwilliger. “(The less polite, call it marital cheating.)

Agatha Christie aficionados can speculate if Dr. Cristow’s character is based upon Christie’s first husband Archibald Christie, who cheated on her. The marriage ended in divorce in 1928. Christie’s second marriage to Sir Max Mallowan, married in 1930, lasted until her death in 1976.

“Just before this (the murder) happens, he (Dr. Cristow) is remorseful and regrets his actions but not to his mistress,” said co-producer Heather Kenney.

“The play differs from the book,” said Loveless. “There are

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Featured art: Linda Morton and Geraldine Dorfi

The crux of Linda Morton’s work, contemporary impressionism and abstract figurative painting, stem from observations and everyday encounters painted alla prima. Alla prima refers to a direct painting approach where paint is applied wet on wet without letting earlier layers dry. In Italian, the term alla prima means “at first attempt.”

Linda’s colorful, expressive strokes, emphasizing light and shadow, create the feeling of a captured moment, often in a café, street scene, or park. Her figurative abstract works convey energy and emotion through their composition, texture, and vibrant color.

Linda’s work has been shown in galleries throughout San Diego and has received several awards. In her prior career as a law professor, she taught and published extensively on creative and interdisciplinary processes.

For inquiries about Linda’s work, contact her at 619-405-6311 or lm@cwsl.edu. To view her recent work, visit bit.ly/2Szc-

Geraldine is a member of the Foothills Art Association. The East County Arts Association and the San Diego Water Color Society. Her work has been shown in galleries throughout San Diego. To learn more and see her work,
The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.

The conflict over this is in no way new. It has always been just under the surface since 1972, explained Pastor Kim. Just four years before that, in 1968, the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist Episcopal branches united to form the current United Methodist Church. Still, the division over the homosexual issue repeatedly came up in the General Conference, which takes place every four years.

The conservative influence of the Evangelical United Brethren branch had the church put in the line about homosexuality being incompatible with leadership of Christ into the Book of Discipline. That’s when the conflict ramped up.

In the last 20 years, it has become a difficult matter for conference members because of all the demonstrations and angry people on both sides. In 2016, things came to a head and a special conference was called just to answer the question of how the United Methodist Church would deal with the issue.

Pastor Kim explained that the second event the news is now reacting to is the proposal put out by a group of leaders from both sides of the debate. Conservative and liberal leaders of the United Methodist Church met during these past months to come to a compromise.

The new proposal is to allow the extreme conservative churches, those in the Southern states, Africa, and the Philippines, who did not want the church to include any liberal theologies, to go and create their own denomination. The rest of the church members would remain as the United Methodist Church. Of the 13 million members of UMC, this could be as much as 6 million people leaving to form a new denomination.

“So essentially the church is splitting 60/40,” Pastor Kim said. “However, this would be the worldwide UMC and not the UMC that we’re mostly familiar with in the United States. Of the 7 million Methodists in the United States, maybe half a million folks will decide to become part of the new denomination. The remaining 90% would still be the United Methodist Church. As far as the church that we’re familiar with in California and San Diego, we will still be the United Methodist Church that we’ve always known.

“The decisions from General Conference 2019 came as a surprise to many, especially in our conference, because of the punitive penalties imposed on anyone who practiced progressive theology on the issue of homosexuality.

“You will see in the history of the Methodist church that it has always responded to the social culture of the times, the issues of the age,” Kim said, citing the confusion and conflict over the issue of slavery in the 1800s.

“In our United Methodist Church, there is a wide range of theological stance from very liberal to very conservative. But most Methodists, whether they lean right or they lean left, believe that we can have differing opinions and still be one church. The decisions from last year created a rift because of mandated penalties.”

However, due to the controversies of this matter, those penalties have been put on hold even as it officially went into effect Jan. 1. Kim said that the congregations of the La Mesa First United Methodist Church and all concerned can rest assured that the church will remain as it has since nearly its beginning — diversified but united. This premise is clearly stated in the church’s mission statement, which the church officially adopted last November, stating that it is welcoming and affirming as a diverse community.

“We may not all think alike, but we can all love alike,” said Kim, explaining that this was the overarching thought of John Wesley, considered the father of Methodism. “And we will definitely all be in ministry together, just as always.”

Some of the ministry projects of the church include those of United Methodist Women as well as the quilting ministry of Prayers and Squares: Interfaith Shelter Network; Fresh Start Saturday for persons experiencing homelessness and the Guatemalan Mission Project.

“This year is an especially important one for La Mesa First United Methodist Church. It will commemorate its 125th year.

“We were the first church established in East County,” said Kim. “We will have quite the celebration.”

Krista Santoro shared, “Having kindness, giving love, and showing support to each other helps create a stronger community and a safer place to learn and take risks. We are lucky to have students who look for opportunities to build an environment with these elements. And a special thank you to retired GHS Principal Bill Ashman and the La Mesa Rotary Club for caring about students and making a difference in the world by funding this amazing week.”

To learn more about GHS and the ways students and staff past and present have made a difference, visit our website at foothill-ermuseum.com or visit the GHS Museum Tuesday, March 3, from noon-3:30 p.m. or by appointment on Wednesdays. Contact: 619-668-6140 or email gshsmuseum@ghsdsd.net.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum.
Helix Highlights
CONTINUED FROM Page 8

following first-place winners: Miguel Talamanza, Alex Chau, Mahmoud Salem, and Nick Smith (National Engineering Design Competition); Nicholas Lam (Civil Structures); and Bernard Bausa, Janae Farinas, and Jeannette Nguyen (MESA Machine).

WINTER SPORTS WRAP UP
Helix’s winter sports teams enjoyed many successes this season. Boys basketball, wrestling, boys soccer, and girls water polo all captured league champion - boys soccer, and girls water polo son. Boys basketball, wrestling, enjoyed many successes this sea-

Helix Highlights
CONTINUED FROM Page 8

Helix English teacher Eric Ginsberg received the Classroom Excellence Award at the February conference for the California Association of Teachers of English (CATE). Ginsberg’s peers nominated him for the award, noting his accomplishments in demonstrating classroom excel-

Helix Highlights
CONTINUED FROM Page 8

However, the highest achievement of this winter season was the Girls Soccer team. They advanced to the quarter-finals.
As Black History Month draws to a close, I hope it’s not too late to recommend some great titles celebrating the amazing contributions of African Americans to our society and culture.

I’m excited about two recent biographies about two very different musicians with impressive cultural contributions and complicated lives. Howie Abrams’ “Finding Joseph I: An Oral History of H.R.” from Bad Brains,” tells the story of enigmatic punk rock icon Paul “H.R.” Hudson, his influential time in the hardcore scene, and his personal battles with mental illness. The book combines his own words and views with interviews with his friends, family, and musical compatriots.

In a completely differently musical genre, we have “The Beautiful Ones” by Prince. The revolutionary musician had begun writing his memoirs at the time of his death, and this book is a combination of that unfinished work, a long intro from his collaborator Dan Piepenbring, a scrapbook of photos and other writings, and a handwritten draft of Prince’s script for “Purple Rain.”

Abolitionist Frederick Douglass’ autobiography is one of the most famous works of American memoir, but a new interpretation helps bring his story to light for modern generations. “The Life of Frederick Douglass: A Graphic Narrative of a Slave’s Journey from Bondage to Freedom” takes Douglass’ life story and turns it into a graphic novel. Writer David F. Walker and artists Damon Smyth and Marissa Louise combine Douglass’ words with dramatic artwork to depict Douglass’ harsh upbringing in the grips of slavery, escape to freedom, and powerful impact as an activist and orator.

One of the gratifying stories of this year’s Academy Awards was the success of the short, animated film “Hair Love.” The movie is a humorous yet surprisingly emotional story about a black father and daughter, attempting to style the young girl’s hair before a special visit to Mom. Former NFL player Matthew A. Cherry raised money online to produce the film, only to have it meet critical acclaim and popularity after years of hard work. Cherry and illustrator Vashti Harrison have created an accompanying “Hair Love” children’s book, telling the same story of Dad, Zuri, and Zuri’s beautiful hair.

While Black History Month is primarily about highlighting the accomplishments of black Americans, there are several important new books about broad historical patterns of African Americans in the 20th century. The first is the powerful and award-winning “The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America,” by Richard Rothstein. It is an unrelenting look at how the past and present geographic segregation of black people in America didn’t happen because of a coincidental confluence of individual choices but was caused by explicit government policies. The book details dozens of examples of redlining, discriminatory loan policies, racist housing covenants, and many other tactics designed to exclude African Americans, but thankfully does conclude with some ideas of how to rectify this damage.

Another exciting new title is Blair Imani’s new “Making Our Way Home: The Great Migration and the Black American Dream.” This book reflects on the decades of migration of black Americans from the South to all regions of the country, and their impact on the culture and politics of the entire nation. The historical facts are accompanied by tales from the famed lives of people like James Baldwin and Ella Fitzgerald, and are even more compelling thanks to the artwork of Rachel Baker.

On March 7 at the library, writer and humorist Richard Lederer will give a presentation about a different kind of history, the history of names. Starts at 1 p.m., come early because it will be crowded!

—Jake Sexton is a librarian at the La Mesa Branch Library.
improvements to help make walking and bicycling safer, and discover the health benefits of walking. During the workshop, enjoy a free cup of coffee with purchase, or a 10% discount on your order, compliments of Spacebar Café. And after the workshop, join us for an educational walk, 10 a.m.-noon at Spacebar Café, 7454 University Ave, Suite A, Free.

Friday, March 6
First Friday Night Market Free monthly vegan market at Grossmont Center, 5500 Grossmont Center Drive, La Mesa, in front of Holleys and Fuddruckers and Chuze Fitness. 5-10 p.m. Celebrate the vegan lifestyle with all-vegan eats, sweets, drinks, goods, plus a local vegan-friendly beer in a 21-plus beer garden featuring live music.

Saturday, March 7
San Diego Harp Society The San Diego Harp Society will present their yearly Advanced Students Recital at Mission Trials Church, 4880 Zion Ave., as part of the Second Sunday Community Concert. At last year’s recital, one of their students, a 13-year-old, absolutely wowed the audience with her performance. A few tunes later, another host was joined on stage by a sax player, performing a Duke Ellington tune, a nice departure from the usual harp repertoire. The San Diego Harp Society is a local chapter of the American Harp Society. Their purpose and mission is to celebrate the harp legacy, inspire musical excellence, and empower the next generation of harp players throughout San Diego. 3-4 p.m. Free, but donations are encouraged.

Monday, March 10
Cooking for a Healthy Brain Learn how to use essential oils in your cooking and how they help with grey matter health. Samples, recipes and a free e-book come with this class held at San Pasqual in the wine tasting room, 8369 La Mesa Blvd. 6 to 8 p.m. Cost is $22. Please RSVP by emailing StressLessPros@cox.net or text Nancy at 619-933-1716.

Tuesday, March 12
‘Garden of the Dead’ Lecture & Historic Walk March 15, 21 The House of Spain is sponsoring a lecture, followed a week later by a historian-led guided walk through Presidio Park’s historic “Garden of the Dead.” Learn about the sacrifices made by members of the historic Spanish Expedition to establish Spain’s presence in California from 1769 to 1774. Visit the sites of the Spanish camp, which contained California’s first Spanish fort and mission, as well as a military field hospital and adja- cent cemetery, which reportedly still contains the unmarked graves of at least 30 San Diego’s early “unknown” soldiers. Visit other modern memorial markers to the Serra Palm and the nearby La Playa Trail and Derby Drive. Free. RSVP to the House of Spain at 619-220-9344.

Wednesday, March 11
Wellness Wednesday Wellness Wednesday is a health series normally held on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Presidio Organ Pavilion parking lot. Historic Walk: Saturday, March 21, 9-11 a.m. at the foot of Presidio Hill, at the corner of Taylor Street and Presidio Drive.

Thursday, March 26
‘Peter Pan’ Through March 28 Peter Pan Jr. Theater presents its namesake play, “Peter Pan.” Flying boy Peter Pan and his fairy companion Tinkerbell encounter Wendy and her brothers when flying through Neverland searching for Peter’s shadow. When Wendy helps Peter sew it back on, he offers to take them all to his home in Neverland where they meet the Lost Boys and encounter the evil Captain Hook. The conflict between Peter and Hook takes center stage as the magical adventure turns dangerous and teaches everyone the true power of friendship. Shows are at 7 p.m. and an additional 1 p.m. show on Saturday at the Ryan and Joan Krook Salvation Army Performing Arts Center, 4579 Mission Gorge Place. Tickets range $30-$35, available at bit.ly/26yLZL.
Rodriguez hopes to net a successful senior season

By DAVE THOMAS | La Mesa Courier

Being in his last season of scholastic boys basketball, Grossmont High senior forward Mykol Rodriguez is looking to go out on top. Rodriguez and the Foothillers have a winning record as February winds down and they prepare for CIFs. According to head boys basketball coach Frank Foggiano, Rodriguez has been a cornerstone of the program at Grossmont. “I have known Mykol since he was a fifth-grader,” Foggiano commented. “I have watched him develop into a very good basketball player. He is a pleasure to coach and will do anything for the team. He works hard every day at his game. My goal for Mykol in his final year has been to continue to improve his game.”

For Rodriguez, playing in his final campaign for the Foothillers, the love he has for the sport shows on and off the court. La Mesa Courier recently caught up with Rodriguez for an interview.

How old were you when you first began playing basketball as a kid and what interested you in the sport?

I’ve been playing basketball for as long as I can remember. But I remember that I didn’t start taking basketball seriously until I was around 13 years old. I’ve always had a love for the sport being that both of my parents are big basketball fans so I was exposed to it really young.

Being your senior season, what have you been looking to accomplish this year?

I’ve gone into my senior season as I do every year with the main goal of just trying to go all the way in playoffs.

Are you involved in anything else in school?

I am involved in a student and staff group at my school called Student Summit, where were we meet once a month to discuss issues and new ideas to ultimately improve the environment of Grossmont.

How has basketball helped you grow as a person?

Basketball has given me many things that I have come to appreciate. But what first comes to mind is that basketball has helped me with a work ethic, patience, and discipline to stick to the task at hand.

Do you plan on college in the fall and any hopes of continuing your basketball career?

Well, playing basketball at the next level at college definitely isn’t out of the question. Importantly, I do plan on studying sports medicine in college.

—Dave Thomas is a freelance sports writer. Email him at hoops_thomas@yahoo.com with comments or story ideas.

Patricia Ann McFarlane

Patricia Ann McFarlane, founder of The Grey Rabbit Pre-School in La Mesa, which she opened in 1981, passed away on December 9, 2019 after a long battle with Wegener’s Granulomatosis.

In honor of Pat’s amazing life and the hundreds of children and their families that she touched over the years, we will be celebrating at The Grey Rabbit Pre-School, 4542 Palm Ave. La Mesa, on Saturday, March 14, 2020, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. with a slide presentation at 3 p.m. Please RSVP to info@thegreyrabbitpreschool.com

Vendors at the markets are carefully curated. (Photos courtesy Michelle Enders)

The Vintage Flea Market has been a huge draw at its North Park location behind the Observatory Theater.

Mykol Rodriguez has played hard in what is his final season of scholastic basketball at Grossmont High. (Courtesy photo)

The San Diego Vintage Flea Market will open on March 29 at Grossmont Center, 530 Grossmont Center Drive. Market hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For questions about the market or to inquire about becoming a vendor, email Michelle Enders at sdvintagemarket@yahoo.com, or visit sdvintagemarket.com.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdcourier.com.
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