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New program provides jobs for homeless around San Diego

Mayor Kevin Faulconer and Councilmember Scott Sherman recently introduced the beginning of a new program run by the Alpha Project called “Wheels of Change,” that will provide day jobs for interested homeless individuals in the City of San Diego.

The program is simple. Two days a week, a van will pick up homeless people who express an interest in working. The van will drive to a designated site to pick up trash, pull weeds, clear brush, etc. for five hours. At the end of the day, workers will be driven back to Alpha Project, or the City’s tent structures for the homeless, and will be compensated for their work.

In addition to giving individuals the dignity of work at minimum wage, the “Wheels of Change” program will connect them with services and help assist with transitioning to permanent housing.

The program is based on Albuquerque’s “There’s a Better Way” program that started as a six-month pilot program, but now has two vans that run five days a week and employs up to 20 homeless individuals a day. More than a dozen cities have implemented a similar program including Austin, Chicago, Denver, Lexington, Portland, and Seattle.

Liberty Station pool project has support of SDUSD, City

A decade-plus effort to secure a long-desired public pool at Liberty Station is gaining traction, as the City has asked for federal approval of a joint-use agreement between it and San Diego Unified School District paving the way to build and operate an aquatics complex at the former Naval Training Center.

In 2002, the City’s Park and Recreation Board approved an NTC Reuse Plan that included a 46-acre park/open space area adjacent to the boat channel on the former naval base. Envisioned within that plan, is an aquatics complex to ultimately include three pools (one competitive), lockers and restrooms, concessions and offices, as well as space for stand-up paddling, kayaking and rowing.

The future complex would incorporate now-vacant Building 619 at Liberty Station, which is presently being rehabbed to accommodate the aquatics complex.

The future NTC aquatic complex was the vision of Point Loma civic activist Julie Cramer and former San Diego District 2 Councilmember Byron Wear. Both have worked with a six-member Peninsula Aquatics Complex Committee led by John Seymour, to advance the aquatic project partnership between the city and San Diego Unified School District.

Plans are to expand that committee this year adding several more members.

“The City of San Diego has sent a letter to the Department of the Interior (National Park Service) requesting approval of a joint City and San Diego Unified School District proposal,” Wear said. “The project has identified joint funding for phase one, including $2.1 million from the city, and 55 million from SDUSD.

Wear noted the joint project could include pools consistent with the land uses approved in 2001-2003 and certified by the California Coastal Commission. He added parking lots have already been built for the aquatics complex at the foot of Womble Road.

Wear also credited Mayor Kevin Faulconer for bringing the City of San Diego and SDUSD staff, along with school superintendent Cindy Marten, together in December 2017 to finalize details of the joint city-school aquatics project.

District 2 Councilmember Lorie Zapf also participated in the cooperative effort, identifying $2.1 Million for rehabilitation of Building 619 for recreational uses, as well as putting $1 million in funding toward future pool construction.

“The City has agreed to operate the facility at no annual cost in exchange for the SDUSD capital investment creating a win-win for students and recreational swimmers,” said Wear, a former lifeguard.

“The facility will be home for Point Loma High swimming and water polo, and could accommodate others as additional pools are built.”

Seymour said the Liberty Station Public pool complex is much needed and long overdue. “We envision three pools over time in phases,” said Seymour noting, “We have all levels of government behind this.”

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REDUCED
Congregations start petition to help save historic North Chapel at Liberty Station

By VICTORIA DAVIS | THE BEACON

Built in 1942, Liberty Station’s North Chapel stands out like a pearl on the corner of Roosevelt and Truxton. With white stucco walls, stained glass windows and elaborate tile art over large archways, this sanctuary has served as a place of worship for Naval service members, recruits and their families for more than 75 years. Today, the chapel is also rented out for weddings, funerals and special events throughout the year, but that could change in a matter of months.

After June 30, North Chapel will no longer be available for rental, according to its page on LibertyStation.com. The Corky McMillin Co., which was given the property by the City of San Diego in 2000, is looking to turn the chapel into a restaurant.

The website states the chapel’s high vaulted ceilings are “perfect for a restaurant or retail tenant.” There’s even a poster outside the chapel saying the space is available to lease.

Arlene Paraiso, a member of one of the two congregations that rent the chapel for church service every Sunday, received the leasing notice in the fall, and started a petition mid-January to fight for her church’s home. The petition to preserve the chapel has already received more than 1,000 signatures. Paraiso’s new goal is 10,000 signatures. There is even a “ Preserve North Chapel” Facebook page.

“I mean, look around you, there’s so many restaurants here already,” said Paraiso, “Why do they have to touch the chapel?”

This chapel means a lot to Paraiso, not only because of her congregation, but also because of her personal family connection to its history.

“That’s where he said goodbye,” said Paraiso, whose cousin was also just recently married in the chapel.

Paraiso believes that McMillin should let the citizens continue to use North Chapel for “its original use” and keep the historic value.

The NTC Precise Plan states that the North Chapel remains in the “mixed use” area of Liberty Station. While it resides in the Historic District, the chapel can still be used for commercial use. However, on page 26 of the plan, it states: “A Historic District was created at NTC prior to transfer of the site from the U.S. Navy to the City of San Diego... These stately and appealing buildings will remain and anchor the site.”

On page 37 of the National Historic Register, it’s noted that the North Chapel is likely the “least altered of any of the buildings in the proposed Historic District.”

Curiosity Rosenthal, who handles all media inquiries for McMillin, said in an email, “We’re not able to comment on or confirm details on the chapel, as absolutely nothing has been solidified in regard to the future of the property.” But Rosenthal did offer the following statement:

“Currently, the North Chapel building is significantly underutilized throughout the week. We are seeking a solution and we’re open to the possibilities of exploring the chapel as a multi-purpose facility. The building is a historic property and any future use will comply with adopted guidelines to protect this resource.”

According to page two of the chapel’s Quotclalm Deed, the property “shall be used and maintained for the public purposes for which it was conveyed in perpetuity as set forth in the program of utilization...”

“This building is not going to waste,” said attorney Henry Garon, who has been attending church every Sunday at North Chapel for more than four years. “We’re using the chapel for the exact purpose for which it was intended. We still have active service members attending church there and it’s a tightly-knit community.”

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties also states that any historical property will be “used as it was historically, or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and special relationships,” and that “the removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features will be avoided.”

According to Standard Five on the 2005 Planning Commission Agenda’s Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation: “Distinctive features, finishes, and constructive techniques will be preserved,” including “the chapel interior,” including the pews, altar, organ, and other interior chapel features listed on the Historic Registrar. The registrar also states the chapel has “provided a significant community function and is a notable landmark.”

“It’s all right there,” said Garon. “I’m looking at this and I’m saying, ‘The law should be on our side.’ But McMillin’s kicking everybody out and giving us six months’ notice, and they don’t even have a building permit yet to alter the property.”

“It’s a place where people from all walks of life have worshipped and are still worshipping at today. To take that away removes a very unique place in the world, right here in San Diego.”

ARLENE PARAISO
CONGREGATION MEMBER, WHO STARTED THE ONLINE PETITION

Online petition: ipetitions.com.

The Peninsula Community Planning Board will be discussing the fate of North Chapel on March 15 at 6:30 p.m. Jon Linney, Peninsula Board Chair, encourages the public to attend.

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With dockless bikes of every color and style – along with motorized scooters – seemingly everywhere all at once, the Ocean Beach Planning Board invited representatives from the companies to its March 7 meeting to answer questions about the businesses – as communities try to find a solution to regulate the vehicles.

Representatives from two of four local dockless vehicle-sharing companies – Bird and Ofo – attended. Limebikes was invited but was a no-show. Mobike is another recent market entry.

“The intent of this forum is to talk about the rollout of these new bike programs, so we’ve reached out, inviting speakers from the companies to answer questions about policy, infrastructure, safety and other concerns,” said OBPB chair John Ambert.

Carl Hansen spoke for the black-hued electric, stand-up Bird scooters, which are increasingly dominating the coastal landscape. Hansen said Bird and competitors are offering something new and different.

“We want to provide as many options as gas-guzzling, carbon-generating cars as possible that are dockless and easily accessible,” said Hansen. “We need to make sure these new transportation choices are convenient, while being thoughtful about how we interact with communities.”

Anna Wan Christie, of the yellow Ofo bikes, billed as the world’s original and largest station-free bike-sharing platform, talked about bike-share’s purpose.

“We want to provide that first- and last-mile transportation for people to get them out of their cars for the good of the environment,” said Wan Christie. “We want to be good neighbors with everybody.”

Dockless bikes are operated and locked by a smartphone app that employs GPS technology. Operators said all they are required to have, to be legal, is a business license. Dockless bikes currently cost approximately $1 to $2 per-hour to rent.

Both dockless reps responded to criticism their products are strewn helter-skelter making them eyesores and safety hazards. The reps claimed their bikes are picked up each evening after-hours, stored centrally off-street, then redistributed early the next day.

OBPB was split on its attitude toward the new dockless vehicles. Some members were receptive to them in principle. But others, like Richard Aguirre, were sour on the new alternative-transportation mode.

“You [bike share operators] don’t pay taxes like brick-and-mortar businesses that you’re coming in here fleecing our businesses. You’re trying to take over the whole market. That’s not the way it should be. I hope someone stops you vultures,” Aguirre added.

Board member Craig Klein didn’t see how the dockless business model can be sustainable. Klein also asked why dockless providers weren’t concerned about their bikes being stolen or scavenged in coastal communities where bike theft is rampant.

Wan Christie, of Ofo, said theft of GPS-tracked bikes hasn’t thus far been an issue.

After an unsuccessful motion to ask the city to restrict dockless bike share rentals to locals, OBPB opted instead to ask the city for a tentative timeline on crafting a new set of regulations governing their operation. They also voted to present the city with recommendations to reign in dockless bike share programs.

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Poke 1-2-3 brings fresh and fast dishes to Liberty Station

By PAGE FULFER | The Beacon

Welcome Liberty Station’s newest fast casual restaurant, Poke 1-2-3. Decked out in stark white and ocean blue hues, this spot shouts coastal cuisine before you even walk through its bright-blue doors.

Poke 1-2-3’s vision embraces the Hawaiian concept of “pono,” which is a state of balance and harmony. Coronado residents, Kevin Shafer and Neil Capin Jr., set out to achieve exactly that when they decided to open the doors of Poke 1-2-3—now in Liberty Station.

“San Diego customers are often time-strapped and want an affordable, fresh, fast, and healthy alternative to existing fast food or fast casual dining choices,” Shafer said.

“Our offerings are a perfect fit for discerning, health conscious patrons of all ages. Active lifestyles are a hallmark of San Diego, and our menu items are designed to be enjoyed in community gatherings and operations management.”

“It’s been a great combination of strengths. We had been talking about a joint venture for a little while. Neil and his family had a great meal at a similar restaurant and told me about it. I had my first experience with traditional poke in Hawaii when I was in the Navy, and it was a concept we both quickly became excited about,” Shafer said.

The term “poké” comes from the Hawaiian language and refers to the action of slicing, sectioning, or cutting. The menu offers many protein options, including premium seafood, free-range chicken, and vegan options, including premium seafood.

“Offering creative, thoughtfully prepared options for non-seafood lovers and vegans was an important goal for our company,” said Shafer.

“For instance, all of our gourmet sauces are vegan-friendly. We also have a simple 1-2-3 step ordering process to make our craft poké bowls, and round out our ‘123 styles’ with delicious ‘norritos’ (seaweed burritos) and signature ‘123 waves’ (small seaweed hand wraps).”

Poke 1-2-3 also extends 10 percent on uniform purchases by the military community, as well as federal, state, and local first responders.

Possibly the best thing about their menu? You can choose to “flavor blast” any norrito or wrap with Cheetos (original or flamin’ hot). Genius!

85°C Bakery Cafe opens in Loma Square

By SAVANNAH DUFFY | The Beacon

85°C Bakery Cafe has more than 1,000 worldwide locations, including China, Taiwan, and Australia. In February, the Asian-European inspired bakery chain opened up its newest San Diego location in Point Loma.

Bakery spokesperson, Christopher Jocson, says that more than 1,050 guests attended the grand opening in Point Loma. Guests were welcomed with special promotions such as the bakery’s iconic Iced Sea Salt Coffee for 10 cents and free tote bags with any purchase.

The shop stands out among other bakeries and cafes with its unique menu and dining experience. Via email, Jocson says the bakery offers more than 60 varieties of bread, 60 varieties of cake and 40 different beverages. Bread and pastries are baked freshly to ensure the highest quality of food.

“Our non-traditional baked goods are inspired from locations around the world ranging from Taiwan, Japan and Europe, bringing the tastes of the world to local California communities,” said Cheng-Hsueh Wu, founder and president of 85°C Bakery.

As is tradition with other 85°C locations, guests at the Point Loma bakery need only grab a pair of tongs when they enter the shop and begin selecting their desired pastries. The menu options are extensive, offering sweet or savory breads, filled or light pastries, and everything in between. But 85°C Bakery doesn’t allow itself to become complacent in its menu.

According to Jocson, the bakery welcomes customer feedback and makes adjustments or adds new products to their menu in response.

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

“We offer monthly product improvements to our menu so that our customers are always coming back.”

Georgia’s Greek Cuisine still thriving after 40 years

By SAVANNAH DUFFY | The Beacon

It’s never easy opening a small business, especially a single-location restaurant in the midst of an ever-shifting economy and countless big-name chain restaurants. But after 40 years and counting, Georgia’s Greek Cuisine is still thriving in Point Loma.

“I was so determined to survive this,” says owner and founder Georgia Stathoulis. “I didn’t want to go down.”

Georgia’s opened on April 14, 1977 after Georgia and her husband, Dennis Stathoulis, moved to San Diego. Originally from Greece, Georgia and Dennis chose the coast because it reminded them of their home country.

Georgia says she does not intend to expand her Rosecrans Street restaurant, though she does plan on staying open for many more years. “After all these years, it’s kind of a passion,” she says.

Georgia is not the only one who has dedicated years of her life to the Greek restaurant. She also credits its success to the sacrifices of her husband, her two daughters, and their in-laws. One of Georgia’s daughters, Alexandra Kuty, recalls spending the majority of her and her sister’s time growing up at the restaurant.

“It was all my sister and I knew,” says Kuty.

She adds that growing up in that environment taught her a lot about food, business and how to connect with her community. While Kuty now has a family of her own and doesn’t spend as much time at the restaurant, she says she still helps out sometimes and handles many of the social media and technological aspects of the business.

Even the menu at Georgia’s has an element of family history to it. Georgia says she kept her mother’s healthy traditional Greek cooking in mind when designing the food that would be served at her restaurant.

Furthermore, the fitness mindset of San Diego locals inspires Georgia to cook all of her meals with fresh ingredients, and to include many vegetarian options on her menu. But Georgia is there for the community in more ways than just veggie options and home-made food. According to her, it’s the heart that she and her family put into personal connections with customers that keep them coming back.

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Come As You Are! Celebrate Easter @ St. Andrew’s

International 85°C Bakery Cafe opens in Loma Square

By SAVANNAH DUFFY | The Beacon

85°C Bakery Cafe is now open at 3361 Rosecrans St. Hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays, 7 a.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays, 8 a.m. to midnight Sundays.

Info: 85cbakerycafe.com, 619-965-8665.

A customized poké bowl prepared fresh in the fast-casual setting. PAGE FULFER / PENINSULA BEACON

A plate of broiled rib lamb chops lightly seasoned in olive oil and herbs (right).

A customized poké bowl prepared fresh in the fast-casual setting. PAGE FULFER / PENINSULA BEACON

An iced sea salt coffee for 10 cents (left).
pointers win second soccer CIF championship in three years

by Scott Hopkins | The Beacon

It was famed New York Yankee catcher Yogi Berra who said, “It’s like déjà vu all over again.” Too bad he never had the opportunity to meet Point Loma High soccer goalkeeper Marley Mascarenas.

Yes, it was the senior with the alliterative name, who saved his teammates from elimination in two consecutive matches over a three-day period to win the Pointers’ second CIF title in the past three years. And, to sweeten the latest triumph, it came in Div. I after the Pointers were moved up following their Div. II win in 2015-16.

The Pointers (No. 4 seed) and Western League foe St. Augustine (No. 1 seed) both received first-round byes in the tournament before being forced to meet for the third time this season in the semifinals after two regular-season league matches, both won by the Pointers 2-1 and 1-0.

In this third game, neither team could find the net after playing for 90 minutes (80 minutes of regulation plus a 10-minute sudden death).

When the game went to a final five-round penalty kick format and the Saints scored on the first pair against Mascarenas, Saints fans cheered wildly. But suddenly the Pointers awoke. Going into the fifth round tied at two, Mascarenas made the dramatic last-chance save before calmly picking up the ball and heading to the mark to take the final shot himself.

Pausing a moment to size up the opposing goalkeeper, Mascarenas approached the ball and sent a rocket into the back of the net for the game-winning score as his teammates raced towards him to celebrate. Just 72 hours later, the Pointers found themselves on the pitch at Mission Bay High’s stadium for the CIF final against another Western League opponent, Scripps Ranch (No. 6 seed), who defeated the Pointers in both league encounters during the season by scores of 2-0 and 3-1.

Determined to change that, the Pointers and Falcons moved the ball up and down the field, again highlighted by aggressive play on both sides, collisions and injury stoppages. Finally, in the 58th minute of play, the Falcons pounced on a loose ball in the penalty box and scored as their fans erupted in cheers at the 1-0 lead.

The Pointers knew they had only 22 minutes to score or face defeat. It actually took only five minutes as senior Jack Caffo found junior Will Barba in front of the Falcon net, quickly tapping a lateral pass to Barba, who slid into the ball with enough force to propel it into the net, tie the game and ignite his teammates and Pointer fans.

The game and 15-minute overtime ended with this 1-1 score, again going to penalty kicks to determine the CIF champion. This time, nobody could miss.

For the Pointers, senior Barrett Wolf, junior Chris Bourdon, senior Timmy Mooreing and Caffo all found the net as did their counterparts from the Falcons, tying the score at four apiece.

And then, Mascarenas took over. First, he leaped to his right to make a save on the fifth Falcon shooter as his teammates and Pointer fans yelled their support while the ‘keeper calmly picked up the ball.

This time he struck a laser that fooled the Falcon ‘keeper, turned to face the stands, raised his hands over his head and dropped to his knees, disappearing under his teammates and hundreds of Pointer fans who rushed the field in a school-wide celebration.

“These boys have been through a pretty rough season,” said head coach Elliott Savitz, “so they’ve been down plenty of times. I was pretty calm and I think the boys were too, knowing we only had to get one opportunity. I don’t think they were rattled.”

And it turns out Mascarenas wanted to take the final penalty kick badly.

“Marley came into my classroom the day after we lost to Oceanside last year,” (a 4-3 penalty kick loss to Oceanside in a state tournament play-in game) Savitz recalled, “And said ‘if we get into a shootout situation next year I’m taking a penalty kick.’ He was ready for it and confident.”

Savitz characterized his team as young but intelligent with high soccer IQ, tenacious around the box, hard-working, focused and aggressive.
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Having grown up in Point Loma during a time when there were dirt streets, no sidewalks and nearly all the residents owned horses, Susanne Friestedt’s passion for the rich history of San Diego started at her roots. Downtown’s Edward J Schwartz Courthouse was named after Friestedt’s late father, the former chief federal judge for San Diego, and was at one point the judge’s own kindergarten school.

“One of our neighbors even had a lama,” said Friestedt of her childhood home. “It was very rural. The houses between Catalina and Point Loma Nazarene didn’t even exist yet.”

Friestedt is the founder of Open House San Diego, an annual city-wide tour of the region’s unique architectural works from office buildings to local homes and from city gardens to coastal sculptures. Friestedt, having run her own marketing communications firm for many years, was searching for what she calls her “legacy project,” when she came across an article on Open House Worldwide.

“It talked about cities in Europe that opened sites of all kinds that were free to the public on the weekend and it deeply resonated with me,” said Friestedt. “The idea of taking an international concept and applying it to our specific community was really appealing.”

San Diego’s first Open House was in 2015 where Friestedt, partnering with the San Diego Architectural Foundation, showcased around 39 sites and hosted roughly 1,300 visitors. This year, March 24-25, 84 sites are on the menu to tour in Balboa Park, Gaslamp, Downtown, Barrio Logan, Point Loma, East Village and Bankers Hill. Friestedt expects more than 10,000 guests, who will each receive a passport and program guide at the beginning of the tour. For each site they visit, attendees will receive a stamp in their travel book.

“We encourage students to come, because they are our future architects and urban designers,” said Friestedt. “We’re educating and engaging the public about the best of our architecture and urban design. Our city has a rich history and brilliant, talented people at the sites we’re opening. We want to support them and publicize the wonderful work they’re doing.”

Each site that is showcased has a unique public purpose and story behind it. One such building is Moniker Commons in Liberty Station. Once a manufacturing building, the space has been transformed into a highly functional shared workspace. The designers also incorporated repurposed wood from a 1920s downtown warehouse and used custom-poured colored concrete tile. Community manager Brian Tustin says that their building being featured in OH! SD is humbling.

“We’ve been around for one year and having San Diego Architecture Foundation include us in the mix of the 84 most beautiful buildings in SD, we’re so honored,” said Tustin.

In addition, the historic North Chapel in Liberty Station and Point Loma’s oldest residence, The Living Room coffee shop, will also be featured on the tours, along with Point Loma Nazarene University, which is home to the first Greek amphitheater built in the U.S. and the 32,900-square-foot Science Center (Latter Hall and Sator Hall) with its iconic curved stainless-steel screens, laser cut with Alpha and Omega symbols.

OH! SD will also showcase sculptures such as Pearl of the Pacific on Shelter Island, which is a part of the Pacific Rim Park Project.

OH! SD is still looking for more volunteers. Those interested can contact Carol Chin at carol@sdarchitecture.org. For more information about the event, go to sdarchitecture.org.
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Point Loma High robotics team gearing up for FIRST again

By SCOTT HOPKINS The Beacon

A group of students from Point Loma High, who won a world championship last year in a robotics competition, are at it again, having already won three regional competitions while one step away from earning a spot in the world championships.

The competition is known as FIRST (FTC), an acronym meaning For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (First Tech Challenge). Students must create a functional robot, from scratch, that will successfully perform pre-determined tasks within a confined space.

This year’s team of a dozen students were in Spokane, Wash, last week for the Western Regional Tournament. If successful, they will travel to St. Louis and Houston for the world championships.

This year’s robot has been dubbed “First Relic Recovery,” replacing last year’s winning robot “Rise of Hephaestus.” Carrying over as team advisor is parent Matt Nilsen, who lends his home garage to team members who sometimes work separately on their aspect of the project.

Each person contributes to a chronicle recording every step of the project that covered more than 500 pages last year. The team works an average of 25 hours per week on the robot, in community outreach and competing during the season while maintaining their assignments and grades in their high school classes. Jobs taken on by the dozen team members include designers, builders, programmers, drivers, photographers, videographers, social media, scouting outreach and public relations. Each step is chronicled in a project book that covered more than 500 pages last year.
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