Dining in? Use our list of open restaurants and businesses. Page 11

La Mesa Library shares hot eBook titles
School's historical landmarks.
The stories behind Grossmont High
local healthcare workers. Page 3

Elams’ Hallmark plays Easter bunny for
local healthcare workers. Page 3

Alvarado Hospital takes steps to ensure safety of patients, staff
Gomez described as “very fortunate.”
“Many other hospitals in the county cannot say
there were many more that had positives before we did,” she said.
As of April 6 when Gomez was interviewed for this story, Alvarado was caring for eight
inpatients who have tested positive for COVID-19.
SEE ALVARADO, Page 2

Alvarado Hospital reports it is currently prepared to handle its share of the projected COVID-19 cases in the region.

PREPARING FOR A PANDEMIC

Alvarado Hospital CEO Robin Gomez (LinkedIn)

COUNCIL APPROVES COVID ACTIONS

By JEFF CLEMSTON | La Mesa Courier

On April 14, La Mesa City Council met for the first time since citywide stay-at-home orders were put in place. And in another first, the meeting was held entirely online. At the top of the agenda was formalizing emergency actions to fight the coronavirus outbreak taken over the last month without a council vote.

City Attorney Glen Sabine explained that San Diego County authorizes city managers in the event of an emergency the ability to appoint a director of emergency and disaster, including declaring a state of emergency; cancelling large gatherings and all city meetings and programs; freezing all evictions in the city; closing parking lots for parks and playgrounds; creating a state of emergency and disaster; canceling large gatherings and all city meetings and programs; freezing all evictions in the city; closing parking lots for parks and playgrounds;

The city also enacted some changes in its operations. In late March, Mayor Mark Aropostathis appointed City Manager Greg Humora that role. Humora then gave a report of actions the city took in the days and weeks following his appointment as director of emergency and disaster, including: declaring a state of emergency; cancelling large gatherings and all city meetings and programs; freezing all evictions in the city; closing parking lots for parks and playgrounds;

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Council approved COVID actions
A screen shot of the La Mesa City Council meeting held by teleconference on April 14, in accordance with social distancing guidelines. Pictured (poorly) top to bottom: Kristine Alessio, Dr. Akilah Weber, Greg Humora, Colin Parent, Mark Aropostathis, Glenn Sabin and Bill Baber (City of La Mesa)
COVID-19 or under investigation for the virus — one on a ventilator. So far, Gomez reported, Alvarado is on pace to not be overburdened with patients like what is being experienced by hospitals in places like New York City and Italy.

Although it took several weeks for Alvarado to see its first COVID patient, it began dealing with the crisis weeks ago.

"In the beginning when it first started hitting, we had a line of patients out the door just wanting to be rapidly tested. I don’t have rapid testing, my tests come back in 24 hours," she said. "The testing medium was very specific and we didn’t have that many back in 24 hours," she said. "The communication strategy is to keep up moral at the hospital. We’re not just fighting COVID-19 right now, we’re fighting fear, because there was an element right away of fear," she said. "When they say the situation is fluid, it’s absolutely true. And what I’ve found is transparency alleviates fears, because if they know what I know, they know what I know."

The communication strategy is working and Gomez shared that a nurse recently volunteered to work on the COVID unit.

"It is phenomenal the way our staff is stepping up to care for these patients and the energy they’re bringing, it is really heartwarming," she said.

The community has also stepped up in heartwarming ways. The hospital has received a number of donations, including "dirt cheap" produce from a market that the hospital gave out to staff; donations of masks that Gomez was “very grateful” for because those masks will be given to hospital staff that are not on the COVID floors and doctors recently treated ER staff to pizza.

"I want to thank the public," Gomez said. "Everyone has been so supportive and so kind. People have put flowers on our front lawn and said, ‘Thank you healthcare heroes.’ They put some banners on our lawn last week, which was awesome, thanking the health-care workers."

Reach editor Jeff Clemenson at jeff@sdnews.com.

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**SAFETY MEASURES**

Part of knowing what they’re dealing with is making added precautions at the hospital.

Nurses that care for COVID patients follow specific guidelines and enter and exit patient rooms.

"We call it darming and dropping gowns. You put on the gown: you put on the gloves; you put on a N95 mask; and then you put on a surgical mask over the top of that, then a face shield on top of that," she said. "In talking to the staff we say, ‘Hey we are actually probably safer here because we know where the COVID patients are, we have the protective PPE to protect our staff against this virus."

"We did a lot of things proactively," Gomez added. "Number one, conservation of PPE (personal protective equipment). When I say PPE, it’s not just masks. We’re talking about face shields. We’re talking about regular surgical masks that are not N95s and you’re talking about N95s themselves."

Alvarado also only has around 150 masks used for tests, and some of those are set aside for staff in case there is an exposure and everyone needs to be tested. "I always have to make sure I have enough mediums to test employees along with patients," Gomez said.

Beyond the protective equipment, there are the strict guidelines on how to use them. Alvarado has also made structural changes to where patients are treated. To reduce the chances of virus-laden droplets from spreading, the hospital has started cohorting patients. COVID patients and those under investigation for the virus are housed on the third floor. There is also a floor for COVID patients requiring a ventilator.

Because Alvarado Hospital is an acute care hospital, a third floor has been emptied to treat aged patients over 65 years old that are recovering from COVID-19. Gomez said that nurse practitioners who recover from the virus, they go into a “convalescent” stage of recovery.

"Maybe you need a little bit of supplemental oxygen, making sure you’re getting proper nutrition and all that," she said, adding that the county has done a good job in getting hospital rooms or even college dorm rooms for younger patients to recover in but older patients need a little more attention, the county asked them to step in.

"So, patients that are no longer needing acute hospital-level care, but can’t go back to the nursing home because they’re [COVID] positive, they’re going to be brought here and we’ll keep them here until they meet a set criteria and can be discharged safely."

**SUPPLY CHAIN WOES**

The hospital is also running into the precautions and following the best practices available, there are still some aspects of managing a hospital during the pandemic crisis that are beyond the control of hospital administrators.

"When you see on the news that we never know what we are going to get in our supply chain, that’s no joke," Gomez said.

For example, on a recent order for 500 large and medium N95 masks, Alvarado ended up receiving 200 smalls. The hospital is also having a “hard time” getting cleaning supplies.

However, Gomez said, the hospital’s supply services director has kept Alvarado supplied by finding some “phenomenally resourceful” solutions.

"We ordered five or six cases of [the usual cleaning wipes] in our last order and we got none," Gomez said. "But what our EHS director has done is she was able to get the liquid stuff. We could get the dry wipes, that’s easy, and we put together buckets and we did a makeshift container so we can pull them right out of the top like the other buckets were and we distributed those out on the floor with all the proper equipment and all that," she added.

And although Gomez said the hospital is equipped with enough N95 masks for nurses to get one a day, "and it remains that way," she still worries about keeping the hospital properly stocked.

"PPE and general supplies is such a big issue. It really, really is such a big issue," she said. "I just can’t say, ‘Oh we’re OK for today and tomorrow.’ I got to look ahead three weeks, four weeks because the reality is, you follow your order a month. That order goes in on the first of the month. Literally, my director, she woke up at 1:45 at night and at midnight she reordered our order because it’s first come, first serve in the queue."

The hospital has also begun reusing N95 masks by using a hydrogen peroxide sterilizer.

"We’re able to sterilize and we get about half of them back," Gomez said.

The good news for the hospital’s supplies is that it is well stocked with ventilators — 28 total — and medication.

"The hydroxychloroquine — we have it and if so it comes down to needing to be used, we have it; we have anthrixophomy and those are the two big ones brought about on the news all the time," Gomez said, adding that Alvarado has at least three weeks of doses. Although Alvarado is in possession of these drugs, they are still experimental and unproven thus far at treating COVID-19 and have lately become controversial as the Trump administration pushes for their use and the scientific community wants a more restrained approach to their use.

**PUBLIC PRAISE**

Gomez is very proud of her staff and how it has adapted to the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

“From my office, I have had a lot of compliments from staff, especially nurses that care for COVID patients, as they may not have symptoms for the last 28 days."

News briefs

**BLOOD CALLS FOR COVID-19 PLASMA DONATIONS**

Thanks to community response to the urgent call for donations amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the blood supply is currently stable both locally and across the nation. San Diego Blood Bank has issued a call for recovered COVID-19 patients, as they may be eligible to donate “convalescent plasma” to help treat patients fighting the virus.

While COVID-19 has no proven treatment, plasma taken from those who have recovered may help patients who are fighting the virus. This is because the plasma has developed antibodies against the virus.

"Hospital patients are reaching out to us on a daily basis for convalescent plasma," said David Wells, CEO, San Diego Blood Bank. "If anyone has recovered from the virus, we are calling on them to join us in helping patients in critical condition fight COVID-19.

Individuals can donate convalescent plasma if they have a confirmed positive laboratory test and no symptoms for the last 28 days. People with a subsequent confirmed negative test can donate after 14 days of symptom resolution. People are encouraged to fill out the form even if they have not yet been tested. To submit
College students relieving the pressure for essential workers

A pair of Cuyamaca College engineering students are making things a little more tolerable for health care workers and other essential employees whose facemask straps can wear thin on the soft tissue behind their ears during their shifts.

Dill Johnson, 24, and Nicholas Snyder, 20, are using their 3-D printers at home and the skills they’ve learned at Cuyamaca College to produce more than 200 “ear saver” bands to relieve the pressure caused by straps on a facemask.

With essential workers from doctors and nurses to food service employees mandated to wear facemasks during the COVID-19 pandemic, and with health officials urging residents to wear one any time they leave their home, wear savers — which look something like a plastic comb and hook around the back of the neck — are becoming increasingly popular.

Snyder’s venture began in developing a few ear savers for his mom, a nurse, and her co-workers at a local hospital.

“Initially I found it incredibly uncomfortable to have all that pressure behind your ear all day long,” he said.

About the same time, a friend asked if Snyder could use his 3-D printer to make more for essential workers such as grocery store clerks. He’s printed dozens so far and has no plans on stopping.

Johnson was motivated by his stays in the hospital while being treated for testicular cancer and appendicitis.

“I have a true appreciation for health care professionals, who have had a huge impact on my life,” said Johnson, who has produced close to 200 of the ear savers. “Giving back to them in even a small way is pretty rewarding.”

Although candy was too unhealthy for the food bank, it was healthy enough for another group of deserving recipients.

“Plan B, we decided the health care workers would love a surprise vis- it from the Easter Bunny — we turned lemons into lemonade,” Elam-Manry said. “I delivered a large amount of yummy choco- late and jelly beans for the small workers to en- joy to Scripps Encinitas, Sharp Memorial, Radys’ Children’s, Sharp Grossmont and Pomerado Hospital in Poway. We spread the love to as many hospitals that are located close to our stores, many of the workers are our customers — we wanted to thank them. This is such a scary pandemic with so many people sick and dying, this is the least we can do to put smiles on the Health care workers faces.”

The hospitals were appreciative. In a thankyou letter, Scripps Memorial Hospital’s gift shop coordinator told the Elam-Manry that the hospital admin- istration staff assembled 17 large Easter baskets with the gift from Hallmark.

“Those baskets were then delivered to all of our nursing units and clinical area break rooms so that staff could enjoy a sweet treat on their break,” wrote Reyes.

“I’m certain it’s not what you had planned when you ordered your Easter Candy several months ago, but trust me when I say that your candy made its way into the hands (and tummies) of those who are working so hard right now and appreciate it more than you know.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemenson at jeff@sdnews.com.
contact information to be qualified as a convalescent plasma donor, visit san diegobloodbank.org/donateplasma. Donors will also need to meet routine donor screening criteria.

**AVOID COVID-19 SCAMS**

“The FBI has identified a new fraud scheme using text messaging and social platforms to reach potential victims,” said David Surwillo, San Diego Police Department Community Relations officer. “The message uses the promise of money, i.e., ‘stimulus check’ from retailer, Costco Wholesale, and provides a link, containing malware, ransomware or other fraudulent methods.

**SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 5**

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**NEWS**

**Helix students killed in domestic violence shooting**

By JEFF CLEMETSON | La Mesa Courier

On April 15, tragedy struck the Helix High School community when two of its students — twin 15-year-old sisters, Cairn and Leah Christopher — were victims of homicide in their Lemon Grove home.

According to the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department report, 38-year-old Dwayne Edwards Groves Jr. was arrested and booked into the San Diego Central Jail shortly after the incident for two counts of murder, two counts of attempted murder and one count of assault with a deadly weapon. In addition to the Christopher girls’ murders, 22-year-old Gary Paul Goode was also shot, resulting in non-life-threatening injury, in the Lemon Grove home and Joann Chantel Hoyt, whose relationship to the girls was unclear, was also shot at.

According to the Sheriff’s report, deputies questioned witnesses and learned that Groves had a prior relationship with the girls’ mother.

On April 16, Helix students and staff learned of the tragedy. “It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that two of our 10th grade students have died,” Wrote Helix High School Principal Kevin Osborn in an email to parents. “Our thoughts and sympathies are with their family and friends. We ask that you please respect and honor the family’s privacy during this difficult time.”

The school made grief counseling available to students.

Outpouring of support for the victims’ family was immediate. A GoFundMe was set up to raise money for funeral costs for the Christopher girls by their god sister Mariah Drayton, who wrote that the murders were a “senseless act of gun violence.”

Drayton also described Cairn and Leah as “The most sweetest and humblest twins you would ever meet. Always smiling and happy. And so loved.”

As of April 23, the GoFundMe page had more than 7,700 shares and 415 donors raising $20,145 — more than double the initial request.

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**Home may not be a safe space**

How sheltering in place puts domestic abuse victims at risk

KENDRA SITTON | La Mesa Courier

With Californians ordered to shelter in place to stop the spread of Coronavirus, non-essential workers are trying to stay safe at home. For people who are never really safe at home, because of domestic violence or other forms of abuse, measures to combat the virus are endangering them in other ways.

In one of the first weeks of quarantining between March 17 to 23, the San Diego Sheriff’s Office received an increased number of calls for service regarding domestic disturbances. Officials at the office specified that it is too early to know if the growth in domestic disturbances is a trend, but experts worry that people sheltering with an abuser are more at risk than those who are not.

“For folks who are living with somebody who is a perpetrator of violence, who’s been abusive, these can be scary times,” said Verna Griffin-Tabor, the CEO of the Center for Community Solutions. There are worries that abusers can use the crisis to further isolate and control their victims.

“For domestic violence [and] intimate partner violence, this is about power and control. When survivors are forced to stay in the same house or close proximity with somebody who’s creating harm. This allows the perpetrator to sometimes have unique impact on survivors, such as withholding hand sanitizers or disinfectant, creating more fear and providing this information to survivors around the pandemic, withholding things like insurance cards or health insurance to prevent survivors from seeking any kind of medical attention,” Griffin-Tabor explained.

The Center for Community Solutions (CCS) has 10 local sites in San Diego as well as three emergency shelters. The shelters have special protocols in place to try and stop the spread of COVID-19, including ending the use of communal kitchens in one of their shelters with individual apartment units.

The court system has also put in place special protections for domestic abuse survivors, including a 30-day extension to restraining orders set to expire. CCS is in contact with judges and attorneys who are doing virtual restraining order hearings even while courts are closed.

While there are efforts from the district attorney and sheriff to get inmates out of jail where coronavirus could spread dangerously, only non-violent inmates awaiting court hearings have been freed. People arrested for domestic abuse during the shelter in place order will remain behind bars.

District Attorney Summer Stephan has also tried to bring attention to local resources for domestic abuse victims which are compiled on the website preventdvli.org/ along with a quiz to determine someone’s risk for domestic violence.

“We acknowledge the necessity of Gov. Newsom’s order, but want to be sure we provide a lifeline to those who may be at increased risk of violence at the hands of an intimate partner,” Stephan said in a press release. “Additional stressors such as losing a job and kids at home due to school closures can trigger for domestic violence. We want people who are seeing warning signs of abuse or who are being abused to know that we stand ready to help them and that they shouldn’t suffer in silence.”

At least in the first weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, CCS did not experience a rise in the number of calls to the hotline the way the Sheriff’s Department did, but Griffin-Tabor said the people calling are needing more resources than normal. Griffin-Tabor does not think this pattern will hold.

“It’s early on in the crisis and our experience has been, during immediate crises, people tend to get through. What we see is, the longer things go on, our concern is we may see an up tick in calls for help,” she said. An example she gave was calls increased during other wildfire evacuations or the holidays where an extended period of time home occurs. There are currently open shelter beds for domestic abuse survivors. CCS units are limited to one family, instead of sharing space. While they are able to accommodate less people, those beds could fill up.

Griffin-Tabor urges people to call the domestic violence hotline to create a safety plan to survive the crisis, including how to protect important medical documents.

For emergencies, call 9-1-1. For anyone affected by abuse and needing support, call the national hotline 24 hours per day at 800-799-7231. If you are unable to speak safely, text LOVEIS to 22522.

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March and early April, a community of operations plan (COOP) was put in place that allowed city hall to telecommute and provided more leave time for city employees who may have used theirs up; created a web portal for city employees to complete work; and allowed for city permits to be issued online; and ordered department heads to prepare for a 30% reduction in workforce by creating training people from other departments to complete work. Currently, the city has not had to furlough any workers and is operating at 75% of its capacity. Before taking questions from the council, Humora ended his report by thanking the city's staff and employees for the work they have done in the midst of the pandemic:

“I also want to thank the residents of La Mesa who have been adhering to the recommendations from the city and the medical community to stay home because it really does save lives,” said Council member Dr. Akillah Weber. “It is something in the medical community that we cannot stress enough.”

Weber had two questions for Humora and Sabine. The first was whether federal relief funds are available for La Mesa. Humora said the city is already in the process of applying for both state and federal funding.

“The tricky part is it’s coming from various departments of the federal government, and we are actively monitoring things,” he said. adding that one funding source the city will be taking advantage of is additional community development block grant funds coming later this year. Weber also asked for clarity on the city’s eviction freeze. Sabine said the city is already in the process of applying for both state and federal funding.

“More than anything, the rules that are enforced at the local level, the state level and now the Judicial Council, they provide for an affirmative defense against eviction,” he said. “Right now, at least from my standpoint, I feel pretty confident that folks can feel secure that they will not be evicted.”

Following discussion, the council voted to officially make Humora the director of emergency and disaster and support the actions taken by the city since March 13. The City Council then discussed other possible actions the city could take.

Council member Kristine Alessio said existing and future permits for public events in the city will need to be examined.

“I cannot imagine a car show... I cannot imagine an Oktoberfest... I cannot imagine a car show... I cannot imagine an Oktoberfest,” she said. “I think all this needs to put on hiatus in whatever legal way it can be.”

There were several public comments emailed in to the council and read into the record by City Clerk Megan Wiegandt about a proposal by Council member Colin Parent to have traffic signals automatically show a pedestrian crossing signal so residents would not have to touch the button requesting a signal. Public comments were split on people for and against it, with those opposed arguing the action would be a waste of money and cause additional traffic congestion.

Public Works director Leon First said that changing traffic signals would require some staff time and would also require a contractor because staff are not the ones who do the programming for signals. He also said wait times at lights for drivers could increase an additional 18 seconds to the 12 seconds on average currently.

“So that’s the tradeoff,” said Parent, adding that a “modest amount” of additional waiting is worth it to keep people out walking around during the pandemic from touching the same button that many others touch throughout the day.

“I think it’s legitimate public safety concern."

Parent said that in his neighborhood, pedestrian traffic has increased because people are out walking the sidewalks during the day while they are unable to work at their offices or places of work.

Council member Bill Barber added that the action would also be consistent with the city’s Vision Zero plan to improve pedestrian safety.

The council, after hearing from First that only a few lights would be able to be changed in a week, eventually voted to approve changing signals at high traffic areas using the best data available where the most need is.

Dr. Weber then raised concerns about the city’s parks, which, despite closing the parking lots, remain open for residents to walk through if they are following the county’s social distancing orders. Humora said the parks are monitored closely and remain open as “a green space for people to go” during quarantine.

Weber replied that keeping parks open when other cities in the state have closed them is “not necessarily the wisest idea at this point... from a medical standpoint.”

In public comments, resident Bonnie Barrand thanked the city for keeping park restrooms open so homeless population can access the sinks and toilets, which lead to a discussion on whether the city could close the parks but keep the bathrooms open.

Mayor Arapostathis and Police Chief Walt Vasquez commented that it would be difficult to enforce a park closure.

After more discussion, the council voted to close only those parks that have a fence that can keep the public out — MacArthur Park and Sunshine Park. The parks that do not have fencing will be open only to those who follow county social distancing rules — gatherings of more than one person, with the exception of those who live under the same roof, are not allowed to congregate in public.

The next La Mesa City Council meeting will be held on April 28 at 6 p.m. It will again be held online and can be viewed live on Cox Cable Channel 24 (within La Mesa City Limits), AT&T U-Verse Channel 99 (in the San Diego Region), the city’s website (cityoflamesa.us) or Facebook Live (facebook.com/lame-saca). Members of the public who wish to make public comments may submit their comments by email to be read aloud at the Council meeting by the City Clerk. Email comments must be submitted to the City Clerk at cityclrk@cityoflamesa.us by 5 p.m. the day of the Council meeting and be no more than 300 words.

—Read editor Jeff Clemenson at jeff@sdnews.com.

LIZZO ‘SHOUT OUT’

On March 31, pop singer Lizzo gave a “shout out” to Sharp Grossmont Hospital in La Mesa and bought lunch for its staff as part of an effort to thank hospital workers across the country.

“Thank you so much for everything you guys have been doing during this pandemic. It has been a very scary time, and you guys have been a peace of mind during this time and a hero” the Grammy-award winning artist said in a video message posted by Sharp. “I hope you feel the love and appreciation

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Saluting nation’s unsung heroes during COVID-19 pandemic

By STEVE JONES

In spite of the uncertainty that coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused, there are still many industries filled with hard-working men and women who are continuing to work amid the coronavirus outbreak. From hospitals to delivery services, to pharmacies, to grocery stores, transportation and logistics and security companies, there are many employees who, while they may not wear capes, are our nation’s heroes. These largely unsung heroes are helping our us survive this crisis by driving vehicles filled with crucial supplies, stocking store shelves, filing prescriptions and providing essential public safety services. Now is the time to share your appreciation or our nation’s unsung heroes. While most of are deeply thankful for the doctors, nurses and emergency workers who are tending to the sick, we should also be appreciative for the men and women who hold essential jobs that require they show up to work during the pandemic. The front line in the pandemic are the heroes working at grocery stores, gas stations, convenience stores and take-out restaurants. These individuals are keeping us healthy by providing essential services that we desperately need. Consider thanking your supermarket’s shop clerk who is doing their best to keep the shelves stocked with necessities and the cashier who is ringing up the purchases. Express your gratitude to the Amazon delivery person who brought essentials to your home.

Our nation should all be in appreciation for the men and women driving trucker-trailer rigs across the country who are delivering vital food and supplies at an unprecedented pace. Some police departments in several states are helping truck drivers find safe places to park and are even arranging to get food directly to the driver.

Let’s salute our hard-working highly trained men and women that are our country’s first responders. Nationwide, there are over 1 million security professionals on the job, classified as essential personnel, who can be put in high-risk situations as they confront and detain criminals engaged in theft, trespassing, gang activity and every other manner of unlawful behavior that occurs. Employees, shareholders and other stakeholders look to their business leaders for strength and direction. Let’s express our gratitude to the company leaders who are sharing their intel to help others during this challenging time. For example, some leaders are publicly sharing their crisis plans, which include employee communications and information about COVID-19, how it’s transmitted, what they’re doing about it, employee FAQs, and links to resources with more information.

—Steve Jones is CEO of Allied Universal, a leading security and facility services company in North America, and author of “No Off Season.”

Republican Women Navajo Canyon urge help to re-elect Trump

As we go through an unprecedented challenge in our country, it is important to focus on the things we all can do to weather this crisis.

President Trump has been doing a fantastic job and has shown the nation and the world that he is an organized leader and a big-league problem solver. He understands the many parts of our economy and healthcare system and knows the steps necessary to get us through this COVID-19 pandemic. He is definitely the leader we want in charge now — and when the economy is ready to fire up again. He got the country on the right track after inheriting the floundering economy of the Obama administration and he can do it again. Let’s all work to get President Trump re-elected in November and give him a Republican majority in the House.

While we are following the guidelines and are isolated from one another and the public in general, there are things that we can do to help elect Republicans. Candidates always need volunteers to make phone calls to...
We’ve been tested before, but never like this. We’ve faced catastrophic wildfires and other challenges, but the coronavirus crisis is unlike anything we’ve seen in our lifetime.

The County of San Diego, as the region’s lead public health agency, has been moving aggressively to fight this virus and address its impacts on our families, businesses and communities.

To keep our residents as safe and sound as possible, we’ve ramped up critical programs and services, and we’re drawing on our vast network of resources to help weather this crisis.

**RWCNC**

CONTINUED FROM Page 6

registered Republicans. It can be done on your own phone from your home. It is easy, rewarding, and effective. A large Republican voter turnout is essential to reach our goals.

Because of COVID-19 and social distancing, we were not able to host our April event which was scheduled for April 14 at the Carlton Oaks Country Club. We hope to reschedule this evening event in July, but we will update as time unfolds. We look forward to resuming our regular lunch meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the La Mesa Brigsantine, but for now those meetings are on hold.

Today, health is the main concern. Please follow all the CDC guidelines and stay healthy. During this period of social isolation, it is vitally important to help each other. COVID-19 is most often transmitted by touch so today we face the challenge of finding new ways to reach out and “touch” – a smile, an act of courtesy, an offer of generosity.

Kindness and respect are always important, but now more than ever.

For more information on our activities, volunteer opportunities or joining Republican Women of California, please visit our website at rwcNavajo-Canyon.org and check us out on Facebook at Republican Women of California—Navajo Canyon. For other questions, please call Marjie 619-551-5522 or email dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov. Stay safe!

—Dianne Jacob represents District 2 on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

### 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.
Staff Mick Mulvaney, Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf, Director of National Security, Richard Grenell, and Management and Budget’s Russ Vought. FEMA has had a confirmed director only since January and still had no deputy director. During our unprecedented national emergency, and near economic collapse, wouldn’t it have been appropriate to have confirmed, vetted and fully qualified heads of these particular departments?

The U.S. and South Korea (population 51 million) had their first case of coronavirus on the same day in January. As of early March, the U.S. has 336,830 cases and 9,618 deaths. South Korea has 10,284 cases and 186 deaths. Leaders in South Korea used aggressive testing measures and introduced social distancing practices immediately. The U.S. still has eight states, all with Republican governors, with no stay-at-home measures. We have no coordinated national testing strategy. Most people wait days for their results if they are "lucky" enough to qualify for a COVID-19 test. South Korea showed what a country with coordinated national leadership can accomplish and slowed the virus two months ago.

Trump dallied, lied, misled. Had his inexperienced son-in-law coordinate some of the national response, and thousands of Americans have died and many thousands more will die in coming weeks and months. As our economy nears collapse with 10 million (and counting) unemployed claims, millions of small businesses (and some large ones) shuttered, a possible and unprecedented 30% unemployment workforce, the stock market off one third and dropping, we can only wonder how much different our preparation and response would have been had a Democrat won the 2016 election.

The next few months will be trying ones for all candidates, particularly ones we actively support and work to elect. The virus is affecting primaries in much of the nation so we won’t have the confirmed Democratic Presidential candidate until June or July, though it looks like Vice President Joe Biden will be our standard bearer. Fortunately, most polling shows him ahead of Trump in all of the critical battleground states.

Over 20,000 copies of La Mesa Courier is delivered to virtually every household and many high traffic locations throughout La Mesa.

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Our local efforts to canvass, sign-wave, get-out-the-vote, fundraise and hold events like candidate forums and coffees are all in a state of flux right now. We urge you to stay connected and keep informed. And most importantly, stay safe and healthy. Please check out our interactive website at lamesafoothillsdemocratic club.com, and check out our Facebook page for lots of information and updates.

—Tina Rynberg is president and Jeff Benecke is vice president of programming of the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club.
Difference Maker: Chantal Lane

by Jeff Clemenson | La Mesa Courier

La Mesa Chantal Lane is making a difference for young artists, while also pursuing her passion for photography.

Lane began her life in Canada, but moved to Orange County when she was four years old. After high school she pursued a bachelor’s degree in photography from Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, a school she described as having “a long and prestigious reputation in photography, but came to a sad end more recently.”

After graduation, Lane moved to the San Diego area, met and married her husband, who eventually purchased a home in La Mesa in 2012.

“We absolutely love our community,” she said.

It was Lane’s husband who introduced her to the Museum of Photographic Arts (MOPA) in San Diego’s Balboa Park.

“I loved it so much that I started volunteering there as part of their camp program,” she said.

“By the end of the summer, I was offered a job in their education department.”

That was back in 2002. MOPA developed Lane’s love for arts education and, after working for several other arts institutions in San Diego—working with different communities for institutions that represent a variety of art mediums—she found her way back to MOPA in 2015.

“MOPA, photography, and arts education are just part of who I am,” she said.

La Mesa Courier recently caught up with Lane to learn more about the work this difference maker does.

What is your role at MOPA?

I hold the title of Manager of Youth and Visitor Engagement. This is a role that has developed over the last couple of years as we have moved to an education-based experience for all of MOPA’s visitors.

I oversee all of MOPA’s youth programming, which includes our school outreach programs, our spring and summer camps and our annual juried Youth Exhibition—along with the very talented staff that teach and work on these programs. I also oversee MOPA’s Visitor Engagement team, who provide an engaging and educational experience for visitors in our galleries.

MOPA is redefining what an art museum experience should look and feel like. We are not interested in creating a space that is intimidatingly quiet or academically inaccessible. We believe that the art presented in our galleries is open for interpretation and discussion. We want visitors to chat with us and ask us questions, and feel free to express thoughts and responses. Our visitors get to guide their own experience, but we are there for them.

Of course, we are now needing to pivot in response to current events! Our philosophical position around accessibility remains, and we will again need to reimage how to best serve our community.

What is the Youth Juried Exhibition? What does it do for young artists?

Since 2006, MOPA has asked K-12 students from Tijuana and San Diego to submit photographic See Chantal Lane, Page 13

Foothills Art presents
ISOLATION Show

The Foothills Gallery, located at the historic Porter Hall in La Mesa, is temporarily closed in accord with precautions advised to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus, but the artists of the Foothills Art Association continue to paint.

In the absence of traditional gallery showings, Foothills Art Association has created an online gallery titled “The ISOLATION Show.” A message on the association’s website describing the show states:

“Sure, we’re currently between a rock and hard place, tip-toeing around trying not to make things worse for ourselves, our neighbors or our families, but we’re artists, so we’re used to making the most of a difficult situation. So let’s paint! Let’s draw! Let’s show each other what we’ve been up to by posting our creations in our online-only ISOLATION Show.”

Artists are encouraged to take pictures of the art they are working on during the quarantine and email them with information about the piece such as title, dimensions, media and price to Scott Trimlett at FFHIT13@gmail.com.

“We’re hoping this will be a once in a lifetime event, so join us!” Stay healthy, stay home, and stay ‘arty’ and send photos of your work to Scott for posting in our ISOLATION show,” continues the message.

The artwork can be seen online at foothillsartassociation.com and by clicking on the ‘ISOLATION Show’ header in the menu.

“Corona Portrait” by Joan Merrick.

When this period of social isolation is over, the Foothills Gallery will re-open and the activities of the Foothills Art Association (art shows and receptions, demonstrations, and workshops) will resume. When that happens, we hope you will stop by the gallery enjoy the wonderful artwork of our local artists.

—Linda Michael is editor of Footprints, the monthly newsletter of the Foothills Art Association.
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Carolina Basilico - Take out orders from 4:30-8:30 p.m. Sun. through Fri., 11 a.m.-9 p.m., seven days a week.
Call 619-337-0670 or go to callbbsca.media, Deliveries can be done through DoorDash.
7200 Parkway Dr. In La Mesa
carolinabasilico.com

Dream Dinners: Easy, Homemade Meals - Our March menu features 12 recipes that cook in 30 minutes or less. Place your order today.
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5490 La Mesa Blvd. - La Mesa
dreamdinners.com

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7133 La Mesa Blvd.
3171. At that time the staff will tell you of the access to locally grown oranges of the year to come, whispering, “Hope smiles from the threshold. When you have saved up, remove from the heat and pour into jars. The marmalade should cool on the counter until room temperature. Place on the lids and chill in refrigerator. Enjoy!”

I hope you are all well and managing okay in these trying times. With so many oranges in La Mesa yards, I decided to make orange marmalade one afternoon. Its tangy sweetness has become such a hit with family and friends that I have made three batches! Please try making it if you have access to locally grown oranges or go buy Navel oranges in the grocery store. It is a fun project — perfect for idle hours during quarantine. Plus, your morning toast with marmalade will make you smile.

INGREDIENTS:
• 6 large Navel oranges or 10 small oranges
• 2 cups granulated sugar
• Juice of 1/2 lemon
• Pinch of ground cinnamon

DIRECTIONS:
Wash 2-3 small jars and lids well and pour boiling water over them to sterilize. Drain.
Using a vegetable peeler, remove only the rind from the oranges. Using a sharp knife, cut the rind in thin pieces. Place in a saucepan covered with two cups of water.
Take the orange and remove as much of the white pith as you possibly can. Cut the orange flesh segments into half-inch pieces and set aside.
Place the saucepan and rind over high heat and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and boil for 10 minutes. Drain the bitter water and once again cover with two cups of water and repeat. This process needs to be repeated three times. I think this is why this jam turns out so delicious — no bitterness!
When you have drained it, the rind for the last time, add the orange flesh pieces, the sugar, lemon juice, cinnamon and two cups of water. Bring mixture to a boil and after 5-6 minutes reduce heat to medium. This mixture needs to simmer for 45-50 minutes. Stir frequently and don’t leave the kitchen. The wateriness and foam will subside as it slow thickens. When it no longer looks watery and has thickened up, remove from the heat and pour into jars.

The marmalade should cool on the counter until room temperature. Place on the lids and chill in refrigerator. Enjoy!”

“No hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, “It will be happier.” —Alfred Lord Tennyson

If you have any questions, please email jeff@sdnews.com.

*List provided by La Mesa Chamber of Commerce and La Mesa Village Association. To be added to the list, email jeff@sdnews.com.
The historic markers on Grossmont High's campus

**Foothiller Footsteps**

**Historic Ivy Bronze Plaque in the Lower Quad**
In 1925, the GUHS P.T.A. paid renowned horticulturist Kate Sessions $50 to landscape the school to "make Grossmont one of the garden spots of Southern California," according to the 1925 El Cajon Valley News.

Then in April 1926, it stated, "4000 trees and shrubs have been planted around ... the building, a long row of creeping ivy (lucus repens) has been planted in front. " The English ivy from the back of the school planted in the 1930s is believed to be from Washington Irving's New York home and originally from Sir Walter Scott's home in Scotland. During these early years, Algerian ivy was also planted in the rear of the school, and features documentary history.

**The WPA Bronze Plaques in the Upper Quad**

In December 1935, a $90,000 bond issue funded three major projects on campus: the Manual Arts (Vocational Arts and Agriculture) building; the reconstruction of the rear wing of the original 1922 school from an auditorium to a two-story classroom wing; and the creation of a new physical education-auditorium building.

Forty-five percent of the cost was an outright gift from the government through the WPA (Works Project Administration), with the remainder funded through a community bond. Architect Frank L. Hope designed the building in the art deco style typical of WPA projects at the time.

In 1935, the Class of 1946 funded the replacement of the historic art deco sign that once appeared above the doorway, which now proclaims, as it did in the past, "Auditorium-Gymnasium" with the added year of completion, 1935. The former corner of the building is the original WPA bronze plaque commemorating the campus's historic construction.

There are several other reminders of the WPA's historic influence on campus: the reconfiguration of the football field from east-west to north-south alignment; a river rock sloping wall behind the home stands of the Jack Mashin Stadium; the wide and deep cement steps leading to the stadium; the X design of the Jack Mashin Stadium; the wide rock of the X design of the Jack Mashin Stadium; and the creation of a physical education-auditorium building.

**The Big G on the Hill**
For decades, the G has represented Foothiller pride as a large visual symbol of the campus. Early 1930s photographs show a whitewashed letter G on a hill near Grossmont.

In 1947-48, the HI-Y Club (YMCA) built the Big G on the slope of the original school made out of shrubs, blooming in colors of blue and gold. During the 1960s, the shrubs were showing their age, but still intermittently blooming. In 1991, volunteers, along with RCPS's Gene Chubb, replanted the G in the same location with one made of brick and rock.

In the late 1950s to the 1970s, there was also a large G on Cowles Mountain (with an S for SDSU on the other side). Yearly, as a part of a weeklong freshmen initiation, ninth grade students "whitewashed" the G.

Today, Bill Woolman (Class of 1962) lovingly cares for the G in front of the original school. If you drive by the G on Murray Drive, don't be surprised if you see Bill there as trims, weeds, and rakes to keep it looking its best. Recently, Bill funded a solar light that shines on the G at night, enabling the G to broadcast its Foothiller Pride day and night.

**HIGHLANDER OPEN CANCELLED**
It was with heavy hearts that the Helix High School Foundation announced the cancellation of the annual Highlander Open Golf Tournament. With all of the uncertainty, it was next to impossible to plan an event of this size.

The Highlander Open is the Foundation's biggest fundraiser each year, raising thousands of dollars to provide Helix graduating seniors with scholarships to help them on their college journey. The cancellation of this year's tournament will make it very challenging to provide the level of support we have come to enjoy. Last year, students received more than $50,000 in scholarships.

With this in mind, the Foundation is seeking community support to build this year's scholarship fund. Donations can be made on line through their website (helixhighschoolfoundation.org), tipping off a checking a bank account to The Helix High School Foundation at 7323 University Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942.


**Helix High adapts to distance learning**

Distance learning. A month ago, this phrase was not a familiar one to most of America. But in just a matter of weeks, almost everyone with school-age children is not only aware of the term, but they are likely experiencing it in their own homes. With the shut down of schools during the pandemic, districts, schools, and teachers across the nation are working to ensure children are still learning. Professionals in the education field are also learning, as they explore and innovate to find ways to continue to connect with students from afar.

Transitioning to an exclusively distance learning environment poses many challenges, especially when students are in need of computers or internet access to allow them to stay connected to their school and their educational program. Helix students and teachers have been working in a new one-to-one environment for the past five years — all Helix students have school-issued Chromebooks and teachers have been incorporating technology into their curriculum during this time. While the transition to distance learning has been far from easy, having this infrastructure in place did ease many of the pains and has allowed Helix teachers to continue to provide academic work to their students.

The Helix High School Foundation, inspired by Spring Break on April 30 and started distance learning with two weeks of enrichment activities, designed to reconnect to school and develop new habits related to the online educational systems, while at the same time allowing staff to determine the needs of families and reach out to students who were not engaging in the activities.

After two weeks of transition time, coursework has resumed. Teachers hold "office hours" during the week via Zoom meetings to allow students to check in, get additional help with assignments, meet with classmates, or participate in optional activities. Helix's Academic Coaches are also available throughout the week to provide academic support to students who need it. The counselors have been provided with a tutoring schedule and can sign up for an online session with one of their coaches.

The ASPIRE after school program has also gone digital. The ASPIRE program has been a staple of Helix High for many years, providing after school activities for more than 300 students every day. Not even a school shut down can stop ASPIRE! The program is offering fitness classes, tap dancing, robotics, creative writing, baking, gaming, money management, academic support and more. Call Coach Hall (919) 689-8206 or anything having to do with applying to college, all through online platforms.

Behind the scenes, staff continue to collaborate. A recent Zoom staff meeting had more than 200 members in attendance. Staff emails abound, containing helpful resources, tips, for teaching technology updates from the tech team on how many students are engaged in online activities, encouragement from the administrative team, and much more. While the physical campus is quiet, the virtual campus is buzzing with activity.

It is not a perfect situation. Teachers and staff miss their students and coworkers. Students miss their friends and, yes, even Helix's Foothiller Footsteps Geron to get back to their sports.

Students involved in performing arts are missing their time on stage. The cancellation finding creative ways to celebrate their prom. The rest of the school year will certainly look different than any other we have experienced. Helix students and staff undoubtedly will be working to ensure there are still achievements and celebrations to make it memorable.

**The WPA Old Gym plaque**
Two GUHS teachers at fountain in 1922.

(WPA Old Gym plaque)

(WPA Old Gym plaque)

Two GUHS teachers at fountain in 1922.

(WPA Old Gym plaque)

(WPA Old Gym plaque)
family with promising careers and a bright future in "An American Marriage" by Tayari Jones. But suddenly everything crumbles when Roy is sentenced to 12 years in prison for a crime Celestial is sure he didn’t commit. As Celestial tries to put her life back together, she finds her love for Roy changing, and starts depending on her childhood friend Andre for support and companionship. When Roy’s conviction is overturned after five years, he returns expecting to resume his life with Celestial, but discovers that everything has changed. A romantic and emotional exploration of how quickly lives can change.

Using this time at home to declutter? Explore Marie Kondo’s world-famous method in “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up.” Learn how to categorize your stuff and prioritize what to keep and what to let go. —Ramona Price is a librarian at the La Mesa branch of the San Diego County Library.

Connecting generations through technology

1. Messaging Apps
A recent study revealed that 73% of grandparents own smartphones. Messaging apps like WhatsApp or Talkatone are a great introduction to texting for grandparents.

With messaging apps, you can send and receive texts, updates, photos and videos in one place. When there’s time for a longer conversation, you can use these apps to chat for free, as most don’t use cell minutes.

Snapchat is another option for sending and receiving custom pictures or videos with a variety of fun filters and lenses.

How to Help Your Grandparents

Only 44% of grandparents identify as tech-savvy.

Teaching non-tech-savvy family members how to use video chat and social media can be a bonding experience. You can also set your grandchildren up with useful home features like the SURE Universal Remote, which allows them to control their TV and other devices from their smartphone. Less tech-savvy grandparents may not realize they can watch their cable TV content from their mobile device or schedule DVR recordings with apps like Cox Connect.

Giving your elders the power to connect helps build relationships with the people you love most, and that’s priceless at any age.

2. Video Chat
Video chat makes you feel as though everyone’s in the same room. Use apps like Skype or FaceTime to have a video conversation from virtually any device, and share life events such as graduations or weddings.

3. Gaming and Creativity Apps
Apps like Magisto and PhotoFunia allow you to personalize photos and videos.

Apps like Wheel of Fortune or Minecraft can be a bonding experience. You can teach your grandparents to use family tree apps like Ancestry to record their family’s story, or an app like Keepy, an interactive platform where you can post photos and videos.

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Here are four ways technology can help you connect with your grandparents:

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An Open Letter from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and Your Water Providers

To the communities we serve,
These are difficult times, carrying great uncertainty and many challenges. However, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and its 26 member public agencies continue to deliver safe, high-quality and reliable water supplies to homes and businesses, just as we have done for nearly a century.

Tap water is safe.
Our water agencies use state-of-the-art, advanced treatment processes that remove and kill viruses, including coronaviruses, as well as bacteria and other pathogens.

There is plenty of water.
Southern California has an extensive distribution, storage and treatment system to ensure continued deliveries even during a disruption. And, our reservoirs are at some of the highest levels ever.

Water deliveries are reliable.
Agencies are taking steps to protect the health and safety of our workforce. Our laboratories, treatment plants and facilities continue to be staffed by skilled and dedicated men and women who provide the vital services that keep our systems running.

Metropolitan and your local water agencies are working together, combining our vast resources and talents, to maintain critical services to the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Gloria D. Gray, Chairwoman