Barrios recovers from COVID amid City Council campaign

Alvarado Hospital reports it is currently prepared to handle its share of the projected COVID-19 cases in the region. (Photo by Jeff Clemetson)

Alvarado Hospital takes steps to ensure safety of patients, staff

BY JEFF CLEMETSON | Column Two

On April 1, Alvarado Hospital admitted its first confirmed COVID-19 patient, a situation that Alvarado CEO Robin Gomez described as “very fortunate.”

“Many other hospitals in the county cannot say that. There were many more that had positives before we did,” she said. As of April 6 when Gomez was interviewed for this story, Alvarado was caring for eight patients either with COVID-19 or recovering from it.

Alvarado Hospital CEO Robin Gomez (LinkedIn)

Preparing for a pandemic

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS BEING ENFORCED

Authorities have begun citing essential businesses that have not complied with the requirement to post social-distancing and sanitation guidelines near the entrance of their businesses.

All employees of grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants open for to-go orders, fast-food eateries, convenience stores and gas stations must also wear a facial covering at all times as part of a county health order.

Though not mandating that residents wear face coverings, essential businesses can deny entry to customers whose faces are not covered, said County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher.

“If an individual business chooses to say that you need to have a face covering to come into their business, that is a determination that those businesses can make,” Fletcher said.

Sheriff’s deputies and SDPD started enforcing the stay-at-home orders last weekend. SDPD issued 10 citations – which carry a potential $1,000 fine – in Ocean Beach, including three at Robb Field, two at Dog Beach, and one at Sunset Cliffs. Five more citations occurred at Balboa Park.

CITY ANNOUNCES BUDGET CRISIS

San Diego City Council President Georgette Gómez and Council members Jennifer Campbell, Monica Montgomery, and Vivian Moreno on April 7 issued the following statement: “The COVID-19 pandemic has created a budget crisis for the City of San Diego that will require extremely difficult decisions. All options to meet this challenge

Barrios recovers from COVID amid City Council campaign

In the March 3 primary for the San Diego City Council District 9 seat, Kelvin Barrios landed frontrunner status with 31.6% of the vote, assuring him a spot on the November ballot. His celebrating was short lived, however. Just nine days later, Barrios recovers from COVID amid City Council campaign.
An Open Letter from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and Your Water Providers

To the communities we serve,

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

Tap water is safe.

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

There is plenty of water.

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

Water deliveries are reliable.

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

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

Sincerely,

Gloria D. Gray, Chairwoman

mwdh2o.com
Alvarado also has around 150 medium masks used for tests, and some of those are set aside for staff, he said. In case there is an exposure and everyone needs to be tested. “I always have to make sure I have enough medium masks to test employees along with patients,” Gomez said.

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

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

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

**SUPPLY CHAIN VOES**

Even with taking all the precautions and following the best practices available, there are still some aspects of managing a hospital during the pandemic crisis that are beyond the control of hospital administrators.

“When you see on the news that we never know what we are going to get in our supply chain, that’s no joke,” Gomez said. For example, on a recent order for 500 large and medium N95 masks, Alvarado ended up receiving 200 smalls. The hospital is also having a “hard time” getting cleaning supplies.

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

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

And although Gomez said the hospital is equipped with enough N95 masks for nurses to get one a day for “a number of weeks,” she still worries about keeping the hospital properly stocked.

“PPE and general supplies is such a big issue. It really, really is such a big issue,” she said. “I just can’t say. ‘Oh we’re OK for today and tomorrow.’ I got to look ahead three weeks, four weeks because the reality is, I’m only allowed one order a month. That order goes in on the first of the month. Literally, my director, she woke up at 11:45 at night and at midnight she submitted our order because it’s first come, first serve in the queue.

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

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

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

“The hydroxychloroquine — we have it and if so it comes down to needing to be used, we have it;
### Barrios Continued from Page 1

his symptoms were at their worst. He eventually broke his fever by March 23, and after several days without symptoms doctors eventually cleared him.

“That’s how they are clearing people who aren’t in the ICU is by using a 72-hour period of no symptoms,” he said, adding that although he was cleared, he self-quarantined through April 1 and has been working from home.

“Even though he’s not virus free, my energy levels were not 100% yet.”

Although his bout with the coronavirus put his campaigning for the City Council seat on hold, his campaign staff still kept busy.

“We have because we have an infrastructure, what we’ve done is shifted and started phone banking seniors using the voter file in the district,” he said. “We look who’s over 65 and give them a call and see if they need anything — just check in, because some of our seniors and elderly folks live by themselves and they’re not able to be social.”

His campaign is also helping coordinate group runs or other errands for District 9 residents unable to go out themselves.

### Home Turf

That Barrios is concerned for the residents of District 9 isn’t surprising. He has lived in the district his whole life, mostly in the City Heights neighborhood.

“I am the only candidate now running for City Heights,” he said. “I grew up in a neighborhood that didn’t have enough street lights and when I would be walking home from high school with my group of friends, we would take detours around certain streets just because we didn’t want to go through streets that weren’t properly lit. And that was just the normal thing for us. There could be gang members on that street, so we would avoid certain houses — that was normal for us to be confronted with those kinds of situations.”

Barrios is the son of Central American immigrants. His father worked at Kaiser Hospital and his mother runs a housekeeping business. He said his parents — especially his mother — have given him inspiration over the years for the way they worked to improve their lives.

“When [my mother] got to the United States, she was getting paid half the minimum wage and was abused as a worker and then turned into a small business woman,” he said, adding that his mother’s community involvement as a PTA president also inspired his own activism. “She always found ways to give back to the community and always pick ourselves back up.”

Barrios’ service to community started early. In high school, he served as a youth board member in the City Heights Town Council and was involved in the ROTC. His plan was to serve in the Marin Corps then utilize the GI Bill and go to college, but in his senior year at Serra High School he severely broke his leg.

“That derailed my plans,” he said.

So after high school, Barrios worked odd jobs and took courses at local junior colleges like Mesa College, Grossmont College and a technical school in Miramar, eventually learning to be an auto mechanic. He worked in that field for five years while studying to be a history professor at night, but again his plans were derailed when his uncle passed away and his mother took it badly and took time off from her work.

“So I started helping out my family and just picking up the slack,” he said. “I didn’t live with them, but I helped them out financially.”

In 2013, Barrios was working two full time jobs.

“I was a cook at night at a pizza restaurant and a mechanic during the day just to be able to help my family,” he said.

During this time, he also got more politically active and was eventually elected to serve on his local planning committee, he said. And when his family was back on their feet, he started a small business with a friend doing consulting work for candidates and recruiting volunteers for their campaigns in 2014 and in 2016.

“That led me to meet Georgette Gomez,” he said. “That’s where our paths intersected and I got into more governmental roles.”

Barrios became a representative for Gomez’ District 9 City Council office after working on her campaign, which he said expanded his knowledge of policy and instilled in him a passion for transportation and housing issues. After his stint working for Gomez, he took a job as director of community outreach for Laborors Local 89.

### A Run for Office

Barrios said when his old boss Georgette Gomez made the decision to run for Congress, and vace her City Council seat, at first he was encouraging other people to run to represent District 9.

“But in the early stages, I did not see folks who were from the community and have that understanding,” he said.

Familiarity with the district is important, Barrios said, because District 9 has a diverse set of challenges ranging from underserved neighborhoods like City Heights that need lots of resources to neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city like Rolando that are sometimes not heard.

“It’s a balancing act,” he said. “I decided to run because I believe that at this time we need someone with experience that can get things done, that understands the different dynamics of some of the issues that get in the way of us and also bridge people together.”

Barrios said he started his campaign in October with a focus on issues like housing, transportation and economic development, but after the coronavirus outbreak “there haven’t been a stall” in his priorities.

“We no longer find ourselves in a position where we’re having some lean budget years here and there and things will get better. We’re looking at a year from now, he said, adding that “now more than ever,” District 9 will need a “fierce advocate” at City Hall.

“We’re going to be fighting for funds between the nine districts, I want to make sure we’re getting our fair share,” he said. “And not just that, but moving ahead what’s our plan to get out of this? How will we restore services? Because I’m sure some will be cut.”

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**Connecting generations through technology**

### Four easy ways tech can help grandparents bond with younger family members

Grandparents: a word often associated with presents, special outings, yummy food and unconditional love. Yet many Americans don’t talk to, or see, their grandparents as often as they’d like. Here are four ways technology can help you connect with your grandparents.

#### 1. Messaging Apps

A recent study revealed that 73% of grandparents own smartphones. Messaging apps like WhatsApp and Talkatone are a great introduction to texting for grandparents. With messaging apps, you can send and receive text updates, photos and videos in one place. When there’s time for a longer conversation, you can use these apps to chat for free, as most don’t use cell minutes.

#### 2. Video Chat

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

#### 3. Gaming and Creativity Apps

Apps like Magisto and PhotoFunia allow you to personalize photos and videos. Looking for some friendly competition with your grandchildren? Try a gaming app like Wheel of Fortune and solve the puzzle together.

Or keep your grandparents updated with an app like Keepy, an interactive platform for sharing school projects and artwork. Use family tree apps like Ancestry to discover photos and stories together as you navigate your family history.

#### 4. Social Media

Start a private Instagram account where you can post photos and videos. Grandparents have lots to share as well, so encourage them to make their own Instagram handles and record their stories. This can be a unique way to learn about your grandparents’ past, p Jazz down family memories or share family recipes.

Snapchat is another option for sending and receiving custom pictures or videos. Apps like Snapchat are another option for sending and receiving custom pictures or videos. They are another option for sending and receiving custom pictures or videos.

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EDUCATION

SDSU professor creates free online studio series

The MFA Musical Theatre Program at SDSU is proud to introduce the SDSU Studio Series, available to university musical theatre faculty and students worldwide.

As an alternative to his in-person Theatre 627 course, MFA professor and Theatre Program Director Robert Meffe, with the help of Stephen Brotebeck, Devon Hunt, and Eden Hildebrand, created the new SDSU Studio Series.

SDSU Studio Series consists of free online interviews with top musical theatre industry professionals. Each episode will be an informal conversation and Q&A sessions about the craft and the business of Broadway, utilizing the free online platform, Zoom.

The first episode that went online April 8, featured Laura Osnes, Broadway’s original Cinderella. Ronnie Parker, and Julie Trojan. April 10 featured Mary-Mitchell Campbell, Broadway composer, orchestra music director, conductor, and the founder and co-executive director of ASTEP – Artists Striving To End Poverty. Richard Maltby, Jr., a Tony Award-winning Broadway writer, lyricist, director, and producer was featured April 13; and Jeffrey Saver, a Broadway music director, conductor, arranger, and composer for Broadway greats like “Chita Rivera” was featured on April 15. Meffe was inspired by the show “Inside the Actors Studio,” formally seen on the Bravo channel, which featured in-depth interviews with actors and industry professionals about their acting process and craft.

“I want educators to incorporate this series into their curriculum and use it as a replacement for a class they can’t teach. It is a different, but very valuable, learning outcome for students worldwide,” said Meffe.

Meffe said he wanted to give hope to everyone who was blindsided by having to learn how to teach virtually in such a short amount of time due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

“I wanted to do something big and show that SDSU is a leader in MFA education, and anyone who teaches musical theatre can count on us to help,” said Meffe.

Combining Meffe’s and Brotebeck’s contact lists from their work on Broadway, they reached out to all of the industry professionals they knew to be a part of this Studio Series.

“The response was overwhelming,” said Meffe. “Within minutes I heard back from people.”

Each episode will air at 1:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST) on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and last about 90 minutes. All of the episodes will be recorded for anyone to access, anytime.

For a full schedule or to access the archive, visit the SDSU Studio Series website at studio.series.wordpress.com.

SDSU professeor creates free online studio series

Broadway’s Laura Osnes was featured in the first SDSU Studio Series online course. (Country SDSU)

St. Katharine Drexel Academy news

By KELLY BONDE

As with most, if not all schools in California, St. Katharine Drexel Academy has temporarily closed to help do our part in flattening the curve of COVID-19. However, we want to still prepare for the future of SKDA.

With the Bishop’s announcement of all Catholic school temporary closures in our diocese on March 13, SKDA was able to transform our curriculum to remote learning overnight, which is something we are very proud of. While we know nothing can replicate the social and physical experience of school (which we miss dearly), we are still able to continue to offer our students a robust and innovative curriculum where face-to-face conversations are still happening and the social emotional needs of our students are still being addressed.

Starting on March 16, students have been utilizing products from Google to stay active in their education, such as Google Classroom and Google Hangouts. Teachers have been able to check in with students as a class and one-on-one through daily “office hours” and scheduled conferences. Counseling services are still being offered through Zoom to have our wonderful USD counselors check in with students who might be struggling with this current reality. The school has also lent out devices to any family in need.

We’ve received such positive feedback from parents so far, and I wanted to share a comment from an SKDA parent of a third grade student:

“I have so many friends that haven’t even heard from their schools and have no idea what the plan is. I know it has been a huge effort on your part and you will get some many questions but really such an amazing job and have never felt so justified in my school decision.”

While tours and shadow days are temporarily on hold, our enrollment for next school year is still open. We are able to email applications and our office is open if you would like to drop off any completed applications you have, as long as we all practice social distancing.

“We know this is a challenging time for all families, but we still want you to know we are here for you. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you need anything or would like to set up a one on one Zoom session or phone call to talk more about our school.”

—Kelly Bond is principal of St. Katharine Drexel Academy.

At the Hornbrook Center for Dentistry, our goal is to always provide the highest level of dental care in an atmosphere that is comfortable, relaxing, and a very special experience for every one of our patients. Uncompromising in both quality of care and customer service are the reasons we have had such a loyal community following the past 30 years in San Diego.
Saluting nation's unsung heroes during COVID-19 pandemic

By STEVE JONES

In spite of the uncertainty that coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused, there are still many unsung heroes working behind the scenes. At SDSU, hard-working men and women who are continuing to work amid the coronavirus outbreak. From hospital staff to delivery services, to pharmacies, to grocery stores, transportation and logistics and security companies, there are many employees who, while they may not wear capes, are our nation's heroes. These largely unsung heroes are helping us survive this crisis by driving vehicles filled with crucial supplies, stocking store shelves, filling prescriptions and providing essential services.

Now is the time to share your appreciation or our nation's unsung heroes. While most are deeply thankful for the doctors, nurses and emergency workers who are tending to the sick, we should also be appreciative for the men and women who hold essential jobs that require they show up to work during the pandemic.

The front line in the pandemic are the heroes working at grocery stores, gas stations, convenience stores and take-out restaurants. These individuals are keeping us healthy by providing essential services that we desperately need. Consider thanking your supermarket's shop clerk who is doing their best to keep the shelves stocked with necessities and the cashier who is ringing up the purchases. Express your gratitude to the Amazon delivery person who brought essentials to your home.

Our nation should all honk in appreciation for the men and women driving tractor-trailer rigs across country who are delivering vital food and supplies at an unprecedented pace.

Some police departments in several states are helping truck drivers find safe places to park and are even arranging to get food directly to the driver.

Let’s salute our hard-working hero farmers across the U.S. who are the country’s first responders. Nationwide, there are over 1 million security professionals on the job, classified as essential personnel, who can be put in high-risk situations as they confront and contain criminals engaged in theft, trespassing, gang activity and every other manner of unlawful behavior that occurs.

Employees, shareholders and other stakeholders look to their business leaders for strength and direction. Let’s express our gratitude to the company leaders who are sharing their intel to help others during this challenging time. For example, some leaders are publicly sharing their crisis plans, which include employee communications with information about COVID-19, how it’s transmitting and what we are doing about it, employee FAQs, and links to resources with more information.

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

Community Council adopts virtual protocols for meetings

Even though it has always been talked about, none of us probably thought we’d be in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic but we are. Please follow all the recommended protocols and stay safe.

Despite the physical situa-
tion, we are all finding ways to keep things going. The College Area Community Council and Planning Board is no exception. Although the April meeting was cancelled, we plan to keep things moving forward, remotely. Our plan is to hold meetings virtually. At our April meetings, we typically seat board members that have been either re-elected or newly-elected and elect new officers. This April, our plan was also to fill one seat, with a one-year term that remained emp-
ty by board election of a new member that has met all the criteria. Following the April meeting, the board meets at a special meet-
ing/retreat or assign committee members, adopt a budget and set new goals for the coming year.

Because all of the aforemen-
tioned items are, technically, in-process, we will continue to think of the board, the planning department and the community as a cohesive unit.

Our hope is that this will only be a short period of time. Please stay tuned for more updates regarding the meetings mentioned.

On another note, we have a vital community. Let’s keep it that way. Please support our local businesses! Consider ordering take-out or delivery from your favorite restaurants. If your other needs are typically met by a local business, find out if they're open and patronize them, albeit, fol-

—Jose Reynoso is chair of the College Area Community Council and Planning Board.

College Area Community Plan status

As you know, the College Area Community Council has been working on ideas to present to the city when the city updates our community plan from the existing one written in 1989. The CACC committee has been working for over two years gathering input from citizens at public meetings, local neighborhood groups, and soliciting feedback from businesses, residents and city officials. A steering committee of local residents and experts in the field, and an advisory committee representing SDSU, developers and other stake holders finalized the report.

That report shall now be for-
mally passed to the city plan-
ing and development depart-
ments. In the meantime, the College Area Community Council is working with the city to assist the city planners in the development of that guide. They will be meeting with the city planners on an on-going monthly basis using Zoom video meetings.

Members of the group are Saul Amerling as chair, Ta’it Galaway, Nathan Causman and Shannon Higdon (city planners), Bob Higdon, Robert Montano, Jose Reynoso, Tom Melville, and Angela Espinoza. The Zoom meetings are open to the public and anyone interested can receive an invitation by contacting presid@ccac.org. The next meeting will be on April 22 at 4:30 p.m. The agenda will consist of introductions, a review of public written feedback and a discussion on next steps for the city planners of next steps in light of COVID-19.

—Saul Amerling is chair of the College Area Community Plan Update Committee.
Alvarado Estates Association news

By SUSAN CLARKE CRISAFULLI

As the coronavirus has caused many of our lives to change drastically, it has not dampened our spirits!

The Alvarado Estates Association has a social committee that plans events throughout the year. And now, being in limbo and not knowing when we will be allowed to socialize, the committee wanted to come up with an event that allowed for some break in the boredom but also follow responsible social distancing.

They came up with a Friday Pizza Happy Hour. Dang Brother Pizza, with its signature fire truck, served up wood fired pizzas. It proved to be so wildly popular that he will be coming every Friday for the month of April.

To ensure our members safety, they pick a time slot to arrive at our community park between 4 and 7 p.m., which allows for a slow and steady pace. In addition, a pop-up tent at the curb creates a drive thru, and the HOA is requiring face masks and 10 feet of social distancing.

Several members have come forward with other ideas to help support the local community businesses, as well as helping neighbors with shopping. We are hoping to support another food truck and we’re even trying to source fresh fish and fruits and vegetables to help those businesses. Hopefully this quarantine will be over sooner than later. But until then we are a community coming together to help and support each other and our greater community.

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Rolando Community Council news

All April Rolando Community Council meetings and events have been cancelled. This includes the community meeting on the April 21, as well as any events regularly put on by the CIT and/or CET groups. Visit RolandoCC.org for updates about future meetings and events.

We encourage you to stay home as much as possible. If you need groceries picked up, email Jackie Flohr at Jackie@RolandoCC.org and she will connect you with someone nearby for assistance.

Wear mask/bandana/whatever face covering and gloves outside your home! The mask protects everyone from whatever you might spread. The gloves protect you from whatever everyone else might have spread.

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Open restaurants in College Area*

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Ackee Tree Jamaican Cuisine
5712 El Cajon Blvd.
619-450-6284

Adalberto's Mexican Food
6685 El Cajon Blvd.
619-698-4172

Alfonor Mediterranean
5965 El Cajon Blvd.
619-269-9904

Black Market Brewing
4803 Art St.
619-866-6033

Broken Yolk
520 College Ave.
619-501-3030

Chega Hut Toasted Subs
6364 El Cajon Blvd.
619-269-1111

Cheba Hut Toasted Subs
6364 El Cajon Blvd.
619-269-1111

Chuy’s Taco Shop
6663 El Cajon Blvd.
619-469-7777

College Sub Shop
6150 El Cajon Blvd.
619-286-4221

Corbin’s Q
6548 El Cajon Blvd.
619-913-3287

Dirty Birds
6490 El Cajon Blvd.
619-265-2086

Duet Coffee
6526 El Cajon Blvd.
619-230-5787

Epic Wings
6715 El Cajon Blvd.
619-462-9464

Epic Wings
5120 College Ave.
619-286-3742

Everbowl
5120 College Ave.
619-255-0511

Fish Pit Sushi
4630 College Ave.
619-546-9389

Garden Fresh Grill
6165 El Cajon Blvd.
619-287-2373

Himalayan Yak & Yeti
6875 El Cajon Blvd.
619-303-3155

Keg N Bottle
6860 El Cajon Blvd.
619-265-0482

La Moon Thai
6366 El Cajon Blvd.
619-546-9990

Lolita’s Mexican Food
5120 College Ave.
619-432-1310

Milo’s Pizza
6866 El Cajon Blvd.
619-462-6456

Penelope’s Mexican Food
7201 El Cajon Blvd.
619-825-7158

Pesto Italian Craft Kitchen
6011 El Cajon Blvd.
619-265-2700

RB Sushi
5943 El Cajon Blvd.
619-265-9400

SalaThai
6161 El Cajon Blvd.
619-229-9050

Scrimshaw Coffee
5542 El Cajon Blvd.
619-501-2355

Senior Panchos
5089 College Ave.
619-287-9272

Surf & Soul Spot
7229 El Cajon Blvd.
619-439-8801

Tajima
6061 El Cajon Blvd.
619-269-0838

Terra American Bistro
7091 El Cajon Blvd.
619-262-7098

The Alcove Wine and Beer
5540 El Cajon Blvd.
619-966-7877

The Living Room Coffeehouse
5900 El Cajon Blvd.
619-286-8434

Trujillo Taco Shop
6450 El Cajon Blvd.
619-286-8434

Trujillo’s Taco Shop
5119 College Ave.
619-583-4182

Woodstock’s Pizza
6145 El Cajon Blvd.
619-265-0999

*List provided by College Area Business District. If your business is open and you wish to be added, please email information to jeff@sdnews.com.

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8 April 17 – May 14, 2020
College Times Courier

FOOD & DRINK
College Area real estate amid coronavirus pandemic

By SARAH WARD

The national real estate market has somewhat slowed in the past few weeks, and that slowdown has includ- ed San Diego and the College Area. There was a delay in the decline of closings as there were quite a few deals already in escrow in mid-March when the lockdown steps began. This year was going to be another very busy year in the local real estate market prior to the lockdown, but most of the deals in escrow last month have now closed and new escrows have slowed a bit.

One deal I was working on for a while was with a first-time buyer looking for a duplex and we went into escrow in mid-March. While we were able to get the physical inspections completed just prior to the lockdown, I finished the transaction primarily over Zoom by meeting with the parties over the face-time platform which worked quite well. It was actually quite convenient for all parties as we spent a total of several hours over the final two weeks of the transaction on Zoom discussing the results of the inspection, disclosures, and loan documents. While I had been using the online face to face software for a while, especially with out-of-town clients, I have started using this tech-nology with local clients as well.

The online notary business has al-so seen a boom in recent business. A five-year-old company that performs real estate closings and notarizations online, Notarize, states it expects to complete $100 billion in real estate closings this year. The real estate in-dustry was already slowly moving more processes to online, but it seems that the current lockdown will accel- erate that trend.

The local market has not shut down and real estate transactions continue, new homes are coming on the market currently, banks are writing loans, and deals are closing. The de-mand for local real estate properties remains fairly strong and the National Association of Realtors only expects a decrease of 10% in closed sales this year from last year.

Many expect this lockdown to end in the next month or so and for re-al estate transactions to get back to normal. Preapproved buyers are still searching for properties on the internet as usual, and quality properties at a good value are still going into escrow fairly quickly.

The difference between the 2008 to 2010 slowdown compared to now is that buyers and sellers currently ex-pect this slowdown to be temporary. The slowdown 12 years ago was a bit more scary because the length of the downturn was so unknown. Nobody was confident at the time on how long that recession, might last. Two years? Five years? No one really knew at the time and the market prices dropped significantly as buyers dried up.

When buyers sense that prices are expected to decrease in the near-term, buyers will move to the sidelines. That is what happened in 2008, and home prices did then drop. However, current-ly, most feel this is just a very tempo-rary slowdown, resulting in prices and transactions actually staying fairly steady for now.

92115 REPORT

For the month of March, 2020, closed sales for single family homes in 92115 was 18 compared to 37 this time last year. End of month inven- tory of homes available for sale was 25 homes compared to 62 this time last year, but the median sale price reached an all-time high of $667,000 compared to $530,000 year over year.

If the lockdown ends soon, I would expect a fairly steady and strong resi-dential real estate market this summer as buyer demand will likely remain du-rable. If the lockdown continues into the summer, I will expect significant property price erosion.

—Sarah Ward is a Realtor with College Area Realty. Reach her at sarahward8321@gmail.com, or at 858-431-6043.

El Cerrito Community Council news

We know many of our El Cerrito community members are wondering how they can help others right now, so here are a few ideas that are not only great for others, but good for your heart too.

• **Check on your neighbors.** Contact your neigh-bors, especially elderly neighbors, to make sure they are okay and do not need anything.
• Help supply each other’s needs. We are trying to not go out much, so someone might be short on certain items— toiletry paper, paper towels, flour, cleansers, etc. If you feel safe, you can visit through screen doors. If not, make a porch drop off so there is no contact.
• **Give blood.** The San Diego Blood Bank reports that their blood supplies are critically low. All healthy, eligible individuals are en-couraged to schedule a blood or platelet donation.
• **Donate food and money.** If you are able to without shortening your own stock, donate food items to groups and churches that are help-ing supply food to more people right now or make money donations.
• **Take care of yourself and your family!** Make sure your family’s needs are covered. Reach out for help if you need anything. You can only help others when your house-hold is healthy and its needs are covered.

—Laura Riebau writes on behalf of the El Cerrito Community Council.

Mesa Colony Community Group news

The Mesa Colony group has not held a public meeting in several weeks.

Informally, members con-tinue to check on each other by email and when walking the neighborhood for exercise.

A few weeks ago, a few neighbors held an afternoon cocktail party on the side-walk, maintaining their so-cial distancing.

While walking, I have no-ticed a few neighbors who have placed bears or oth-er stuffed animals in win-dows to give the toddlers out exercising with their parents something to look for.

Many in the group continue to try to support our commu-nity restaurants by order-ing and picking up take out meals. We urge you readers to do the same.

—Saul Amerling writes on behalf of the Mesa Colony Community Group.

CVEA continues from Page 6

Look like waves of thorns, but that I know will be blooming soon. It is easy to take this for granted, but the campus land-scape is truly exceptional.

On a related note, the City of San Diego recently offered free tree planting in front of peo-ple’s homes. I hope residents of College View Estates and nearby communities partici-pate in this program to engage more with nature and its gifts.

—Prashant Bharadwaj is president of the College View Estates Association.
is because the plasma has developed antibodies against the virus. “Hospitals are reaching out to us on a daily basis for convalescent plasma,” said David Wells, CEO, San Diego Blood Bank. “If anyone has recovered from the virus, we are calling on them to join us in helping protect others in critical condition fight COVID-19.”

Individuals can donate convalescent plasma if they have a confirmed positive test for COVID-19 and have no symptoms for the last 28 days. People with a subsequent confirmed negative test can donate after 14 days of symptom resolution. People are encouraged to fill out the form even if they have not yet been tested. To submit contact information to be qualified as a convalescent plasma donor, visit sandiegoblood.org/convalescentplasma. Donors will also need to meet routine donor screening criteria.

AVOID COVID-19 SCAMS

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

Added Surwillo: “The FBI is warning the public that Costco is not texting or using social media platforms to reach the public or its customers to provide a ‘stimulus check,’ ‘freebies,’ or a ‘stimulus package’ in fake messaging. It is not possible to click on this type of unsolicited link. Do not provide personal information for unsolicited links.”

LINCOLN CLUB CALLS FOR TASK FORCE TO RE-OPEN SD ECONOMY

The Lincoln Club of San Diego County, a pro-business civic association representing over 300 local businesses, is calling on the mayor of San Diego and chairman of the board of supervisors to establish a task force to advise regional leaders on best practices for re-opening San Diego’s economy as soon as it’s safe and responsible to do so.

Industries and associations recommended by the Lincoln Club for this task force include business organizations like the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, the San Diego Unified Port & Visitor’s Bureau, the San Diego County Chapter of the California Restaurant Association, and other associations representing San Diego’s distressed economy.

The Lincoln Club is asking Mayor Kevin Faulconer and County Chairman Greg Cox to assemble a task force because of the devastating impact the coronavirus and sheltering-in-place are wreaking on our local economy.
Thinking of Buying or Selling? Take Advantage of These FREE Offers!

SELLERS:
FREE "PRECISE PRICE" HOME VALUATION
FREE "ROOM-BY-ROOM IMPROVEMENT REVIEW"
FREE 1-YEAR SELLER'S LIABILITY INSURANCE PLAN

BUYERS:
FREE "WHAT CAN I AFFORD?" QUALIFICATION
FREE "BUYER BREAKDOWN" CONSULTATION
FREE "WELCOME HOME" PHOTOSHOOT

Call Sarah Today to Schedule Your Appointment! 858-431-6043

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