Annual homeless count released

By Dave Schwab

The annual 2019 Point-in-Time Count of the region’s homeless population suggests their total number may be shrinking, though some news sources and others who actually counted heads doubt the total accuracy of figures released.

The Point-in-Time Count, better known as WeAllCount, was begun in the early morning hours of Friday, Jan. 25, 2019. This year’s data determined that, at the very minimum, there are 8,102 homeless San Diegans living on public streets or in shelters, on any given night in San Diego County. Those numbers are down from last year’s 8,576 estimate.

The Point-in-Time Count also found that the number of unsheltered homeless individuals in San Diego County was 3,626, and the number of homeless individuals in shelters was 4,476. Of the total homeless population, 10% are veterans, 36% reported having a physical disability, 12% of the total population are under age 24, and 3% are families with at least one child.

This year’s count was performed by more than 1,500 volunteers and outreach workers across the region. They focused on engaging the homeless population directly. One-on-one conversations guided by informal questions were used by volunteers wherever homeless individuals were encountered. Volunteers interviewed homeless people as they contacted them, instead of conducting surveys after the fact.

Philip Ballew was one of the volunteers who conducted interviews in the Mission Valley area. “We started the event at 6:30 a.m. I felt this was not ideal because all of the homeless people had woken up and gone out to start their day by then,” Ballew said. “The event was handled well though by the leaders of the group. The time spent took about three hours. I felt we could see Homeless count, pg 7

Music fest seizes Adams Avenue

By Joyell Nevins

Music spilled out onto the streets on Saturday, April 27, as Adams Avenue Unplugged, sponsored by the Adams Avenue Business Association, kicked off its seventh musical walk-about. Nearly 10,000 music fans came out to hear 80 different artists sporting steel drums, cellos, guitars, trumpets, and even harmonicas. The musicians performed in 24 different venues up and down Adams Avenue from Kensington to University Heights.

“It is such a pleasure to play here,” singer-guitarist Nina Francis said, who was performing with her band, The Three Amigos.

Guatemalan singer-songwriter Gaby Moreno’s headlining performance held in Normal Heights United Methodist Church (Photo courtesy Adams Avenue Business Association)

BikeSD board president Nicole Burgess on her cargo bike leads the parade of young riders down 30th Street at San Diego’s first “people-protected bike lane.” (Photo by Brian Hoffman)

BikeSD board president Nicole Burgess on her cargo bike leads the parade of young riders down 30th Street at San Diego’s first “people-protected bike lane.” (Photo by Brian Hoffman)

Bike SD board president Nicole Burgess on her cargo bike leads the parade of young riders down 30th Street at San Diego’s first “people-protected bike lane.” (Photo by Brian Hoffman)
“What a great experience we had working with the McT Real Estate Group to sell our North Park home. From the very beginning, Mary and Z made the home selling process extremely easy. They contacted us as soon as any new information came up and always kept us in the loop about everything that was happening. We were never left feeling like we were unsure or uninformed throughout the entire process. Their knowledge of the central San Diego market is exceptional. They know what sells and how to set the best and highest price that the market will sustain.

Mary and Z are true professionals. They are extraordinarily courteous. They responded to any questions or concerns I had quickly and thoughtfully. When we needed a repairman or contractor to get ready to go on the market, their network of contacts made getting the work done fast, affordable and worry-free. They even made a special trip to let our cat out when we couldn’t make it home on an exceptionally hot summer day. Incredible service! We highly recommend the McT Real Estate Group.”

– Seth C
Uptown News Editor Kendra Sutton spoke to BuzzFeed News reporter Ema O’Connor about her new investigative article “Inside The San Diego Church Where ICE And Border Patrol Bring Pregnant Women.” That church, Christ Ministry Center (CMC), is located in Normal Heights and is being forced to close its overnight shelter in May after it became overcrowded and a fire risk. CMC was the only long-term shelter for asylum seekers in San Diego and border agents often dropped off pregnant women and young families to the shelter. This also follows the end of the Safe Release program last fall, which stopped federal funds helping asylum seekers get to their final destination, which could be the home of a family or friend to stay with while they wait for court dates or who had tenancy with young children who dy. CMC filled a unique gap of Homeland Security custody, which can be unhealthy and result in run-ins with the law. Because of this, I did not learn much more about the treatment of women in immigration detention. However, since my reporting on this last summer, there have been many reports about record numbers of miscarriages happening in detention and women being detained in their third trimester, which is against ICE policy in most circumstances. However, some of the women I spoke to this time did complain about not having much to eat in CBP detention, and one woman told me about judgmental and invasive questions a CBP officer asked her during processing. She said he asked her questions like, “Why did you risk your child’s life to come here? Does your kid actually have a father?” She said she told him she was pregnant and her husband (her child’s father) accompanied her to the border but could not cross with her. I suppose if this article shed light on anything, it was the same thing my prior reports have shown: contrary to (former Secretary of Homeland Security) Kirstjen Nielsen’s claims, pregnant women are likely better off out of detention than in detention. But that nonprofit organization (NGO) to help them interpret the documents, they could not violating their orders without realizing it.

KS: You previously reported on women having miscarriages in immigration detention, partially because of the harsh conditions and lack of care they experienced in detention. This came in March after President Trump ended a policy blocking the detention of pregnant women. Your investigation showed CMC actively worked to help shelter pregnant women and ensure they had access to a safe delivery. How did this new report shed light on your previous work?

EO: Most of the women I talked to for this article were not detained by ICE and were detained by CBP for only a few days. Most of them were traveling with children and San Diego does not have family detention centers, so they do not hold parents with children in detention. Because of this, I did not learn much more about the treatment of women in immigration detention. However, since my reporting on this last summer, there have been many reports about record numbers of miscarriages happening in detention and women being detained in their third trimester, which is against ICE policy in most circumstances. However, some of the women I spoke to this time did complain about not having much to eat in CBP detention, and one woman told me about judgmental and invasive questions a CBP officer asked her during processing. She said he asked her questions like, “Why did you risk your child’s life to come here? Does your kid actually have a father?” She said she told him she was pregnant and her husband (her child’s father) accompanied her to the border but could not cross with her. I suppose if this article shed light on anything, it was the same thing my prior reports have shown: contrary to (former Secretary of Homeland Security) Kirstjen Nielsen’s claims, pregnant women are likely better off out of detention than in detention. But that

KS: You spoke to several asylum-seekers at the shelter during your time in Normal Heights. Which of their stories most stuck with you after you returned to Washington D.C.? Can you share it with us?

EO: I think the stories of all of the Haitian women I spoke to were striking, and ones I hadn’t heard before. There are thousands of Haitian immigrants crossing the border, but in the press, you often only hear about those from Central and South America. These women’s lives
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The Plaza de Panama Project Is Officially Dead

Qualcomm cofounder Irwin Jacobs, who has for years championed a plan to overhaul the park’s central mesa, said that the Plaza de Panama Committee notified the city on Thursday that it is ending its public-private agreement to help fund the project.

By Lisa Halverstadt

For decades, a mostly forgotten corner of Balboa Park known as Inspiration Point has been one of the park’s least inspiring destinations. Now city officials are turning to the area — currently home to hundreds of parking spaces, a storage depot and a dried-up fountain — as a potential moneymaker.

“The city is seeking proposals that serve the best interest of the public while maximizing the economic viability of the property and ensuring a sustainable revenue source to the park,” city Park and Recreation Department spokesman Tim Graham wrote in an email.

The call for proposals is a response to the park’s long-running funding woes.

Balboa Park advocates have long agreed that the park needs a sustainable source of cash for infrastructure repairs and park maintenance.

Some activists and city bureaucrats have eyed Mission Bay Park’s funding model, which has helped bankroll a planned $40 million makeover.

Hotel and commercial leases in Mission Bay Park generate tens of millions of dollars annually. Most Balboa Park institutions, on the other hand, pay little to no rent despite the park’s lengthy list of needs and repairs.

Now the city is looking to see what prospectors envision for an area of Balboa Park that falls under the San Diego airport’s flight path and includes a parking lot, activity center, a tract and the Veterans Museum at Balboa Park, which operates out of the former Naval Hospital Chapel site.

Losses known are the former hospital building east of the museum, which has been converted into a space for Park and Recreation employees or the picturesque walkways and fountains around it that are now surrounded by buildings.

Park and Recreation Department vehicles, park storage and trees largely dominate the rest of the space — save for the empty fountain steps from the city’s dirt parking lot.

The request for proposals focuses on the latter areas, plus the portion of the Inspiration Point parking lot closest to downtown.

City officials see the process as an opportunity to breathe new life into Balboa Park and the community is going to play a key role with stakeholder representation on the (request for proposal) selection committee,” said Christina Chadwick, a spokeswoman for Mayor Kevin Faulconer, in a statement. “The city looks forward to working closely with the community and Balboa Park organizations to invest in Inspiration Point and ensure the park remains an iconic destination for generations to come.”

Yet a city parks official’s announcement at a Balboa Park Committee meeting earlier this month that the city would explore Inspiration Point’s redevelopment possibilities caught even park insiders off guard.

A few activists quickly seized on the likely conflict between the Balboa Park master plan’s vision for the space and the expected proposals to revitalize the area.

The 1989 document called for the former storage area and southmost parking lot to be “re-turned to open parkland” and for the historic buildings and outdoor areas to be restored and maintained.

Any change that would require City Council approval.

Longtime Mission Bay and Balboa Park advocate Judith Swink and Mike Kelly, president of the Balboa Park Committee of 100, say they fear what could come next for Inspiration Point.

“I disagree with giving away what should be free and open parkland that there’s an increasing need for as populations grow,” Swink said.

Kelly said he’s particularly concerned about the possibility of a hotel.

He pointed to decades-long frustrations about San Diego High School’s failure to move out of the park as evidence of the challenges the city has had forcing tenants out once they settle.

San Diego High opened long before Balboa Park became a tourist magnet and park activists for years pushed for the school to relocate once the school district’s lease for the property expired in 2024.

Then a successful 2016 ballot measure all but ensured San Diego High will remain in the park.

“It’s got the potential for commercial business moves into Inspiration Point, it’s likely to become a permanent fixture too,” Kelly said.

“I really want to see the details,” said Kelly.

Others said they welcomed the city’s attempt to make the most of an undersized area of the park.

“If it could be done in a way that is really compatible with Balboa Park, and it can create a permanent revenue stream, it would be a phenomenal idea,” said Tomas Herrera Mishler, who leads the Balboa Park Conservancy.

Those tied to the park’s institutions are already worried any redevelopment efforts might affect parking availability.

Other park insiders note that what could easily become a permanent fixture too.

Balboa Park Committee Chair Katherine Johnston, a former City Council member, said she expects concerns about parking availability. She welcomes story tips and questions. Contact her directly at lisa@vosd.org or (619) 325-0528.

“Is there’s such an interest in Balboa Park that I think whatever moves forward will be something that makes sense for the park and protects the economic vitality of the park and protects the iconic nature of the park,” Johnston said.

— Lisa Halverstadt writes about San Diego city and county governments. She welcomes story tips and questions. Contact her directly at lisa@vosd.org or (619) 325-0528.

Editor's note: this story first appeared in Voice of San Diego on April 18. To read the original story, visit bit.ly/2ZMeuy4.
The idea is Comic-Con has been going to remodel the space and the planned museum previewed what can be done in exhibit excited him because it’s a little taste of what it’s going to be once it opens.

Smith explained that the “EverQuest” event fits right into his vision for the museum, which also includes plans to offer later evening hours and regularly host events year-round for the community (contrary to many museums, which only occasionally extend hours and host events sporadically).

“There’s lots of little pieces that we plan to put in the museum in here now... arts a really big part of popular culture and the world of Comic-Con. We’ve got original art so people can see the talent in our community. We’ve got history — the artifacts that tell the story of how ‘EverQuest’ came about. We’ve got fan art — so participation,” Smith said. “We’ve got a little bit of fun in the tavern there. A little bit of rule-breaking. I don’t want this to be a stuffy traditional museum.”

One of the main ways he sees the future Comic-Con Museum being different than other groups is that it will hopefully build a sense of community and bonds of friendship around a shared passion for something. He started a couple at the exhibit actually met and later got married through their interactions while playing “EverQuest.” Comic-Con spokesperson David Glanzer echoed the hopes of creating a community at the permanent location.

“Comic-Con has a great community and I think we’re hoping the museum will do that as well,” Glazer said, noting 2019 marks the 50th year since the convention began.

In addition to creating community, he remarked Comic-Con was essential in showing popular art was a valuable and dynamic art form.

“One of the things that is important to us is education and explaining popular art. There was a period of time where people looked at movies, comics, whatever, as forms of entertainment that were easily discardable. There was no thought that anyone would want to see [it] again [or that] there was any intrinsic value other than a first watch or a first read,” he said.

Glarer asserted the founders of Comic-Con did not have that mentality, “They thought this isn’t just something fun for entertainment, this is actually art.”

The early disregard for popular art is making killing the museum difficult, as so many items were not preserved. Comic books and early movies that did survive have skyrocketed in value. The Comic-Con Museum hopes to showcase them.

“It’s a way to acknowledge art — popular art — 365 days of the year. We don’t realize what we have until it’s gone,” Glazer said.

Smith said that for events like the “EverQuest” anniversary, he is working with the architects of the museum to make sure there is no point at which the building is completely sold down while it is being remodeled. “EverQuest” Executive Producer Holly Longdale was at the event and talked about the release of the low-budget creation and explained how it turned into a global phenomenon. “In 1999, a team of a whole 20 people... in only three years and $85 million, launched this incredible product and they hoped to have 50,000 people to sustain it. They were completely overwhelmed. They disturbed San Diego’s internet for about a week. Their hosting service had to pipe more lines to LA because people were losing internet,” Longdale...
Superhero Therapy
Janina Scarlet, Ph.D.

Superheroes and other characters from books, movies and TV shows have argued that, "Doing bad is part of our modern mythology. As such, pop culture characters have an important role in helping consumers learn about personal growth, conflict management, as well as mental health.

Historically, mental illness was something only villains struggled with. Many villains used to be portrayed as one-dimensional mentally ill characters that were out to take over the world and cause chaos just for the sake of doing evil deeds. Similarly, superheroes were represented as almost all-fallible and invulnerable. In these representations, mental illness was something that could have been perceived as a rare and undesirable, and even evil trait. As a potential result, mental illness used to be far less understood and more stigmatized than it is now.

Nowadays, the heroes, the villains, as well as antiheroes are usually presented as more complex characters. Often both the hero and the villain may experience a similar kind of a traumatic or otherwise painful event but the two might make different choices in regard to how they decide to cope with their experiences. Examples of heroes and villains with similar origin stories but alternate life pathways include Luke Skywalker vs. Anakin Skywalker (“Star Wars”), Charles Xavier vs. Magneto (“The X-Men”), and The Doctor vs. The Master (“Doctor Who”). Superhero stories and other pop culture media can help viewers to understand that their mental health histories are common and that they are not alone in their struggles. They also help the viewers to recognize that it is our choices that define who we are, not our experiences.

In the past, movies and TV shows might have helped us to escape from our painful experiences, nowadays, they serve as a model for teaching us how to manage them. For example, by watching TV shows, such as “Jessica Jones” and “Daredevil,” we might be able to better understand what trauma-related disorders might look like in some people, as well as how to cope with them. Specifically, these shows can teach us that finding meaning in our traumatic experiences and finding a sense of purpose can help motivate us to help others.

In addition, superhero and other pop culture films, books and TV shows can help us learn that although sometimes a particular situation may look hopeless and grim, things are likely to change for the better with time. This is an important message, especially for those struggling with major depressive disorders and other mental health difficulties, which might make us believe that things will never get better. Superheroes teach us that by bonding together to fight a common enemy (which includes bullies, traumas, losses, and fears), we might be able to defy all odds. Sometimes, in the moment of our greatest suffering, our greatest strength is born. Our painful experiences might remind us what matters to us, what we stand for, what we care about the most, and potentially encourage us to take action to help ourselves or others. And that is the making of a true superhero.

— Dr. Janina Scarlet is a North Park-based clinical psychologist and is the author of Therapy Quest (re-released May 7), a revolutionary self-help book, which combines therapy with an interactive fantasy quest. For more information, go to superherothrapy.com.

Who should be your financial advisor?

UptownMoney
Steve Doster

[Editor’s note: this part is one of a two-part series on financial advisors.]

It seems like everyone wants to be your financial advisor. Banks, insurance companies, brokerage firms, as well as mutual fund companies — they all would like to manage your portfolio and help you reach your financial goals. And that’s why it is important to make sure your financial advisor is one that you can trust and have confidence in.

The quick and short answer is no. Financial advisors at these companies are not required to operate under the fiduciary standard. A fiduciary is a professional who is required by law to put their client’s best interests first at all times. Financial advisors who follow a fiduciary standard must disclose any conflict of interest (or potential conflict of interest) to their clients before and throughout their relationship.

That may come as a surprise to many of you. Financial advisors at banks like Chase, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America can recommend investments and products that earn your advisor a bigger commission rather than recommend what is best for you. Financial advisors at large brokerage firms like Fidelity and Schwab are not required by law to recommend what is in your best interest as a client. Financial advisors at insurance companies like Lincoln Financial or Prudential can sell you expensive variable annuities even though low-cost mutual funds are much better for you.

That is a big list of companies that should not be your financial advisor. So, who should be? You can start your search by going to the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA.org). This is a nonprofit organization promoting fee-only advice where consumers can find financial advisors who adhere to the fiduciary standard and will not sell consumers expensive and unnecessary financial products and investments.

This website also has excellent resources for consumers like a Financial Advisor Checklist. This checklist has 25 questions you can give to potential advisors before deciding to meet with them. These questions reveal an advisor’s experience, how they get paid, and what services are provided. Also included is a Fiduciary Oath for the advisor to sign. If they won’t sign this, do not work with them! If your current advisor doesn’t sign the Fiduciary Oath, it’s time to find a new financial advisor.

Once you have your final two or three potential advisors, you can send them the Financial Advisor Diagnostic. Compare their answers to the “test your advisor” questions of NAPFA. This pamphlet is written in a straightforward way that makes it a valuable tool to use in your search. Download and send this diagnostic tool to your current financial advisor to see if they would be ranked at the reponses you receive.

Everyone wants to be your financial advisor, but not everyone should be. Before saying yes, confirm they are legally held to the fiduciary standard. That is the most important factor in selecting someone to work with. Next month, we will dig into more detailed criteria and the value you receive in working with a financial advisor.

[Image provided by canstockphoto.com]

— Steve Doster, CFP, is the financial planning manager at Rowling & Associates—a fee-only wealth management firm in Mission Valley helping individuals create a worry-free financial life. Rowling & Associates helps clients with their taxes, investments, and retirement planning. Read more articles at rowling.com/blog. [Image provided by canstockphoto.com]
Probably one of the most shocking aspects — and there are many to choose from — about the attack on our democracy during the 2016 presidential election is how it has divided our nation. And we must always come together in a show of unity whenever we are attacked. It happened after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The same unity was on display after Sept. 11.

On one side, this attack on our sovereignty has sparked serious concern and calls for accountability. On the other side, it seems to have elicited yawns.

The release of a redacted report by special counsel Robert Mueller was unequivocal in confirming that our intelligence community had found the Russian government orchestrated an effort to undermine our election.

But in today’s political climate, partisanship has won the day.

The president’s supporters have tried to portray the report as a total exoneration, even though the report specifically says it does not exonerate him.

Despite the report’s conclusive findings, there was no direct, consistent evidence to prove the Trump campaign conspired with the Russians, there were numerous contacts between Russians and campaign officials. Ignoring those would be tantamount to criminal prosecution.

If any other presidential campaign had been contacted by Russians, their next call would have been to the FBI.

The report’s section on obstruction of justice shows a president desperate to thwart the special counsel’s investigations and White House staff protecting him from himself.

We should not have a White House where staff must ignore orders from the president to keep him from breaking the law.

While the Mueller report did not make a prosecution decision on obstruction, it gives Congress a path to follow as it continues investigations.

There have been calls from the president’s supporters and even some independent observers saying it’s time to move on. After all, there was no crime committed.

But as former U.S. Attorney Chuck Rosenberg recently said on MSNBC “You don’t have to complete the crime of obstruction in order to be culpable of it... Asking someone to destroy records or request that another person lie is obstruction of justice even if they don’t carry out that order.”

Congress does not “move on” from its constitutional obligation to act as a check on the executive branch, particularly when foreign powers threaten our democratic institutions.

And especially when we have a White House that uses lies and deceit on a daily basis to achieve its policy and political objectives. If anything, it is a clarion call for Congress to look further. We still don’t know what we don’t know.

Congress needs to hear from special counsel Robert Mueller. We need to hear from former White House counsel Don McGahn, who on more than one occasion ignored President Trump’s directive to fire the special counsel.

But Congress doesn’t have more immediate things to work on? One of the things my colleagues and I are pretty good at is multitasking.

House Democrats still push our agenda of lowering health care costs, raising wages, and ending corruption.

Ending corruption: Another path to conducting further oversight investigations.

Unfortunately, I’m not expecting much cooperation from my colleagues in the minority.

But I am confident when it comes to protecting our nation from future attacks.

The Russians are still engaging in activities that the president doesn’t even want to talk about it, according to testimony from former special counsel Donald McGahn. So would call into question the legitimacy of his presidency and require him to stand up to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The House, however, has already introduced legislation that passed comprehensive election reform legislation earlier this year.

The election security measures in the bill require the Department of Homeland Security to designate election infrastructure as critical and assess threats to the system at least 180 days prior to a federal election.

It creates a National Commission to Protect United States Democratic Institutions to counter threats and requires testing of voting systems nine months before a federal election.

In my role in the NATO Public-Private Assembly, I am working with our allies to prevent Russian aggression. We aren’t going to back down.

The threat is real. If we are going to end that threat, we need to be united in a common goal of ensuring our security.

My hope is that we will come together as a nation to make sure our elections are decided by the American people and the American people alone. The integrity of our elections should not be a partisan issue.

Neither should the honesty and integrity of those working in the White House. The founders wanted Congress to be the check on the executive branch and we must not shirk that responsibility.

— Congresswoman Susan Davis represents central San Diego, including the communities of Old Town, Kensington, Mission Hills, University Heights, Hillcrest, Bankers Hill, North Park, South Park, Talmadge, Normal Heights, as well as La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Bay Park, and parts of El Cajon and Chula Vista.

Fellow RTFH board member County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher has said a homeless count will help authorities target public services offered to San Diego’s homeless.

“The county of San Diego works collaboratively with local governments and our community partners, to connect people experiencing homelessness with resources that put them on a path to a healthier, more stable life,” Fletcher said. “Now that we have a clearer, more precise picture of the individuals’ needs, we are going to be able to establish the right mix of services and programs to those experiencing homelessness.”

It’s up to the RTFH now to complete the annual Point-in-Time Count by using critical statistics gathered to secure federal funding for needed homeless housing and services.

“We have leveraged the capacity and resources of the RTFH as an expert on homelessness to deliver an accurate and verifiable count that has already improved our understanding of this vulnerable population,” said District 3 Councilmember Chris Ward, who chairs the RTFH. “The improved methods used focus on direct, consistent engagement with homeless San Diegans aligning us with nationally recognized best-practices. This improved outreach methodology sets the tone for formalizing and standardizing a qualified outreach protocol for use throughout the county.”
A Tribute to the Pekin Cafe

Past Matters Katherine Hon

The elaborate Oriental facade of 2877 University Ave. has been a North Park constant since the 1930s. The bright neon sign announcing “Pekin Cafe CHOP SUEY” seemed to smile as you walked through the double wooden doors. But those doors are closed for now.

A sign posted on the window announces to all “loyal and amazing customers” that the difficult decision to retire the restaurant was made “with a full and heavy heart,” but staff “are ready for the next chapter of retirement and new endeavors.” A thank you sign on the door notes, “It has been an absolute pleasure knowing you all and serving you through the generations...Thank you for welcoming us into your lives and making us a part of your tradition.”

The uniquely-styled restaurant building sits between the stately white brick Granada Building and the elegant terra cotta Spanish Renaissance North Park Theatre — more recently rebranded as The Observatory North Park — on the south side of University Avenue east of Granada Avenue. The contrasts in architecture were not always so exuberant. The Pekin Cafe became a safe place for many Chinese immigrants to take their first steps toward success in a very new world.

In June and July of 1931, permits for plumbing, plastering, electrical and gas work recorded in the Evening Tribune indicated major changes were happening at 2877 University Ave. The Evening Tribune’s July 10, 1931 issue recorded permits by San Diego Neon Sign Company for an “electric sign” at the building. The San Diego Union’s July 12, 1931 issue announced Pekin Cafe was “just opened” and would serve their regular $1 dinner for only 50 cents “to get acquainted with the people of San Diego.” The restaurant advertised it was a place to dine and dance on New Year’s Eve in 1931 and placed similar ads for many years afterwards.

The San Diego Union’s June 23, 1935 announced “Pekin Cafe Reopened After Redecoration — Entirely redecorated in an Oriental motif, Pekin cafe, 2877 University Ave., has reopened. The same policies that prevailed before will be in effect, it was stated, with the same Chinese cooks, food, prices and service.” Newspaper advertisements through the 1940s highlighted the cafe’s “exclusive booths.” In 1948, the restaurant advertised being newly decorated with “all private booths.” A fire on Oct. 21, 1981 extensively damaged the kitchen, but the restaurant reopened on Feb. 24, 1982 after repairs and redecoration that eliminated the private booths.

Pekin Cafe has been owned and operated by a close-knit circle of friends and family throughout nearly nine decades. In addition to creating some of the first “Chinese-American” dishes — including their brightly advertised chop suey — these courageous immigrants provided employment and housing for others who had just come to America. Pekin Cafe became a safe place for many Chinese immigrants to take their first steps toward success in a very new world.

The 1932 City Directory was the first to list a restaurant at 2877 University Ave., and the person associated with the address was Kway Chow. His name also appeared as Kway “Chow” in various directories through the years, including as the manager of Pekin Cafe in 1945.

Book (also “Back”) Cho and his wife Muriel worked at the restaurant in its early days, and Muriel was listed as working at Pekin Cafe in 1947. In a departure from most directory listings during the 1930s, the 1935 Business Directory listed “Cho Book You” as the restaurant at 2877 University Ave. instead of Kway Chow or Chow.

Even though newspaper advertisements consistently used “Pekin Cafe” from 1931 forward, the name did not appear as a separate listing in the City Directory until 1940. That year, Kway Chow was named with Buckeyu Chow, So Leung and Leo Ying as being with the restaurant.

So Leung (1899-1955) came to the U.S. from China in 1917. In 1930, he was operating a retail produce business and boarding with Leo Ying, who came to the U.S. from China in 1921 and was also selling produce. Ying (1905-2004) formally changed his last name to Fong in 1951 naturalization paperwork. He worked at Pekin Cafe and co-owned the business and the building with his nephew Roy Lowe. Fong and friend Frank Chan for many decades. Leo Fong retired with his wife Emily in 1973.

Roy Fong (1921-1999) and his wife Irene were both born in China and became naturalized U.S. citizens in 1964. He was a long-time head chef at Pekin Cafe and retired in 1973. Frank Chan (1902-1974) witnessed Roy Fong’s naturalization paperwork — on which both were listed as restaurant owners. Chan was born in Walnut Grove, California. He and his wife Marie have owned and run the restaurant ever since.

The final message to restaurant customers concluded, “Thank you for loving us and thank you for the memories.” North Park says the same to all members of the Pekin Cafe family, past and present.

— Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-6890.
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revisions to the menus at The Patio on Goldfinch; and Baja-style seared halibut with English pea puree served alongside citrus-mint pea salad at The Patio on Lamont.

An alum of Johnson and Wales University in Rhode Island, the Massachusetts transplant last worked as executive chef for Rancho Valencia Resort in Rancho Santa Fe.

“T’m very excited to be involved with The Patio Group and their current sous chefs and executive sous chefs on each property,” he said. “The company has a great concept and a strong culinary team.”

Look for menu changes at The Patio Group’s restaurants, Jarrod Moiles, is starting an executive for a trio of popular “patio” restaurants. (Photo courtesy of The Patio Group)

Not all croissants are created equal. Just ask Alice Oliveti, who owns the recently opened Caffe San Luca in Hillcrest with her husband, Stefano Ravaglia.

Both from Bologna, Italy, the couple ships in croissant dough from their homeland and bakes it onsite. According to Oliveti, the difference between these croissants and American or French-made ones is “all in the butter and food options. Known also as “cornett,” they are noticeably richer and a bit sweeter.

The breakfast-lunch cafe also offers everything from bomboloni (filled donuts) and waffles to fresh pasta dishes, paninis, charcuterie boards and desserts. Beer and Italian wines are available as well. 600 University Ave., 619-501-5557. www.italiancafesandiego.com.

In approaching its three-year anniversary next month, Cucina Sorella in Kensington has rolled out an entirely new menu that includes the introduction of pizza — deep-dish to be exact.

Operated under the umbrella of Urban Kitchen Group, the company’s new executive chef, Tim Kolanko, re-authored the menu in conjunction with sous chef Tarn Mae. They came up with a slate of small and large plates that include carrot arancini, Sicilian-style meatballs, and hard-to-find chicken fra Diavolo.

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New vibes at Two Seven Eight

I’m not sure if the current happy-hour deals were around in 2017, but if they were, I missed some mighty swell opportunities to stretch out my leisure budget since then.

Nearly all drink and food items are $5 or less, starting with beer-shot combos and wines by the glass. Prices come down from there with well drinks selling for $4, and draft beers or blood-orange “hard” kombucha going for $3 apiece.

Most impressive are the $5 “smash” burgers, a menu staple that sells for $16 on the regular dinner menu. Granted, it comes with french fries during that time, but what you get for the money during happy hour will thrill most stomachs.

The burger is constructed with two thin beef patties cooked under weighted pressure on a flat grill, plus two slices of American cheese, and a liberal smear of garlic aioli. It’s similar to the wildly popular burgers slung at The Friendly in North Park, except here, the kitchen accepts modifications.

I ordered mine with the addition of raw onions, which raised the burger to my gold standard, and a liberal smear of garlic aioli. For the same cost, he ordered a sizable bowl of tater tots that were crispy and perfectly salted.

Whether on the hunt for a full meal or just don’t stop. So yes, this is your happy place too.

Two Seven Eight

3687 Fifth Ave. (Hillcrest)
519-219-0000
casepttwoseveneight.com
Happy hour: 4 to 6 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday

Given the attractive happy-hour prices and diverse patronage at Two Seven Eight, which features a loungy dog-friendly front patio, chances are great you’ll want to stay a while.
San Diego Unified program fights food insecurity

By Joyell Nevins

Ever wonder where the leftover lunch items from your kids’ school cafeteria go? In the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), those last few hamburger patties from Roosevelt Middle or single breadsticks from McKinley Elementary no longer end up in a trash can. Thanks to the program “Food Love, Not Waste,” that extra food is being passed on to organizations fighting food insecurity.

From its pilot start in September 2016, to full district incorporation in 2017, to now, 482,799 pounds of food have been kept out of the landfill. Rather than contributing to methane gas and climate change — that leftover food waste out of the school when they leave, and bring it back to the cluster hubs. “It doesn’t cost us anything extra,” Brody said. “We’ve taken on the process and increased its usability.”

Actually, the process is saving the district money, Brody notes. “We produce less, we buy less,” he said. “We don’t always know what happens when food waste is combined from the various school cafeterias. ‘Between that little school, and this little school, that’s a lot of food,’ Brody said.

The next question was how to get the extra food out of the school and into the kitchens of those who are feeding the needy. Brody and his team realized that there was already a presence of delivery drivers in place bringing food products to the school on a regular basis. Now, those trucks just take the food waste out of the school when they leave, and bring it back to the cluster hubs.”

“We produce less, we buy less, and we see more revenue,” he said.

The next major event at the future museum is scheduled to be held during Comic-Con itself (July 18-21). The Batman-themed event will include batmobiles and a bat cave experience. Smith said he is looking for a way to open it up to everyone attending Comic-Con so they can get a taste of the museum to come.

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

From a cluster to a charity

Now, once the food is at these cluster kitchens, can it realistically get to charities that are feeding the hungry? Enter Feeding San Diego and its CEO Vince Hall.

“This [program] wouldn’t happen if we didn’t have a partner like Vince,” SDUSD Food & Nutrition Services Director Gary Pettil declared.

The massive hunger relief organization provides food and resources to a network of more than 260 neighborhood partners, serving approximately 63,000 people each week. Hall works with Food & Nutrition Services and the Feeding San Diego staff to take SDUSD’s compiled extra food and distribute it in that existing network.

“They make the process feasible,” Hall said of SDUSD’s cluster concept.

Hall and Brody aren’t the only ones appreciating this new way of sustainability. Brody notes that the individual school food and cafeteria employees have jumped on board as well. “They bought right into the process,” he said. “They know we’re doing the right thing for the right reasons. Brody said. He laughed about the most common response he received, which was “well, it’s about time!”

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

FROM PAGE 5

EVERQUEST

Some of us got jobs in the industry as a result. Some of us lost our jobs.”

She claimed “EverQuest is credited with giving some of the major players at other gaming companies like Blizzard Entertainment (developers of the “Warcraft,” “Diablo” and “StarCraft” series of video games, among others) their start as well as revolutionizing what an MMORPG could be to us.”

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

I turn 50 in May of 2019. My son was away at college when I began this journey. When he returned home, he asked “where’s my dad”, while looking at me. My wife can wrap her arms around me now, as I have dropped about 35 pounds.

Additionally and most importantly, is what has happened to my blood pressure. When I began this journey with Fitness Together Mission Hills, initial blood pressure readings were 157/111 and I was being treated medicinally with drugs to manage my high blood pressure. Though still a high at my last retest on 9 20 18 at 138/90, my Doctor has begun to lower the dosage of drugs to manage my blood pressure, as I continue to get lighter, leaner and fitter with the ultimate benefit being how my heart operates.
Uptown resident to be honored as 2019 Chicano Federation Visionary Award recipient

By: B.J. Coleman

Bankers Hill resident Delia H. Talamantez is slated to be honored on Saturday, May 11, at the 50th anniversary gala of the Chicano Federation of San Diego County. Talamantez will be named the recipient of the 2019 Chicano Federation Visionary Award at the gala celebration, which will be held at the Downtown U.S. Grant Hotel.

"I have been involved with civil rights most of my life," Talamantez said. "I was always getting involved in helping other people — through church, and through advising politicians. I have always been passionate about civil rights."

Talamantez worked with the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC) on their Anti-Poverty project from 1966-68, ending up as director. "That was a wonderful experience," Talamantez said, despite the 16-hour work days.

She experienced the stinging bias of racism but decided to overcome fear and speak up.

Talamantez participated in a recent round-table interview anticipating the 50th anniversary celebration, together with Nancy Maldonado, new CEO of the Chicano Federation of San Diego County; and Mario X. Sierra, Chicano Federation board chairman.

The interview commenced with background and review of the federation's half-century of community advocacy and service. Maldonado, who was named CEO in January, in what was then known as community service over the past five decades, Maldonado noted that the federation was born of advocacy first, to unite more than 40 small groups to support Latino rights and civil rights. Chicano Park was at risk. Barrio Logan was split by freeways, and many former residents were left without homes.

Talamantez added her perspective on the days of the 1960s assembly of the federation.

"The 1960s were a time of protest," Talamantez said. "As immigrants, we were conservative, and taking this step, like we did, was bold. We took over the park, which gave the community power."

Maldonado gave more of the historical background, observing that the Chicano Federation has evolved into a direct community service organization these days, responding to critical community needs, focusing mainly on low-income community members but serving anyone who qualifies for federation programs.

"The struggle is still on," Maldonado said.

Maldonado is looking toward new visions of the second half-century of Chicano Federation community service.

"My vision is leading in social services that are so desperately needed," Maldonado said. "We were once great; we will be again."

Mario Sierra was born in Tijuana and is an engineer with the city of San Diego's Environmental Services Department. Talamantez met Sierra through the Civil Service Commission and she invited him to join the Chicano Federation board.

When he was 15 and 16, Sierra worked summertime jobs in conjunction with The Chicano Federation. He assisted non-English-speaking people with acquiring child care and filling out tax preparation papers.

"I could see the difference this was making for the community, in what was then known as Shelltown," Sierra said. "I realized I loved nonprofit work." He mentored in particular the collaborative services on behalf of child development nutritional support and senior housing. Within a year of being named to the federation board, Sierra was promoted to chairing the board.

Sierra happens to be the person who first thought of and nominated Talamantez for the award. When the Chicano Federation Visionary Award nominations were opened, Sierra said, "Delia came to mind."

"Delia is a strong leader," Sierra said. "Delia does that."

Maldonado agreed. "That’s true leadership," Maldonado said. "And she brings an important historical perspective."

Also slated to receive honorary recognition at the Chicano Federation 50th Anniversary Ball is Irma Castro, the federation’s longtime executive director, who left her role in 1991. Castro will receive the Chicano Federation Legacy Award.

Organizers of the gala hope to raise $250,000 to support programs for child development, affordable housing and other services for San Diego County families. The ball is sold out, but the federation seeks continuing monetary donations and donated items and services for auction. Additionally, volunteers are always eagerly welcomed. More information is available online at chicanofederation.org or by phone at 619-285-5600.

--B. J. Coleman is a local freelance journalist and editor/staff reporter with 22nd District Legislator. B.J. can be reached at bjjournalist@gmail.com.

FROM PAGE 3

BUZZFEED

were turned upside down by the 2010 earthquake, and they have been trying to survive and create good lives for their children ever since, but every country they turn to — Brazil, Guatemala, Venezuela, Honduras, among others — exploited them and underpaid them, and even targeted them with racism and violence, they said. Once those countries started experiencing their own economic and political troubles, the immigrants there were some of the first to suffer.

[The island of] Haiti is located across the entire continent from San Diego. These families have traveled for so long, across so many borders, and tried so hard to get to San Diego, following messages scrawled in bathrooms and betting on guides with money from their families. Now that they are here, they are being targeted by people they call "the haters" — anti-immigrant protesters that film them in their rooms and spread them with violence online. This story is true for so many people, and it’s one I know nothing about.

KS: The abrupt end of the Safe Release Program has forced San Diego County to support asylum-seekers now forced to stay in the area while their claims are processed. CMC was already overburdened but with that down even as 15,000 families were released in the city just this year. Based on what you saw in San Diego, how do you think the city should or could respond as those numbers continue to grow?

EO: Because of the end of the Safe Release Program, shelters like CMC and San Diego Rapid Response have been forced to bear the weight that IRC and CBP did before. The San Diego County Board of Supervisors has sued the Trump administration for ending that policy, to help them out with funds, which hopefully will result in San Diego getting federal help to fill in the gaps their agencies left. I also know San Diego is working with CMC to potentially rent them new properties that are better equipped to act as long-term shelters for even more asylum-seekers. I think continuing to work with shelter governors and NGOs, and hopefully pulling through on these projects and starting more of them would help make sure that asylum-seekers can get to where they need to go and not end up on the streets.

Ema O'Connor is a political reporter for BuzzFeed News and is based in Washington, D.C. She can be reached at ema.oconnor@buzzfeed.com. Her full report on Christ Ministry Center can be read at bit.ly/2DunWJ.

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

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Thank you for your continued support for the past 23 years.

Now we have San Diego Musical Theatre’s production of “Sister Act,” the 2006 musical based on the 1992 film about religion, criminals, love and finding your place in the world.

In Philadelphia, pop singer Deloris Van Cartier (Miriam Dance) and two other female singers do “Take Me to Heaven” for Deloris’ gangster boyfriend Curtis Jackson (Berto Fernandez), who has been stringing her along with promises of fame and fortune. But he tells her (again) that she’s “not ready.”

She decides to take her career into her own hands, but unfortunately, she gets to Curtis just at the time he’s planning to kill someone he believes has “squealed” on him. Deloris skedaddles out of there to the local cops, where she tells her story to cop Eddie (Jeremy Whatley), who turns out to be an old high school friend she used to call “Sweaty Eddie.”

Meanwhile, Curtis has put out a hit on her, so she’s got to hide. Eddie takes Deloris to the local convent, where he thinks Curtis will never find her. The Mother Superior (Sandy Campbell) is not thrilled when this obviously inappropriate creature walks into the sacred convent in shorts and sparkly boots and a most unholy swagger. But Eddie is adamant about hiding her in this unlikely place.

You can imagine the chaos Deloris causes. Putting on that habit doesn’t change her. Will she adapt? Will Curtis somehow find her? Will the sisters influence her or will it be the other way around?

You probably know the answers, but that doesn’t matter. What does is that SDMT has another genuine hit on its hands, thanks to fine direction by Larry Raben, a terrific cast, a great orchestra of 11 wonderfully conducted by Don LeMaster, and delightful disco-look choreography by Luke Harvey Jacobs.

This terrific cast includes many newcomers to SDMT. Miriam Dance plays the star of the show Deloris Van Cartier, singer extraordinary and wearer of clothes utterly inappropriate for a convent. She has a voice as big as all outdoors, knows how to use it, and is utterly believable as the fish-out-of-water star.

Sandy Campbell, no stranger to local stages, continues her unbroken string of great performances in her SDMT debut as the put-upon Mother Superior.

Berto Fernandez is impressive (and scary) as head gangster Curtis; his henchmen Joey (Donny Gersonde), TJ (E.Y. Washington) and Pablo (Gerardo Flores Tonella) are amusing and a little scary too.

Sarah Errington is impressive as Sister Mary Robert, who takes to this pop style of singing enough to make her wonder (in the poignant song “The Life I Never Led”) whether she has truly found her life’s work.

And another local favorite, Bethany Slomka, is a riot as Sister Mary Patrick, up for anything and amusing in everything she does.

This large cast of 24 gives it their all, which is considerable. But enough of this talk. If you’re looking to escape the news for a while — or just for an entertaining musical to watch — “Sister Act” fills the bill.

—Jean Lowerison is a long-standing member of the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle and can be reached at infodame@cox.net.
A panel faced the audience in City Heights’ You Belong Here community. With a mic in hand, four experts looked upon raised hands and eager men after a Tuesday, April 23 screening of “The Mask You Live In.”

The group seemed to resemble a classroom more than an audience.

The tone of the forum provided a stark contrast to that of the film, as the viewers took advantage of an immediate opportunity to engage in healthier tactics of communicating emotion. "A lot of different cans opened up," said Brandon Steppe, founder of The David’s Harp Foundation, which seeks to provide environments wherein San Diego’s at-risk youth can be expressive in productive ways. Steppe contributed from the audience, sharing a case in which he had a breakthrough with the young men he serves after being vulnerable to them in a group setting.

"It’s no different from [what a] coach would do in sports," Steppe explained. Despite this analogy, Steppe and Donald noted the value of mentors like him and Donald in spaces where roles like those of a coach or disciplinarian are not the primary voices.

Men often socialize in environments that are inherently competitive or sexual in nature, whether it be in sports, at the gym, drinking at bars, etc. The film notes young men who partake in theater, and other extracurricular activities not known as conventional male spaces, are often maligned or discouraged by peers and mentors alike. "My dad was really uncomfortable with [me] changing into this very ‘human-like person,’” a subject in the film recalls, chronicling his experience turning from sports to theater in his youth. "Even in the context of theater, where it [the character] wasn’t really me… it became a point of friction between me and my father.”

Similar reinforcement of hyper-masculine behavior was a theme throughout the film and a shared experience of those who spoke during the forum afterwards. Encounters with such reinforcement were cited as memorable negative experiences on par with physical trauma in terms of influencing behavior. "It’s performative… If it was natural, we would already just be doing it," said Dr. Jenn Gonzalez, a local sociologist and sexologist who counsels people on navigating gender roles and communicating with the opposite sex, and who was one of two women on the panel. "People feel very threatened if you step out of that box. If people think a baby is a boy, they’ll be more rough and tumble with them… You could have the same baby and dress them up differently, people will treat the baby differently and have different expectations. There’s blunt versions where someone is beat up or called ‘faggot,’” but the smaller [versions] can be a trauma to the spirit.”

Viewers at the screening gave the project high praise and recommended that those planning to see it do so in a group, with the hope that it will bring about similar discussion among other men. "The Mask You Live In" can be found on Hulu, iTunes, YouTube and other popular streaming platforms.

"The Mask You Live In" received a 4.5 Film Rating. "It’s performative… If it was natural, we would already just be doing it," said Dr. Jenn Gonzalez, a local sociologist and sexologist who counsels people on navigating gender roles and communicating with the opposite sex, and who was one of two women on the panel. "People feel very threatened if you step out of that box. If people think a baby is a boy, they’ll be more rough and tumble with them… You could have the same baby and dress them up differently, people will treat the baby differently and have different expectations. There’s blunt versions where someone is beat up or called ‘faggot,’” but the smaller [versions] can be a trauma to the spirit.”

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— Jorden P. Hales is a multimedia journalist based in Southern California. Follow him on twitter: @JayPGatsby
Friday, May 3

Science Talent Search 2019 will feature two events in San Diego this spring, with one an after-hours garden party at Balboa Park and the other an unscheduled potting occasion to take home, ethnobotany baskets (marks using cuttings and pressed samples), honey treats, and flower ball lessons, live music, and a lot of creative, lots of captivating and weird plant science.

For additional information about these and other San Diego garden events, visit OCKN.org.

Saturday, May 4

Saturday Market at Park and Grape
San Diego City College's Saturday Market is a fun, free, and family-friendly event featuring vignettes of art and glass-making throughout the day. The market will feature a variety of vendors, including local artists, makers, and artisans. There will be live music, food trucks, and a variety of workshops and classes throughout the day. The event is open to the public and is free to attend.

Sunday, May 5

Science on Tap San Diego: The Power of Living Organisms to Change the World
A science discussion event for the general public. This month's topic is the power of living organisms to change the world. The event will feature a talk from a scientist and an interactive discussion with the audience.

Monday, May 6

Bike to Work Day
Bike to Work Day is an annual event that encourages people to commute to work by bike. The event is free and open to the public. Bike to Work Day San Diego is organized by SANDAG and is supported by City of San Diego, SANDAG, and other partners. The event includes a free safety check and a free bike tune-up at the Bike to Work Day San Diego booth located at 900 E Street.

Tuesday, May 7

Teen Film Fest: International Film Festival Film Series
The Teen Film Fest is a selection of short films from around the world that are created by youth. The films are shown in a variety of formats, including digital, film, and video. The films are shown at 6:30 p.m. at Balboa Park Museum of Art and are free to the public.

Wednesday, May 8

Intergenerational Services for Older Adults: The Power of Music and Movement
This event is designed to bring together older adults and their caregivers to engage in music and movement activities. The event includes a musical performance, dance, yoga, and other movement activities.

Thursday, May 9

Red Shoe Day Fundraiser
Red Shoe Day is an annual fundraiser to benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities. The event is open to the public and includes a variety of music, refreshments, and activities.

Friday, May 10

San Diego River Clean-up Day
San Diego River Clean-up Day is an annual event that encourages people to pick up trash along the San Diego River and its tributaries. The event is free and open to the public.

Saturday, May 11

Theater on the Green: "The Importance of Being Earnest"
This outdoor production of Oscar Wilde's classic comedy is presented by the San Diego Repertory Theatre. The play is performed at Balboa Park's Spreckels Organ Pavilion.

Sunday, May 12

San Diego Portico's Springtime Scottie Dog Show
The Springtime Scottie Dog Show is an annual event that celebrates the popular breed of Scottish Terrier. The show includes competitions, judging, and awards.

Monday, May 13

Lectra's West Open Mic
Lectra's West Open Mic is a weekly open mic event that is open to all. The event features a variety of music, including spoken word, poetry, and other performances.

Tuesday, May 14

Introduction to Buddhism: Meditation and Mindfulness
This event is designed to introduce participants to the basics of Buddhism, including meditation and mindfulness practices.

Wednesday, May 15

Film Out San Diego LGBTQ Short Film Festival
The Film Out San Diego LGBTQ Short Film Festival is an annual event that celebrates LGBTQ+ cinema. The festival includes a variety of films, including shorts and features.

Thursday, May 16

San Diego County's International Film Festival
San Diego County's International Film Festival is an annual event that celebrates films from around the world. The festival includes a variety of films, including shorts and features.

Friday, May 17

North Park Thursday Market
The North Park Thursday Market is an outdoor market that features a variety of vendors and activities. The market is open to the public and is free to attend.

Saturday, May 18

Aliens, Zombies, and Other Scary Things
This event is a free, family-friendly event that celebrates the world of the unknown. The event includes a variety of activities, including a costume contest, live music, and food trucks.

Sunday, May 19

South Park Family Fun Night at the 'Seussical' Premiere
The South Park Family Fun Night is an annual event that celebrates the world of Dr. Seuss. The event includes a variety of activities, including a costume contest, live music, and food trucks.

Monday, May 20

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FROM PAGE 1
ADAMS

nominated for Best Singer-Songwriter at the 2019 San Diego Music Awards. Francis grew up attending Unplugged’s parent, the Adams Avenue Roots Festival, and approached it with wide eyes and wonder as a child. Now a grown-up, she made a special trip down from Los Angeles to continue the tradition from the other side of the stage.

While the Roots Festival may have changed names and removed the street vendors, Unplugged has kept the same diversity of acoustic music. Blues, soul, folk, jazz, country and other genres all showed up on the schedule this year.

“We couldn’t have done [the festival] without the amazing contributions of the many performing artists,” said Scott Kessler, Unplugged coordinator and executive director of the Adams Avenue Business Association.

The lineup was a hodgepodge of bands, duos and solo artists. Musicians performed in venues as different as they were bars, restaurants, coffee shops, a church, a water store, and even in front of an auto mechanic shop.

That last privilege went to Dan Dimonte of the Dan Dimonte Trio and his drummer Zac Tatum. Dimonte was tapped to play when Kessler heard him perform at a local art gallery. The idea emerged to turn a space beside the food court at Smitty’s Service into a stage as well.

“It was a blast,” Dimonte said, noting that foot traffic didn’t just walk by. “People were hanging with us.”

Some festival-goers came out to support a specific artist, while some just strolled up and down the main drag, entering wherever their ears took them. Some of the bars became so full, bouncers had to turn people away because they were at capacity (those pesky fire codes!). Many of the musicians themselves visited other artists or made an appearance at the fest’s official after-party at the Air Conditioned Lounge.

FROM PAGE 1
BIKELANE

The project is already gaining significant community input, as nearly 100 people crowded into an upstairs room at North Park Christian Fellowship on Tuesday, April 16, to speak on the proposal. The approval process is on a short timeline because it coincides with the conclusion of the 30th Street pipeline construction when the road will be repaved and repainted. The proposed bike lane and the loss of current parking spaces, as well as other issues, were reasons locals came in to give their input.

Despite input from both opponents and proponents, and a few in between, the atmosphere remained calm. The only outbursts were of those advocates are embracing the new bike lane, next to a lane for cars, cyclists, and people wearing bright neon vests. With a long row of people wearing bright neon vests next to a lane for cars, cyclists, and kids all lined up at the food court at Smitty’s Service into a stage as well.

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Patrick Santana, an avid cyclist, said riding along 30th Street currently is challenging. He also said the argument that a bike lane should not be added because there are not many cyclists on the road is akin to people looking at a river and saying a bridge should not be built because there are no swimmers using it at that moment.

30th Street is currently painted with “sharrows” — the combination of painted bicycles and arrows marking the lane as shared between bikes and vehicles. This system can lead to dangerous road conditions as cars swerve into oncoming traffic to get around a bike, and bikers feel they must ride closer to parked cars, which increases their risk of getting doored. It also means only the most confident and aggressive cyclists use it. Surveys have found only 1-2% of people are willing to cycle under dangerous conditions, while half of respondents say they would try biking if there was a protected lane.

“I don’t feel safe in this area,” Phil Ballew said, a business consultant who often rides his bike to meet clients in Uptown. He said he has been doored twice in the past year and urged the committee to close the infrastructure gap.

Business owners on both sides of the issue spoke out at the meeting. In addition to some elderly residents worried about having to walk farther to access the businesses on 30th Street, some of those business owners worried clientele from other parts of San Diego would be less likely to make the trip out to North Park if they knew they had to struggle to find parking.

A business owner from a consulting firm on University Avenue where bike lanes have been implemented came to show his support of the plan. Ari Isaac claimed that of his 13 employees, many have chosen to give up their cars and cycle to work.

“If you care about parking, you should care about getting the cars off the street,” he said.

Bankers Hill resident Ben Baltie said business actually went up and there were more parking spaces available when bike lanes were implemented near property he owns on Fourth Avenue. He said for people to ride more, there cannot be gaps in the infrastructure where bike lanes end. Instead, many in the audience argued the entire system needs to be connected the same way roads are for cars.

Justine Epstein, owner of independent bookstore Verbatim Books in North Park, said there is more to consider than just parking. She argued that biking cuts down on air pollution and with more people walking around the area, the ambience of the area would improve.

“Parking is not getting better by not removing parking,” Epstein said.

With a growing population, the current levels of car use and with the parking structure being underutilized, parking in Uptown could still get worse.

Two women at the planning meeting said they moved from inclement places where they were able to bike more because of cycling infrastructure.

Marissa Tucker said she biked 50% of the time while living in San Francisco but that amount has dropped to 5% in San Diego.

“They should always give me an option. I’m taking up that parking space,” Tucker said.

Another woman said that after years of going without one in other cities, she is considering buying a car because there are not enough transportation options in the city.

In their concluding remarks, the majority of the planning board voiced support for adding a bike lane, while only a few announced which of the proposals they will back in next week’s vote.

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