The great ‘Grape’

By JOYELL NEVINS | La Mesa Courier

Big vision, big purpose, big magic. La Mesa’s Kathryn Cloward, a.k.a. “Kathryn the Grape,” is on a mission to change the world through heart messages she imprints on kids, toddlers, and the adults in their life.

Her “heart-centered” media collection, as she describes it, uses music and stories to unlock a “treasure box” for those who join her. These affirmations aren’t just pithy sayings, they are “tools of love” from Cloward’s core:

I am magical.
I am colorful.
I am love.
I am kind.
I am unique.
I am grateful.
I am joyful.

The tools come from lessons Cloward learned through her own family of rehabilitation to several weeks to find her, followed by mom Erin Buckley, the police and private investigators that took her off on her bike to go to a friend’s house — and never arrived.

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It triggered a massive search for Lesley Buckley. By mom Erin Buckley, the police and private investigators that took several weeks to find her, followed by months of rehabilitation to reunification, recovery.

The trauma of human trafficking

A mother and daughter’s story of reunification, recovery

By DAVE SCHWAB | Mission Times Courier

[Editor’s note: The real names of the people in this story have been changed to protect their anonymity. This is the first installment of a series on human trafficking in San Diego.]

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Brothers earn simultaneous Eagle Scout ranking

The Eagle Scout rank is the best-known and most prestigious award in the Scouts BSA organization, formerly known as the Boy Scouts of America, but only about 4% of all Scouts devote the substantial time and effort to earn it.

The Epperson brothers – 16-year-old Jacob, 15-year-old Joshua, and 13-year-old Noah – are members of Troop 370, located in La Mesa. Jacob was on track to complete his Eagle requirements earlier this year but opted to wait until Oct. 24 when all three brothers could have their Boards of Review together. On that day, all three achieved the Eagle Scout rank.

“Having three Scouts from one family earn the rank of Eagle Scout is an accomplishment. Having three Scouts with a four-year age difference between all three achieve the rank of Eagle Scout on the same day is even more astonishing. Having worked with these Scouts and seeing the camaraderie and support for one another is very impressive. I truly enjoyed working with Jacob, Joshua, and Noah and know they will have successful futures whatever they choose to do,” said Jim Atkins, the District Eagle Board of Review Chairman.

Each of the boys began this quest when they turned 11 years old and joined Troop 370. They decided to make it a group effort.

“It was worth it because all three of us would work together and help one another to accomplish requirements for merit badges and rank advancements,” said Joshua. “It’s a ‘three-for-one’ deal.”

Joshua credits his accomplishments with the support of parents and strong Scout leaders who took a special interest in him and encouraged him every step of the way.

“We have grown and matured through active learning and outdoor experiences – and for us, it has had the added benefit of bringing our family even closer,” said Joshua. “That’s the heart of what scouting is about.”

“It was a lot of effort and towards the end, it became a race against time.”

SEE EAGLE SCOUTS, Page 3

City holds senior engagement expo

By DOUG CURLEE | La Mesa Courier

For some time now, the city of La Mesa has been positioning itself as a city concerned with the health, safety and general well-being of its senior citizens.

A city-sponsored event on Nov. 16 was another in a series of long-lasting efforts to provide that help — an effort that attracted a number of organizations to come tell people what kind of help is available if needed.

About 16 different organizations came together at the La Mesa Community Center, to be available for anyone who might be interested.

Eldercare, City Hope, Meals on Wheels, Oasis, Sharp Healthcare — the list went on.

Megan Howell, of the city staff, hoped attendance would be better than, frankly, it was. “You always hope you’ll draw a crowd,” she said. “We’ll keep putting these on, and hope the word gets out more and more.”

Some people came to take advantage of the free hearing testing and blood pressure checks — things that are vital for seniors to keep an eye on.

Bill Effert, of Elderhelp, could chronicle a long list of the services available to seniors.

“They need to know that whatever they might need is available at places like this, whether from us or any of the other organizations, absolutely free of charge,” he said. “Transportation, home visits, daily welfare calls, the whole list at no charge at all.”

City Hope’s Bonnie Welch echoed that, and said, “We are available for any kind of problems that arise, not just for seniors, but anyone who finds themselves facing a situation they can’t handle. We have memorandums of understanding with everyone from school districts to cities and counties and senior citizens, where help of any kind is available, no questions asked. We’re privately fund- ed with grants from foundations, and income from property we own.”

“It’s a good thing indeed that there is so much available for people, if they only know about it and can take advantage of the resources. The problem is making sure that more and more people know about those resources.

It’s a slow process, letting people know all that. But it’s a process the city is not about to give up on. That’s a good thing for everyone.”

—Doug Curlee is a longtime San Diego reporter in both print and television. Reach him at dougc@cox.net.
The ‘Secret Stairs’ of La Mesa

By BILL DIAMOND

Eagle Scouts


There is no one, in or out side of the Scouting program, who knows a thing or two about the constant pace. He has been their Scoutmaster since 2015. A lifelong scouter himself, he knows how difficult this is. He earned the Eagle Scout rank in 1994. The boys have benefited from a supportive and loving family. "We have devoted countless hours of effort to the success of our sons as they worked toward Eagle Scout rank -- and their younger sister, Chloe, has cheered them on every step of the way," said Megan Epperson.

The final requirement to earn the Eagle Scout rank is a service project. The three brothers’ projects combined for more than 400 hours of benefit to the community:

• Jacob’s Eagle project added trail markers and distances at Hillside Park in El Cajon.
• Joshua’s Eagle project installed an informational bulletin board kiosk at the newly created walking trails at MacArthur Park in La Mesa.

They will be ceremoniously awarded the Eagle Scout rank at a Court of Honor scheduled for December 2. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints located at 5555 Aztec Drive in La Mesa.

—Tanya Castaneda is vice president of public relations at Manolatos.
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT PICKS NEW CHANCELLOR

Lynn Neault, longtime Vice Chancellor of Student Services at the San Diego Community College District, is the governing board’s pick as the next chancellor of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.

Neault replaces Cindy L. Miles, who is retiring at the end of the year after a record term of almost 11 years at the district’s helm. Governing Board President Linda Cartwright announced Neault’s selection at the board meeting on Tuesday. Neault starts her new job in January.

“Dr. Neault brings decades of knowledge and experience in local community college administration and is well-versed in the statewide issues of student outcomes and enrollment and their impact on state funding,” Cartwright said. “She also brings a strong commitment to participatory governance and decision-making that comes after many years of working and consulting with varying constituency groups from a multi-college district.”

Neault has served 25 years at her current post with the San Diego Community College District, one of the largest in California.

She began working there in 1983 as an administrative analyst in Institutional Research, and later served as director, associate director and coordinator of Student Services. From 2011-2014, she served as interim president of San Diego City College.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in political science, a master’s in public administration, and a doctorate in education, all from San Diego State University.

“I deeply understand California community colleges,” Neault said. “I appreciate the complexities and opportunities that arise from a multi-college district. I understand the laws and regulations that guide our work and I know the importance of establishing strong relationships in the community, with community leaders, legislators and the Board of Trustees.”

Raised in an immigrant family, where she was the first to attend college, Neault credits her own lived experiences to her commitment to the mission of community colleges.

“I am committed to the mission of community colleges,” she said. “We give students hope for a better life. We see the potential in them, even when they don’t see it for themselves and we lift their spirits.”

Neault said she plans to spend much of her first year meeting people, developing relationships, and learning about the needs and

A FEW SMART IDEAS TO HELP YOU SAVE.

Here are some things you can do this season to save between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. when energy prices are highest:

- Do laundry before 4 p.m. or after 9 p.m. when energy prices are lower.
- Caulk/weatherstrip doors and windows to save 10-20% on heating.
- Let hot foods cool off (1hr max.) before placing them in the fridge.
- Turn off computers, TV’s and other electronics when not in use.
- Prepare meals in a slow cooker outside the hours of 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Find more tips at sdge.com/whentomatters

Time to save.

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Also join us for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. December 24th at 6PM

Free Community Event Sunday, December 15th at 6PM Children are provided for Children 5 years and younger

8360 Lemon Avenue, La Mesa, CA 91941 619.461.1291  www.ccclameco.com

MR. DICKENS CHRISTMAS CAROL

For it is good to be children sometimes
And never better than at Christmas,
When its mighty Founder was a child himself!

Find more tips at sdge.com/whentomatters

Time to save.
...She [Susan] would go places and I didn’t know where she went. I realized after a time that she was being prostituted. I felt like they were being nice to pull me in when I think about it now. We were smoking a lot of weed and partying.

“My husband Dave and I took an active, central role in the search, because we couldn’t rely on law enforcement,” said Erin of the hunt for Lesley. She added, “We had to find the right resources and run our own ‘case’ in reality... We had to work as well. We were allowed to work from home and devoted ourselves full-time to the search, while handling our jobs and a family with four other children.”

Persistence paid off in the end for the Buckleys.

“She [Lesley] was gone more than five weeks before we found her,” said Erin. “Saved In America [child rescue group] had rescued the girls off the streets of Compton in coordination with LA County Sheriff.”

Erin noted the struggle to “reclaim” her daughter had actually just begun once she’d been found after running away.

“Naively thought that getting her back was the finish line and the end of challenges,” Erin said. “However, we quickly realized that day that these girls needed to quickly transition to a new location away from their homes to avoid being discovered or leaving again, and for residential treatment specializing in girls that are traumatized by trafficking.

“This was a person we no longer knew,” Erin said of her daughter. “She had come back from being gone a very different, traumatized girl... Now, she referred to the staff and her fellow residents as ‘family’ and I think she was feeling resentment that we had abandoned her...” Her therapist was convinced she was ready to come home for good when she came home for good after surviving treatment at a residential Utah facility for months of rehabilitation therapy.

Describing her treatment there, which started with a week of coming home after she was rescued, Lesley said, “At first I hated where I went. I never was alone the whole time I was there. There was always a counselor with me. I had no privacy. I had to earn rights and rewards. I saw what happened if you didn’t behave. If you got pined off or acted crazy, then all the staff would hold you down... There were some seriously messed up kids in there... I made some incredibly close friends after a while. I wanted to escape and live with them. I didn’t want to go back home and wanted to start out now somewhere else. My friends and I kept talking about what we’d do when we got out of there at 18.”

Lesley talked about what it felt like being controlled by others during rehab. “They took my phone,” she said. “I couldn’t call my parents and was embarrassed even if I could contact them. I thought I could get away and do my own thing. Maybe get a job. We used different names and I thought, ‘I’m stuck and maybe I’ll just start a new life.’ I didn’t like my life. Maybe this was the start of a new life for me.”

After Lesley’s rescue, Erin said a police officer told her that “her parents really loved her because he never seen parents work so relentlessly in trying to find their child. I just thought we were doing what any parent would do if their child was in peril.”

Discussing reconnection with her parents, Lesley noted the connection is not yet complete — maybe never will be.

“I feel like I’ve never gotten my mom and dad’s relationship back to where it was before,” she said. “I don’t want to see my family, my grandma, my uncles, anyone hardly at all. Now that I’m 19 almost 20, I live without them on my own and am happy just working and doing my own thing.”

Looking back on it, what advice would Erin and Lesley give to others finding themselves trapped in a similar situation?

“Make sure you know what your child is doing on social media and who they are spending time with,” said Erin. “Know their world as much as you can. ... As a parent, you are responsible for your child’s safety and they don’t have a right to complete privacy. She was vulnerable to an old friend who had been a runaway and got sucked into a world that our daughter did not know. In trying to help her, Lesley got sucked into it too.”

Regarding lessons learned, Lesley concluded, “It’s best not to trust adults you don’t know. You shouldn’t be around adult men that want to be with kids. If it doesn’t feel right, get away from it. You have to be very careful in talking to strangers that hide in social media. There are some disturbed people out there that go after vulnerable girls and boys. You need to listen to your parents. They are your friends. They are there to protect you.”
Guest Editorials

There is no such thing as safe smoke

By TAM PEFFY

Once upon a time in the 1960s, cigarette companies sought to increase their market by specifically advertising to women. Soon women were smoking cigarettes in the movies, on billboards and everywhere. This targeted advertising paid off handsomely and there was no mention that women were smoking. As a result, there was a proportionate increase in the number of women diagnosed with COPD. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is a disease that obstructs airflow in the lungs and affects more than 16 million people. Moreover, millions do not even know they have it until it reaches advanced stages. Now more women than men die from this leading cause of death in the United States.

With more women smoking, family exposure to secondhand smoke has increased significantly, along with the incidence in the FDA from secondhand smoke. Among people with COPD, around 15% never touched a cigarette and lived in poor air quality environments in their lives. These 15% were typically exposed to secondhand smoke from their parents, spouses or sometimes work environments. It is a shock to most patients that they have COPD when they have never smoked themselves.

In 2019, our new marketing is in the form of an electronic cigarette, also known as an e-cigarette, an e-cig or a vape. A vape is a cartridge filled with around 7,000 chemicals including nicotine, but without the tar of regular cigarettes. Smoking is done from a pen and does not have the smell of a regular cigarette. Again, the cigarette companies cashed in on the opportunity to increase the market by advertising now to children. Flavors like lollypop, Skittles, candy cane and others appeal to the younger market. It was an easy tool for children to try, since they were told it was harmless. There were no, or very few, warnings of the dangers it can bring. The idea was to target children and get them to start smoking early. There is no such thing as safe smoke.

In 1978, more than two-thirds of California’s voters passed Proposition 13 (“Prop 13”), a ballot measure that reduced property tax rates on homes, businesses and farms and capped how much property tax rates could grow in the future. Elderly homeowners on fixed incomes, faced with ever-escalating and often unpredictable property tax bills, were being forced to sell their homes to meet the payments. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, property values and property tax assessments in California began skyrocketing. Property taxes were based on a property’s market value, which often increased faster than inflation and the homeowner’s income. According to annual reports from the then-State Board of Equalization, tobacco taxes levied on property subject to Prop 13 from fiscal year 1960-61 through fiscal year 1977-78 increased more than 360%.

Fed up with high tax bills, voters passed Proposition 13, which limited property tax increases to 2% of a property’s assessed value, limited assessment increases to no more than 2% annually, and establihed that state taxes levied on property subject to Prop 13 from fiscal year 1960-61 through fiscal year 1977-78 increased more than 360%. That meant a $1,000 home in 1960 had a $400 tax bill and 17 years later, the property tax paid on the same home would be $1,440.

There is no such thing as safe smoke. Asking the respondents did not know if it was harmful or not. Asking if they had ever heard of harm is like asking if a burn is less serious if it comes from a wood-burning fire versus chemical fire. What is the lesser of two evils? But make no mistake, they are both bad choices. Yes, it looks harmless, smells harmless and the smoke even looks kind of “cool,” but it is the ultimate silent killer, even as a secondhand exposure. Standing next to someone with an e-cigarette still exposes you to secondhand smoke as much as secondhand cigarette smoke. The chemicals in e-cigs increase your risk of lung disease, heart disease, strokes and canters. But one of the most dangerous chemicals in e-cigs is diacetyl. This chemical is often added to the liquid in a vape, to enhance the flavoring like coconut and vanilla. Currently more than 75% of e-cig testers in California have COPD. Diacetyl has been banned from use in microwave popcorn. This chemical caused “popcorn lung” which describes the damage to the small airways of the lungs. It should also be banned from vapes. However you get COPD, you must know it is a progressive disease that results in shortness of breath causing frequent hospitalizations. Multiple medical research studies have demonstrated that pulmonary rehabilitation therapy is the best way to coordinate the overall care of patients with COPD. Unfortunately, only 3% of patients with COPD receive pulmonary rehabilitation. And while millions suffer from COPD, millions more do not know they have it. Symptoms may include:
- Chronic cough.
- Coughing up mucus or phlegm.
- Shortness of breath doing every day activity.
- Chest tightness.
- Frequent respiratory infections.

If you were a user of, or exposed to secondhand smoke from cigarettes or e-cigarettes or have experienced shortness of breath and low endurance, you should have a lung function test.

Early detection is key to stopping the progression of COPD. At La Mesa Rehab, you can receive a free lung function test which shows how well each lung is working. If you have COPD, and to what extent. In addition, you can also get a free consultation on your lung health and risk factors.

Tami Peffy is the clinic director of La Mesa Rehab Pulmonary Rehabilitation. To find out how your lungs are working, call La Mesa Rehab at 619-466-6077.

Letters

A COMPLEX CHALLENGE

Re: “City sues opioid manufacturers” [Volume 9, Issue 10 or bit.ly/SdPan]

The misuse and abuse of prescription opioids is a complex public health challenge that requires a collaborative and systemic response that engages all stakeholders. It’s also critical to understand that the system of stakeholders across the supply chain. Distributors do not conduct research, manufacture, market, or prescribe medications, nor do they influence prescribing patterns, the demand for specific products, or patient-benefit designs. The idea that distributors are responsible for the number of opioid prescriptions written defies common sense and lacks understanding of how the placebo effect and placebo chain actually works and is regulated. Those bringing lawsuits would be better served addressing the root causes, rather than trying to redirect blame through litigation.

—John Parker, Senior Vice President of Communications, Healthcare Distribution Alliance.
As we all look forward to the end of this very forgettable and tragic year in the Oval Office, filled with innumerable high crimes and misdemeanors, at least we have the knowledge and comfort that this corrupt administration’s self-serving conduct, collusion and unlawful abuse of executive power will be openly explored and investigated in the next few weeks during the Congressional impeachment hearings.

We must all look forward to a 2020 election year that will shine light on truth, renewed respect for the rule of law, and a return to normalcy for our democracy and its standing in the international arena. We hope that new leadership will bring social and economic justice for all citizens and those that aspire to citizenship. Most importantly, we hope to unite our nation behind a leader and those that aspire to citizen leadership will bring social and economic justice for all citizens and those that aspire to citizenship.

We will be highlighting that hope and optimism with our annual holiday celebration on Wednesday, Dec. 4, with friends, food, charity and our returning favorite entertainer, Jon “Bowzer” Bauman. While Jon is best known for his decadeslong association with the oldies group Sha Na Na, he is also a great advocate for elder issues, Social Security, Medicare and candidates and causes that protect the rights and welfare of our senior citizens. He is currently president of Social Security Works PAC, a national organization working to elect candidates who advocate for Social Security.”

Republican Women of California-Navajo Canyon will kick off the holiday season with their annual party at the home of Ginny Wisley on Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 11 am.-1:30 p.m. Donations of toys and other necessities will be collected for Military Outreach Ministries (MOM). San Diego MOM serves the junior enlisted military family, typically headed by a 19- to 23-year-old with young children and away from home trying to survive in our expensive economy on a low salary. Delicious appetizers and desserts will be provided by our members and shared by all.

We are honored to have Judge Robert Amador and Judge Daniel Lamborn install our officers for the coming year. Waskah Whelan will be installed as the 2020 president succeeding Jon Bauman. Jon is best known for his decadeslong association with the oldies group Sha Na Na, he is also a great advocate for elder issues, Social Security, Medicare and candidates and causes that protect the rights and welfare of our senior citizens. He is currently president of Social Security Works PAC, a national organization working to elect candidates who advocate for Social Security.

Jon “Bowzer” Bauman (Photo by Gage Skidmore)
Across America, seniors and families are struggling to afford the prescription drugs they need to stay healthy. Three in 10 adults reported not taking their medicines as prescribed at some point in the past year due to cost. Prices for more than 3,400 drugs jumped 17 percent in the first six months of 2019. Between 2011 and 2016, prescription drug spending in the United States grew more than 2.5 times inflation.

The soaring cost of insulin has almost tripled between the 1990s and 2014. In the United States, insulin costs per patient have nearly doubled from 2012 to 2016. These price spikes are driving up health insurance premiums and creating unaffordable costs for taxpayers who finance Medicare and Medicaid.

My constituents share their stories with me every single day about the struggles they face to get the life-saving medications they need. A 68-year-old man with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a condition that makes breathing very difficult, wrote me about his experience with trying to pay for his medication. He requires an inhaler to open up his airways and pays more than $400 for a month’s supply of the drug to treat his condition.

A father told me about his trouble in affording his daughter’s cystic fibrosis medication. He wants Congress to look at ways to bring down prices. He requires an inhaler to allow him to breathe in the drug, which is critical to the more than 150 million Americans who get their health insurance through their employer. The Lower Drug Costs Now Act strengthens and improves Medicare. Seniors will see a new $2,000 out-of-pocket limit on prescription drug costs. It also reverses years of unfair price hikes for thousands of drugs in Medicare.

Currently there is no cap on out-of-pocket expenses for Medicare Part D enrollees. In 2017, 1 million Part D enrollees had average annual out-of-pocket costs exceeding $3,200. The Congressional Budget Office and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services both report that HR 3 would save $345 billion for Medicare and Medicaid, covering tens of millions of patients, would be available to Americans. The HHS secretary would be empowered to negotiate up to 250 drugs per year, drawn from a refilling list of the most costly drugs in the U.S.

Drugs representing more than half of all Medicare Part D spending, covering tens of millions of patients, would be subject to the negotiation process—including insulin. These reduced drug prices would also be available to people with private insurance, which is critical to the more than 150 million Americans who get their health insurance through their employer. The Lower Drug Costs Now Act strengthens and improves Medicare. Seniors will see a new $2,000 out-of-pocket limit on prescription drug costs. It also reverses years of unfair price hikes for thousands of drugs in Medicare.

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News from your County Supervisor

**Dianne’s Corner**

**PROTECT YOUR FAMILY:**

The county recently mailed 200,000 disaster planning guides to households in high-risk wildfire areas.

*These booklets provide critical information on how to prepare for a crisis and how to deal with it once it strikes.*

They include tips on evacuation, a list of emergency supplies and how to take advantage of programs like Alert San Diego.

If you received a guide, be sure to fill it out. It can also be found at readsandiego.org.

**HELPING THE VULNERABLE:**

The Board of Supervisors has added a new tool in its expanding efforts to help those with chronic mental illness and substance abuse issues. We're launching a pilot program that will allow the county to name a conservator to oversee treatment and services for those battling co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders. Our aim is to strengthen the social service safety net for some of our most vulnerable residents.

**LMFDC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7**

- Mental illness and substance abuse are huge concerns in our region and the board action marks our latest step to address them.
- **Great job, Edgemoor:** One of the nation's top-ranked medical care sites, county-run Edgemoor Skilled Nursing Facility in Santerre, recently marked its 10th anniversary.
- County officials, joined by community leaders and residents, recently celebrated the milestone with cake, music and a special tribute to the great, highly dedicated staff at Edgemoor.
- The 192-bed facility is a huge improvement over the old Edgemoor geriatric hospital and has been consistently ranked among the top skilled nursing facilities in the U.S. by national organizations and publications.

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**THE GRAPE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

"transformation process" 10 years ago. Her life had hit some unexpected curves, but rather than simmer in misery, Cloward began to rethink who she was and who she wanted to be.

"It wasn’t the whole me. I was just checking all the boxes of the ‘American dream.’" Cloward recalled. "There were things that I wanted to do that I wasn’t doing. But when we get quiet and listen, what rises up is who we are and our true purpose.

One morning while meditating, Cloward realized that she had inner magic — not a “Harry Potter” kind of magic, but a special kind of courage. She also realized that she wasn’t the only one who carried this courage.

"We all have inner magic — love and joy and bravery," she explained. "That was the first tool. Cloward was filled with a ‘call to action’ to share that and other tools she was learning. Then she remembered a conversation with her mom, Mary K. Cloward, 10 years prior to that about when Kathryn was an adolescent.

Kathryn, who currently resides in La Mesa, grew up in San Carlos and played softball for years. Her coach “Mr. P” nicknamed all of his players. Since Kathryn wore purple all the time, he called her “Kathryn the Grape” as a play on “Kathryn the Great.”

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The Grape
CONTINUED FROM Page 3

Mary brought up this story, and encouraged Kathryn to turn that persona into a children’s book character. “At that point, I wasn’t in sync with what [Kathryn the Grape’s] brand was,” Kathryn said. Fast forward a decade, and Kathryn finally knew how she wanted to share her life lessons with young people, and the adults that read to them – that aforementioned character of Kathryn the Grape.

“My mom still gets the credit, but those stories had to come through me,” Kathryn said. Other credit goes to the youthful Samantha Prince, who helped write two books with Kathryn, and Jennie Lapointe, who is Kathryn’s walking and creative partner.

“This is what we do – we go on walks and we create stuff for kids,” Kathryn laughed.

After creating the material, the next question was how to share it. Cloward was already a musician, and still fronts the band Kathryn & the Royals. She knew she wanted to combine her love of music with the power of reading, and still fronts the band Kathryn & the Royals. She knew she wanted to share her life lessons with young people, and the adults that read to them – that aforementioned character of Kathryn the Grape.

Then as Kathryn began to promote the Affirmations and perform around the county, she realized that many of the children she interacts with are toddlers. So, the newest book series, Let’s Read Together, is a collection of popular songs, revamped to still portray those life lessons. For instance, the well-known “Wheels on the Bus” song now has a line that reads “the parents on the bus say ‘I love you...’”. Cloward also realized that some one has to read those books to the toddlers. She still remembers those times of her mom reading to her as she called “her favorite time of the day.”

“That nurturing time: it’s still important, it still matters,” Kathryn said. So, she started to pursue a second book series geared at the toddler age. Not only would it encourage children and their parents or loved ones to read together, but it would also introduce her tools to grow-ups as well. By getting a message in the hands and hearts of young people, it gets into the hands and hearts of adults, too.

“I ultimately intend to share these messages with the youngest of kids all the way to adults,” Kathryn declared. Even teenagers have employed her verbiage to explain their feelings — like when a mother told Kathryn the story of her 16-year-old who was getting ready for a major event. She and the teen talked about the “nervous bubbles” in her stomach as a way to express the anxiety, and ultimately quell it.

That is Kathryn’s greatest purpose — to take these messages of love, magic, and peace, and incorporate them into as many hearts and lives as she can.

“To live your purpose is to do what you’re passionate about and help others,” Kathryn said. “My goal is just to keep growing and keep expanding. I bet on purple!”

THE NEXT GRAPE STEP

Kathryn isn’t done yet! This New Years’ Day, a new “Let’s Sing Together” album will be released. The 20 songs on it corroborate with the Let’s Read Together series. She is also working to increase the spotlight on independent media. This year, although her inspirational song “Heroes” didn’t get enough votes to score a Grammy nomination, it did meet the qualifications to get on the first-round ballot. Kathryn isn’t daunted — she is already planning to try again next year.

“You could be discouraged, or you could say ‘hey, I can figure this out,’” she explained. “Don’t take no for the end answer — ever.”

For more information about Kathryn Cloward and her materials, visit kathrynthegrape.com or kathriyncloyd.com. Her book series are also available on Amazon and barnesandnoble.com.

—Freelance writer Joyell Nevins can be reached at joyellc@gmail.com. You can also follow her blog Small World. Big God at swbgblog.wordpress.com.

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Holiday cooking with local culinary authors
By Chelsea Harris

“It’s the season for family, friends, and food! This month we’re exploring cookbooks by chefs and foodies from here in San Diego.”

Skip the classic turkey dinner and host a family fiesta instead! Marcela Valladolid’s “Casa Marcela. Fresh Mexico” and “Mexican Made Easy” are both titles that will spice up your holiday repertoire and inspire new favorites. Her most recent title – “Fiestas: Tidbits, Margaritas & More” – was released in April of this year. Marcela lives in Chula Vista, when she isn’t busy being a Food Network star.

If fiestas aren’t really your style, have you ever looked through a pair of binoculars? Things look bigger, closer, and easier to see. Dr. Peter DeGraziano, OD says that same principle when he designs custom miniaturized binoculars, microscopes, and prismatic glasses to help people with decreased vision to see better. Dr. DeGraziano, OD explains, “My goal with these devices is to get people back to doing the things they enjoy.” In many cases these special glasses can be prescribed to help people read, watch TV, and sometimes even drive. We also work with cutting-edge electronic devices like InVision, and CCTV. To find out if you are a candidate for these services, call and discuss your case with the doctor at no cost. For more information and a free telephone consultation, call 619-488-1100 and visit us online at EyesHelpSanDiego.com.

Holiday cooking with local culinary authors
By Chelsea Harris

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Her work has been shown at the San Diego Museum of Art Festival of Fine Arts, the San Diego Hospice, Mission Trails Regional Park, and at the Foothills Gallery. She is a member of the Oil Painters of America, California Art Club, San Diego Museum of Art Artists Guild, and the Foothills Art Association.

Hayen’s work will be featured at the Foothills Gallery from Dec. 6-31. The gallery is free and open to the public Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Foothills Gallery at Porter Hall is located at 4910 Memorial Drive in La Mesa.

—Linda Michaels is editor of Footnotes, the monthly newsletter of the Foothills Art Association.
MacArthur Park workshop gathers input for master plan

By JEFF CLEMETSON | La Mesa Courier

Chris Langdon says he is “very invested” in the plan to overhaul and redevelop MacArthur Park. Not only is he a La Mesa resident, he is also a senior associate for the landscape architectural firm KTUA and the project manager for the MacArthur Park Master Plan update.

“We are committed to developing a better park and making use of the area vacated by the golf course,” he told a group of residents at a MacArthur Park Master Plan workshop held on Oct. 29 at the La Mesa Community Center.

The public workshop was held to gather input for and answer questions about the park plan. He also dispelled a few rumors such as housing being built in the park or the removal of the baseball field.

“Those things aren’t going to happen,” he assured the workshop attendees. “There is nowhere to move the baseball field and the park is dedicated parkland.”

The process to update the MacArthur Park master plan began in 2017 with an opportunities and constraints study (OCS) that was finished at the end of 2018. That study consisted of gathering public input on what people wanted to see developed in the park or the removal of the baseball field.

“Hopefully in the middle of next year.”

“Then we’ll start going over the two concepts and hopefully picking things out of each one that we really like and then use that information to synthesize it down to one preferred master plan concept for the park,” Langdon said, adding that the plan will then go for to City Council for approval, “hopefully in the middle of next year.”

“Some now based on the input we got from the opportunities and constraints study, and then the resources we’re providing here tonight, we really want to engage you to help us formulate what this master plan wants to start being,” Langdon said.

Workshop attendees were asked to consider various ideas for the park in three stations — one for the open park area, one for the pool area and one for the community center — by attaching stickers to their preferred amenities.

After that workshop, KTUA will use the public input to draft two master plans for MacArthur Park and release them to the public at a third workshop in early 2020 that will collect data on both plans.

“Then we’ll start going over the two concepts and hopefully picking things out of each one that we really like and then use that information to synthesize it down to one preferred master plan concept for the park,” Langdon said, adding that the plan will then go for to City Council for approval, “hopefully in the middle of next year.”

— Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdcnews.com.
directions of a multitude of programs and departments in the district.

Other objectives Neoul identified include raising the public profile of the district, completing the Proposition V-funded construction projects, and continuing the innovative work of the East County Education Alliance, a partnership forged between the college district, the Grossmont Union High School District and the Mountain Empire Unified School District to ensure a seamless educational path for the students of East County.

NEW TOOL TO HELP THOSE WITH CHRONIC MENTAL ILLNESS

The Board of Supervisors today added a new tool in the county’s expanding efforts to help those with chronic mental illness and substance abuse issues.

The county will launch a pilot program that will allow it to name a conservator to oversee treatment and services for those unable to care for themselves due to these crippling disorders. “Conservatorship can be a critical tool to keep some of our most vulnerable residents from falling through the cracks,” said Supervisor Dianne Jacob, board chairwoman. "Mental illness and substance abuse are huge concerns across our region and today’s action is our latest step to address them.”

Supervisor Nathan Fletcher recently joined Supervisor Jacob in calling for the county to go further. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed legislation to expand options for conservatorship.

“We will utilize every available tool to address the issues of behavioral health and homelessness, said Supervisor Nathan Fletcher. "With the Board’s approval today, the county can move to fully implement the conservatorship law to help those with the most severe behavioral health challenges. Ultimately, we want to build a regional, coordinated, integrated behavioral health system that prevents people from needing a conservator. Our success as a region should be judged on keeping people out of that situation, but in the interim we will utilize every option that can provide help to those most in need.”

Prevention and voluntary behavioral health interventions are always the preferred option, but some individuals could benefit from a court-ordered conservatorship, which includes treatment, wrap-around services, case management and housing. Eligible individuals must be diagnosed seriously mentally ill with a co-occurring substance use problem.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH CHARITABLE WORK?

Since I was very young, my mom would take my brother and me to do volunteer work. I recall volunteering for I Love Clean San Diego to keep the environment clean.

Ariana Montalto is a Grossmont High School student whose passion for helping others has led her to become a Latina leader in her community.

From a young age, Ariana demonstrated compassion towards others and has held multiple leadership roles in organizations she’s involved with, including being a member of the California’s International Day of the Girl Child and MANA de San Diego’s Hermanitas program. During her time with Hermanitas, she facilitated a mental health First Aid training from the National Council of Mental Health (NCMH) for 60 girls.

For all her continued efforts to make her community a better place, Montalto was recently selected to be a MANA de San Diego Scholarship recipient, which will go towards covering her expenses for her first year of college.

La Mesa Courier recently caught up with Montalto to find out what drives her passion to be a difference maker in her community.

DESCRIBE THE INTERNATIONAL WORK YOU DO WITH THE DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD.

It was around sophomore year when I came across a flyer about Human Trafficking. At that point I became aware of the plight of young girls who were recruited and sold into human trafficking.

I learned that UCSD was organizing an event “The International Day of the Girl Child” to empower young girls and to raise awareness about equitable treatment and human trafficking. So, I wanted to get involved and I contacted the UCSD organizer and asked if I could be in their planning committee.

I joined their committee—a group of seven girls—and we coordinated an event for about 200 young girls and 12 inspirational leaders who held high level professional and political positions. They spoke about the importance of equitable treatment for women including ending human trafficking and prostitution for young girls around the world.

WHAT IS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH MANA DE SAN DIEGO?

MANA de San Diego is a national Latina organization that empowers Latina women through education, leadership development and community service. MANA de San Diego has the Hermanitas Program for young Latina girls. Through this program young girls receive mentorship to attend college, develop leadership skills and provide community service.

Being part of this organization has been a big blessing in my life as I received mentorship and support. I improved my leadership skills, provided community service to help others, gained confidence in myself and made lifelong friends.

WHAT ADVICE OR ENCOURAGEMENT WOULD YOU GIVE TO A YOUNG PERSON WHO WANTS TO MAKE A CHANGE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

I would say get involved in your school activities or volunteer at one of the nonprofit agencies and never be afraid to speak up when you feel like your voice needs to be heard no matter how you fear a consequence or judgment.

—Reach editor Jeff Clemonson at jeff@sdbews.com.
use disorder and have eight or more 72-hour involuntary hold in the proceeding 12-month period. Additionally, the court must decide, at the recommendation from the behavioral health director, that the individual would not qualify for a related outpatient treatment program, or the program would be insufficient.

Existing county programs to help the mentally ill and addict ed include IHOT, or In-Home Outreach Teams, which offer outreach and assessment for those in crisis.

Earlier this year, the board moved to create 24/7 crisis stabilization centers and bolster clinical resources and other tools for those dealing with substance abuse and mental illness.

SANDEF LINKS METH, MENTAL ILLNESS

Adult arrestees who reported ever trying meth were significantly more likely to have received a mental health diagnosis, according to a new report released by the SANDAG Criminal Justice Research Division.

Findings revealed that 36% of adult arrestees who reported having tried meth also had suicidal thoughts, compared with 20% who had never tried meth.

The new SANDAG report, “Methamphetamine Use and Mental Health Issues Among the Arrestee Population,” found that nearly equal percentages of arrestees reported receiving a mental health diagnoses first or trying meth first – one did not precede the other in a predictable way.

The study also found significant differences between arrestees who reported ever trying meth and having a mental health diagnosis or staying overnight in a mental health facility.

Findings include:
• Three-quarters (75%) of this group tested positive for meth at the time of their current arrest, compared with 42% of all arrestees.
• Females represented a greater proportion of this group (42%) than they did of the other arrestee group (32%).
• This group was more likely to be homeless at the time of their arrest (58% versus 29% of other arrestees) and to report ever being homeless (86% versus 55%)
• This group was more likely to have prior arrests (92% versus 72%) and prior prison sentences (34% versus 24%).
• While arrestees were less likely to report living with children (14% versus 27%).

“We conducted a deeper dive on our data because we know from national surveys that substance use is more common among individuals with a mental health issue than those with out one,” said SANDAG Criminal Justice Research and Program Management Director Dr. Cynthia Burke. “As our community struggles to address the needs of individuals with these types of dual diagnosis issues, many of whom are also homeless, it is important that we work collaboratively to get people the help they need but may be unable to get for themselves due to their substance use or mental health issues.”

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, Page 19

Sudoku & Crossword puzzle answers from page 23

Learn more about MesaView Senior Assisted and Independent Living!

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Restaurant Review

FRANK SABATINI JR.

The produce that flows regularly into Garden Kitchen experiences no layovers along the way. It evades retail and wholesale establishments, arriving directly to the door by growers who operate within a 30-mile radius of the mostly outdoor restaurant.

In San Diego’s dining scene, that’s a rare thing.

“I’m shaking hands with farmers who still have dirt in their fingernails when they deliver here,” said chef-owner Coral Strong, who opened the establishment in 2015 under a strict farm-to-table credo.

In culinary circles, she’s what you call a die-hard locovore, resorting to only seasonal, locally grown ingredients — even right down to the marigold greens she uses to give certain dishes their bewitchingly herbaceous flavor. Those originate from Wild Willows Farm in South Bay.

The restaurant operates from a converted house in Rolando. With exotic flowers blooming in ever-changing rooms in the back that serves as the wine lounge, seating is spread throughout a few sections of the patio, which is framed in part by lattice, and was recently “canvass wrapped” for weather protection.

Live greyhounds hanging about in combination with fresh flowers perched on every table lend an unexpected charm in this otherwise non-script locale. A certain elegance descends on the space post-sunset amid the embracing glow of table candles and evenly distributed string lights.

Color the moment with a glass of sangria, made in-house with a red blend from Temecula’s South Coast Winery, plus Champagne, cinnamon, cloves and “some secret,” at which point you might feel transported to a cozy backyard gathering in rural Spain. Strong buys her produce from eight local farms such as Wild Willows, Agua Dulce, Stehly, and D’Acquisto. The latter happened to be delivering eggplant and zucchini late in the afternoon on the day I visited.

Hericot vert salad

Meatballs over linguine

“I am now,” she said.

At each dinner, customers can choose from a menu comprising three appetizers, two salads, one or two soups, five or six entrees, and three desserts.

What’s here today is most certainly gone tomorrow.

I progressed to lentil-pork soup — one of the most loving, embracing potages I’ve had in ages. Carrots, beet greens, Italian herbs and tender cubes of the meat washed through the sedimenting pork broth, which was also accented by Parmesan cheese. Strong relies on her keen intuition for cooking in devising the menus.

“I also like entertaining and customer service, so that led me to where I am now,” she said.

As a past bartender and one of the most loving, embracing potages I’ve had in ages. Carrots, beet greens, Italian herbs and tender cubes of the meat washed through the sedimenting pork broth, which was also accented by Parmesan cheese. Strong relies on her keen intuition for cooking in devising the menus.

“I also like entertaining and customer service, so that led me to where I am now,” she said.

Desserts that day were almond-crusted dark-chocolate tart with mint; fall fruit custard with vanilla bean pastry cream. Asian pear and peach puree; and brioché bread pudding with warm chocolate sauce. All of them were out of the question given the substantial portions of the three courses I scarfed down with wild abandon.

Which brings me to a revelation I missed by waiting this long to finally visit Garden Kitchen in the four years it’s been in operation.

The farm-to-table concept here is the real deal — basically what so many other restaurants either strive to achieve or sadly lie about — the latter of which Strong cites with clipped tones of criticism.

Strong buys her produce from eight local farms such as Wild Willows, Agua Dulce, Stehly, and D’Acquisto. The latter happened to be delivering eggplant and zucchini late in the afternoon on the day I visited.

Just a few short minutes later, the meatballs came to the rescue. They added undeniable sweetness to a memorable salad of blanched green beans, fresh arugula and terrific tarragon dressing. Strong can effectively trace every ingredient you put into your mouth to her esteemed farms. You need only ask.

The menu changes daily and is posted on the website by noon on the days of operation (Tuesday through Saturday).

As a past bartender and one of the most loving, embracing potages I’ve had in ages. Carrots, beet greens, Italian herbs and tender cubes of the meat washed through the sedimenting pork broth, which was also accented by Parmesan cheese. Strong relies on her keen intuition for cooking in devising the menus.

“I also like entertaining and customer service, so that led me to where I am now,” she said.

Desserts that day were almond-crusted dark-chocolate tart with mint; fall fruit custard with vanilla bean pastry cream. Asian pear and peach puree; and brioché bread pudding with warm chocolate sauce. All of them were out of the question given the substantial portions of the three courses I scarfed down with wild abandon.

Which brings me to a revelation I missed by waiting this long to finally visit Garden Kitchen in the four years it’s been in operation.

The farm-to-table concept here is the real deal — basically what so many other restaurants either strive to achieve or sadly lie about — the latter of which Strong cites with clipped tones of criticism.

“Can you tell me about the wine lounge?”

“Sure,” she said.

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Succulent Mexican shrimp, ready-to-bake crab cakes, taquitos & cocktail by the pint or quart, and MORE to make your next gameday party a legend!

All available at our friendly retail counter.

Owner Coral Strong (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

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Check out our new Sunday Brunch menu on our website! 619-463-0368 • 9530 Murray Drive, 91942• ANTHONYSFISHGROTTO.COM

SAUSAGE, CHEESE AND CROISSANT BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

By JULIE WHITE

Perfect for a weekend breakfast, Thanksgiving guest brunch or for an unusual dinner served with a small salad. Pretty delicious!

INGREDIENTS:

• 1 1/4 cups of Parmesan cheese
• 4 green onions thinly sliced
• Pinch of salt
• 1 1/2 lbs. of ground turkey or pork sausage
• 1 package of mini croissants (about 24) torn apart (available at Vons and Sprouts)
• 3 cups milk
• 6 large eggs beaten
• 1 cup half and half
• 2 cups of grated Gruyere cheese (other cheese can be used but Gruyere gives a nice, nutty taste)

DIRECTIONS:

Cook the sausage until done and a bit browned. In a buttered 13-by-9-inch baking dish, toss the sausage, cheese, onions, salt and croissant rolls. Mix the milk, half and half, eggs, and Gruyere cheese. Pour milk mixture over the ingredients in baking dish. Cover and put in fridge for an hour so that the bread can absorb the milk mixture. You can sprinkle a little cheese on top right before baking. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

“Autumn — sweaters, pumpkin spice and everything nice!”

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Nov. 22 – Dec. 19, 2019
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Sausage, Cheese and Croissant Breakfast Casserole

What’s Cooking with Julie

Photo courtesy Julie White

Gameday Seafood Platter Headquarters!

Succulent Mexican shrimp, ready-to-bake crab cakes, taquitos & cocktail by the pint or quart, and more to make your next gameday party a legend! All available at our friendly retail counter.

Check out our new Sunday Brunch menu on our website!
One of the most beloved traditions in Grossmont High School’s history is the acclaimed Christmas Pageant, which was presented by Grossmont High School staff and students as an annual gift to the community from 1926-1988.

We have recently completed a 270-page history of the Christmas Pageant. The purpose of the book is to capture the Christmas Pageant through photographs, personal memories, newspaper articles, pageant programs, choir albums, and more. The book is predominately a pictorial history of the Christmas Pageant at GHS from 1926-1988 and includes all of the photographs from the El Recuerdos, Grossmont High School’s yearbooks. Over its 63-year history, the pageant maintained its excellence due to the years of dedication of Dorothy Cooke Smith, among others. Under Donahue, among others. Under director, reflects, “The pageant was said to be GHS’s gift to the community. And that it was: drama students and crews, students cast perhaps for their first drama experience, the orchestra, the choir, to say nothing of faculty directors who coached their differing charges to near perfection, and the overall pageant director who fondly dreamed of an ongoing flow to the drama — no black spots — and no slow curtains! When it succeeded, as it most frequently did, the pageant exemplified the value of collaborative work to produce great art.”

The final scenes are the Nativity scenes showing the shepherds and the wise men following the star to the stables to worship Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus, while a student reads scripture from the King James Bible and the Red Robe Choir sings various carols. The “Hallelujah Chorus,” sung by the choir, accompanied by the orchestra or an organist, provides a dramatic finish.

Performances began at 8 p.m. except during WWII when they started at 6:30 p.m. to allow everyone time to return home before nighttime blackout rules took effect.

“The Christmas Pageant’ was the result of the vision of the early pioneer drama and music teachers: Eva McCarthy Quicksall, Dorothy Cooke Smith, and Merle Donahue, among others. Under their leadership, these early productions inspired students, staff, and the community. As Dani Barton, 1966-1977 reader coach and 1976 and 1979 director, reflects, “The pageant was given to packed houses. It was first performed in the auditorium in the north wing of the original school, now known as “The Castle.” Beginning in 1937 until its end in 1988, the Christmas pageants were presented in the auditorium-gymnasium, now known as the Old Gym, which allowed for larger audiences.

Free tickets for each night were issued beforehand to guarantee seats. Due to the pageant’s popularity, the number of performances grew from one to two in the 1930s to three in the 1950s and then four in the 1960s and 1970s, shown to thousands of people each year. Performances began at 8 p.m.

Over its 63-year history, the pageant maintained its excellence due to the years of dedication of hundreds of GHS staff, thousands of students, and, of course, community members whose often anonymous contributions included sewing and mending costumes, painting sets, applying makeup, distributing tickets, and collecting them at the door, directing traffic, decorating the auditorium, and more.

In the 1920s, the early “pageants” were more Christmas programs as directors experimented with various scenes. By the end of the 1930s, the pageant was solidified in its scenes and music.

The first scene of an old English Christmas, the Feast Scene, complete with lords, ladies, ballerinas, jesters, merrymakers, and more. The second scene, the Madonna Scene, was what many people regard as the most moving, which begins with candle bearers walking toward the stage with closed curtains. As they reach the stage, the curtains fly open to reveal the Madonna, standing motionless for three minutes. The final scenes are the Nativity scenes showing the shepherds and the wise men following the star to the stables to worship Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus, while a student reads scripture from the King James Bible and the Red Robe Choir sings various carols.
While the San Diego weather belies the fact that it is autumn, we can measure the seasons in Southern California using high school sports! As we approach the end of the fall sports season, Helix is celebrating the success of many of our student athletes—many of the teams and individual athletes had outstanding seasons, and some are still competing for more!

- The girls volleyball team was the League Champion and advanced to the CIF Division III Semifinals.
- Girls golf team member Jamie Lau (senior) advanced to the CIF Championships on Nov. 23 at Morley Field.
- The field hockey team was the League Champion and advanced to the CIF Division II quarterfinals.
- The boys water polo team was the League Champion and advanced to the CIF DII Playoffs.
- The football team was the League Champion and will play in the Open Division Championship on Nov. 23 at southwestern College.
- The cross-country team will run in the CIF Championships on Nov. 23 at Morley Field.

And it’s not just teams on courts, fields, and pools that are having success. The speech and debate team took second place in the county at their second league tournament of the year. The Highlander band qualified for the State Championships in their division.

And finally, English teacher Angelique Gianas has built a solid esports foundation through an after-school program on the Helix campus, and led the team to a second-place national competition in her first year competing. This success is just part of what earned her a spot as a North America Scholastic Esports Federation (NASEF) scholarship fellow. Gianas is one of just 25 teachers chosen from across North America to participate in this program. NASEF works to interweave science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) with the world of team-based competitive video gaming, known as esports. NASEF's new fellows program will provide scholastic-based tools, resources and instructional coaching for educators.

After-school snacks for all

In partnership with the Grossmont Union High School District, Helix has introduced an after-school food program. With funding provided through a federal grant, all students will have access to snacks or light meals after school each day. This program will provide a great service for our students, as many students stay on campus after school for sports practices, performance rehearsals, study groups, and academic support.

More news about food

The Helix foods classes are showing their work on Instagram! If you’d like to see what delicious dishes they are creating, follow them @helixfoodie!

Events calendar

Helix Instrumental Music presents Holiday Snow Jams, featuring The Helix Bagpipe Band, concert band, orchestra, and wind symphony, Dec. 10 and 11, 7 p.m., in the Helix Mainstage Theater. Tickets are $10 and can be purchased at helixinstrumental.org (limited number available at the door).

Helix Vocal Music presents Highland Holidays, Dec. 16 and 17, 7 p.m., in the Helix Mainstage Theater. Tickets are $10 and can be purchased at helixinstrumental.org (limited number available at the door).

Helix has built a solid esports foundation through an after-school program on the Helix campus

○ Key Club – Dec. 4, 4-9 p.m.; Dec. 8, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Dec. 18, 4-9 p.m.
○ Tap Club – Dec. 5, 4-9 p.m.; Dec. 12, 4-9 p.m.; Dec. 24, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

The Helix Aquatics program will hold its sixth annual Crab Feed Fundraiser on Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020, at 6 p.m., at the Crystal Palace, 3991 54th St. in San Diego. Come join us for an evening of fun, food, and fundraising! We’d love to have you participate and support the boys and girls swim teams, and boys and girls water polo teams. For more information, visit bit.ly/20uw54j. Please note this is a 21+ event!

---Jennifer Osborn writes on behalf of Helix Charter High School.

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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.

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Grossmont High’s Calimlim, Smith net great season on the courts

By DAVE THOMAS | La Mesa Courier

For a pair of Grossmont High girls tennis players, 2019 has been a year to remember.

The doubles duo of junior Helaena Calimlim and freshman Ashley Smith recorded a fantastic season for head coach Hillary Park.

In post-season action this month, the duo lost in a hard-fought match against a seeded La Jolla team (6-1, 4-6, 12-10) at the CIF Tournament. The last score was a tiebreaker in lieu of a third set. According to Park, “Ashley and Helaena played a great second set by attacking the net and staying calm and focused.”

Despite the loss at CIFs, the pair has much to be happy about this fall.

The two finished the season with a record of 18-11.

They did not play as a team to get the whole season as Park started Calimlim off in singles, then with another teammate in doubles. Ashley started the season at the No. 3 spot in doubles, playing with a first-year varsity player.

“After about three weeks of matches, my assistant and I saw how consistently aggressive Ashley was at the net and sought to find her a stronger partner,” Park commented. “Helaena was our pick and the first time we put them together they swept, dropping only three games.”

According to Park, the duo is successful due to their aggression at net.

“Ashley is always looking to pick off a ball at net while Helaena sets her up in the back court with consistent ground strokes,” Park continued. “Helaena is tough at net as well and will come in on a short ball to attack the net. They both have good hands and are quick. Ashley has two hands on both sides of her ground strokes, backhand and forehand, giving her a lot of power. They have always met tough competition head on and with no fear. They are both excellent competitors: they display good sportsmanship and are fair.”

At the team’s awards banquet on Nov. 13, Smith was awarded Rookie of the Year for the squad. Both girls were named to second team all-league for the Hills League.

SEE TENNIS SPORTS, Page 23

La Mesa Courier recently caught up with Lau for an email interview.

HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED GOLFDING AND WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN THE SPORT?

I was about 4 years old when I first started golfing, but I didn’t really start enjoying it until I was 11. Initially, I only played golf because my dad wanted me to, but I became much more interested in it later when I became an active member of Pro Kids|The First Tee of San Diego. I started liking it a lot more because of the people I met during my time spent at Pro Kids, who made the experience much more enjoyable.

WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN LIKE OVER THE YEARS GOLFING AT HELIX?

My experience golfing at Helix has been good, especially this last golf season, which I felt was by far the most fun. The coaches genuinely care about helping us improve and I really enjoy spending time with the girls on the team.

COMING INTO YOUR FINAL SEASON, HAVE YOU ACHIEVED THE GOALS YOU WANTED BOTH AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM?

I definitely achieved my individual goals, and the team went above and beyond my expectations. Personally, winning the Louise Parks Memorial-Grossmont Hills League Match Play was a goal, as was winning the Grossmont Conference Match Play. I also wanted to make the cut to CIF, which I did. As for the team, we qualified for a play-in to CIF, which our school has not done for 12 years. I didn’t think we’d get so far and I am so proud of the team for working hard enough to achieve that.

Lau made the cut and more for Helix High golf team

By DAVE THOMAS | La Mesa Courier

To say 2019 was a banner season for Helix High golfer Jamie Lau would likely be an understatement.

Lau turned in a great performance and then some for the girls golf team.

The senior defeated the No. 1 seed from Steele Canyon High to win the 2019 Louise Parks Memorial-Grossmont Hills League Match Play Tournament.

According to Helix High head girls golf coach Frank Theroux, Lau has been a vital member of the program for four years.

“She has set a standard for our program that our future players should aspire to and is a big reason our program has earned the respect of other girls golf programs,” Theroux commented. “Jamie has served as our team captain, a role she took very seriously. Her ability to mentor our younger players, on and off the course, has hopefully inspired them to assume the same leadership skills which Jamie has exhibited.”

Lau earned All-League honors and represented Helix in the CIF Individual Tournament all four years. According to Theroux, Lau’s achievements rank her in the top five of all players in the history of Helix girls golf.
Sunday, Nov. 24
Mother Goose Parade
El Cajon’s annual pre-Thanksgiving parade will take place this year on Saturday, Nov. 24, with the parade running 1-4 p.m. and will start at the intersection of Main and Street and Madison Avenue. Free event. Visit mothergooseparade.org for information on parking and a list of floats participating.

Friday, Nov. 29
Editor’s Pick
‘A Christmas Past’ – Through Dec. 15
Lampillghters Community Theatre presents “A Christmas Past” featuring two one-act plays. “The Long Christmas Dinner” showcases the lives of the Bayard family over nine generations. In this funny and poignant one-act play, characters age from children to seniors in one continuous ribbon. The second play, “A Child’s Christmas in Wales,” is a dramatization of Dylan Thomas’ wonderfu, nostalgic look at mem- ories of his childhood. Thursdays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. at Lampillghters Community Theatre, 5915 Seventh Drive. Cost is $23 adult; $20 for seniors and active military. Tickets and information available at lampillghterslamesa.com.

Saturday, Nov. 30
Duke Windsor: ‘Radiance’
Reception for La Mesa artist Duke Windsor who will be show- ing his solo exhibit “Radiance,” Nov. 1 through March 1 at the Sparks Gallery in San Diego’s historic Gaslamp Quarter. Re- ception will be held 6-9 p.m. at Sparks, 530 Sixth Ave., San Di- ego. ‘Radiance’ will exhibit illumi- nated contemporary urban and citiescapes, contemporary still- life series and sculpture. Wind- sor’s urbanscapes have been ex- hibited and received awards at juried exhibitions and are held in many private collections through- out the U.S. and Europe. He has produced numerous com- missions and military historical works. Windsor works in a vari- ety of mediums including pastel, oil, acrylic, watercolor, linocut, silkscreen, mobiles, black prints, and plaster and concrete casted sculptures. For more information, visit dukewindor.net.

Wednesday, Dec. 4
Military Families Toy Drive & Party
Join the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce and assist military families and children living in La Mesa military housing. Cele- brate the strength of our com- munity as the chamber collects toys for these children and their families that live in La Mesa at one of the many locations on base 7 p.m. at BJ’s Restaurant and Brewhouse, 5500 Grossmont Center Drive. Cost is free to chamber members who bring a new, unopened toy; $10 advan- tage tickets for guests and nonmembers who bring a toy; and $20 for nonmembers at the door who bring a toy. Toys will also be collected prior to the event at 8080 La Mesa Blvd. #212 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. RSVP to rsvp@lamescham- ber.com or call 619-465- 7700 ext. 2.

Wednesday, Dec. 4
Evenson Blue Christmas Service
Christmas tough this year? Clouded by loss and pain? Are you wondering how you’ll make it through? The holiday season focuses on the upbeat, the cel- ebratory. But it can evoke grief as well. This “Blue Christmas” service acknowledges the diffi- culties and sadness people may experience and offers a time of peaceful, prayerful, and personal com- fort of drawing close to God, to those in crisis. At The Table: United Church of Christ of La Mesa, 5940 Keiton Ave., La Me- sa. All are welcome. Visit table-ucc.com for more information.

Thursday, Dec. 5
Joni’s Jukebox Holiday Revue
Oasis presents a holiday perfor- mance featuring Joni and The Jeanies, The Malt Shop Girls, “Elsie,” and more. You’ll be en- tertained with holiday music and with ‘60s and ‘70s pop hits. The show includes singers and dancers, with professionally

* * *

Friday, Dec. 13
Editor’s Pick
Holiday in the Village Through Dec. 14
The La Mesa Village Association’s Holiday in the Vil- lage returns to downtown La Mesa. This free, fan- cy-friendy event will fea- ture a wonderland of festive holiday music and dance, food, children’s activities, shopping and more. Friday, Dec. 13, 4-9 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 14, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. at the downtown Vil- lage. Visit lamesavillage-association.org for more information.

Saturday, Dec. 14
Holiday Craft Fair
Mount Miguel High School Alumni Foundation will host a craft fair featuring holiday-inspired gifts. 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. in the Mt. Miguel High School Multi-cultural Events Center, 8585 Blossom Lane, Spring Valley. Free admission. For more information, call Jo- Anne Burke at 619-468-7350.

Monday, Dec. 16
‘A World of Harmonies’
The California Note Catchers, a women’s a cappella harmo- ny chorus, and Music Masters, a men’s a cappella chorus, present an evening of holiday harmonies featuring four-part barbershop classics, tradition- al and international holiday mu- sic. 7:30 p.m. at La Mesa First United Methodist Church, 4690 Palm Ave. Free admission, but donations are appreciated.

Tuesday, Dec. 17
SD Concert Band: Holiday Concert
The San Diego Concert Band consists of more than 100 mem- bers from all walks of life who come together to play symphonic music under the direction of Roy Anthony Jr. The Holiday Concert will feature classics for the whole family to enjoy. 7:30 p.m. at Joan B. Kroc Theatre, 6611 University Ave., San Di- ego. Tickets run $20 for adults; $15 for seniors, students and active military; free for children under 6. Visit sandiegoconcert- band.com.

Wednesday, Dec. 25
Happy Hanukkah!

Thursday, Dec. 26
Happy Kwanzaa!
Tennis sports
CONTINUED FROM Page 20

La Mesa Courier recently caught up with the duo for an email interview.

HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU BEGAN PLAYING TENNIS AND WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN LIKE PLAYING FOR GROSSMONT HIGH?

Calimlim: I began playing tennis when I was 12 years old, the beginning of my seventh grade year. My tennis experience at Grossmont High has been a fun and interesting experience. Each year, I have learned new skills, and I continue to improve. Every year, I have made new friends and learned new tennis skills that I use in my matches.

Smith: I began playing tennis at 8 years old. I have continued playing for a while and my time at Grossmont has only improved my tennis skills. Each year I have learned new skills and played with different opponents. I continue to improve as a player and enjoy the process of learning new skills.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE KEYS TO SUCCESS AS A DOUBLES TEAM?

Calimlim: I think the main key to success as a doubles team is to have good communication. Communication is key to success as a doubles team because it allows us to talk about what is happening on the court and adjust our strategies accordingly. In addition, we must develop a strong team dynamic and work together to achieve our goals.

Smith: As one of the younger players on the team, I feel like it is important to develop a strong team dynamic and work together with my teammates to achieve our goals. By working together, we can learn from each other and develop a strong bond on the court.

AS ONE OF THE YOUNGER GIRLS ON THE TEAM, HOW HAVE THE OLDER MEMBERS HELPED YOU OUT THIS SEASON?

Smith: As one of the younger players on the team, I feel like it is important to develop a strong team dynamic and work together with my teammates to achieve our goals. By working together, we can learn from each other and develop a strong bond on the court.

As the season has gone on, I have been able to learn a lot from my older teammates and gain valuable experience. They have been a great support system for me, and I have been able to improve my skills as a player. In addition, they have been a great source of motivation and encouragement, helping me to stay focused and committed to my goals.

Calimlim: I think that the older girls have been a key factor in our success as a doubles team. They have been able to provide valuable advice and guidance throughout the season, and I have been able to learn from their experiences. In addition, they have been a great source of motivation and encouragement, helping me to stay focused and committed to my goals.

AS ONE OF THE OLDER GIRLS ON THE TEAM, HOW WOULD YOU HELPED ASHLEY AND SOME OF THE YOUNGER PLAYERS?

Calimlim: I think that the older girls have been a key factor in our success as a doubles team. They have been able to provide valuable advice and guidance throughout the season, and I have been able to learn from their experiences. In addition, they have been a great source of motivation and encouragement, helping me to stay focused and committed to my goals.

Smith: As one of the older players on the team, I feel like it is important to be a good role model for the younger players. By providing guidance and advice, I hope to help them improve their skills and become better players. In addition, I hope to encourage them to stay committed to their goals and work hard to achieve success.

AS ONE OF THE YOUNGER GIRLS ON THE TEAM, HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR GAME AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER?

Smith: As one of the younger players on the team, I feel like it is important to learn from each other and develop a strong team dynamic. By working together, we can all improve our skills and become better players. In addition, I hope to encourage my teammates to stay committed to their goals and work hard to achieve success.

Calimlim: I think that the key to success as a doubles team is to have good communication. Communication is key to success as a doubles team because it allows us to talk about what is happening on the court and adjust our strategies accordingly. In addition, we must develop a strong team dynamic and work together to achieve our goals.

As the season has gone on, I have been able to learn a lot from my older teammates and gain valuable experience. They have been a great support system for me, and I have been able to improve my skills as a player. In addition, they have been a great source of motivation and encouragement, helping me to stay focused and committed to my goals.

Dave Thomas is a San Diego-based sports writer. Reach him at heo@tomasas@yahoo.com.
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