To the finish

While a cluster of landlubbers looked on from the Embarcadero, the action was in full swing on San Diego Bay Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 17 and 18. That’s when replicas of two ships from the Age of Sail – the Lynx and the Californian – heated things up in a mock battle, just like the real deal from the early 19th century. The Lynx, above, is a 122-foot schooner patterned after fighting ships from the War of 1812. At 93 feet, the Californian is the clone of a cutter whose personnel enforced federal law during the Gold Rush days of the 1840s and ’50s.

Close to home
Fed funds squeezed from schools in two beach areas near Downtown

By SEBASTIAN RUIZ | DOWNTOWN NEWS

Schools in the near-Downtown communities of Pacific Beach and Ocean Beach and in La Jolla are poised to receive less federal funding this year to support students whose families struggle financially.

The San Diego Unified School Board of Education voted 3–2 on Jan. 27 to give less federal funding to some beach-area schools and shift it to other schools.

SDUSD board member Richard Barrera said the move was an effort to give money to schools that have more students from poorer families. Barrera voted to shift the money, but he said he’d reversed last week’s decision.

“I made a mistake,” Barrera said. “I think I jumped into a decision without… community input. My feeling is that we need to back up a little.”

The board will address the issue at its next meeting Tuesday, Feb. 10, according to Barrera.

Schools in the beach areas that stand to lose funding include:
- Pacific Beach Elementary: $31,732
- Spreckels Elementary: $66,444
- Ocean Beach Elementary: $35,476
- Clairemont High: $176,384
- University City High: $212,660
- Point Loma High: $198,156

Board members John de Beck and Katharine Nakamura voted against the motion to move the money, while board members Sheila Jackson, John Lee Evans and Barrera voted in favor.

Nakamura said the board also eliminated the district’s “6 to 6” funding plan.

SEE HOME, Page 4

‘Inner story’: Downtown is a chief cultural exporter for design students Platt College

By MARTIN JONES | WESTLIN

Marketa Hancova’s memories of catch-as-catch-can housecleaning and halting English are dimmed by the hard work and persistence that marks her immigration to America almost 20 years ago. San Diego—specifically Platt College, where Hancova is dean of education—is the richer for her residency and her love of culture, instilled from day one in her native Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic). A thick Eastern European accent frames her excellent adopted tongue; her eyes shift and widen as she draws comparisons between domestic and foreign arts education. Her allegiances on the topic may lie with her native country, but her life’s work has taken the bulk of its shape a third of the world away.

This may seem off-point for a story about Downtown’s stature as a cultural resource, and in the long run, it probably is. But if the city’s developers want to build the world-class urban center they say they do, they’d be well advised to read the material between the lines.

Hancova is an avid advocate of centering culture as a teaching aid, a path to educational excellence and, by extension, to a well-rounded citizenry. Symphony Towers; the Museum of Contemporary Art; the San Diego Repertory, Spreckels, Balboa, Civic and Old Globe theaters: Hancova and her students visit them regularly as the real-life complement to a national education system that otherwise prepares its target populations for mediocrity. The idea is to stimulate and inspire artistic thought, enhancing the quality of classwork and the depth of the human experience.

Platt, a 300-student Rolando-area school offering degree and diploma programs in graphic and web design, multimedia, three-dimensional animation and digital video, has left its mark on the city core. The students have designed the programs and all printing material for the Rep’s last five seasons; a second exhibit of their work at the Central library has just ended; and their designs are on display four times a year in the foyer of Horton Plaza’s Lyceum Theatre. They’ve also been integral to visual-arts programs at Silver Fate and Terrasanta elementaries and have

SEE PLATT, Page 3

COURTESY PHOTO

The San Diego Symphony may specialize in a fine art, but the applied arts often pave the way for its recognition in the marketplace. Above, this image by Platt College student Kelly Barry illustrates the school’s frequent use of Downtown resources as an inspiration for its graphic design projects.
THE LANDING
$1,795,000
Enjoy proximity to the heart of downtown from across the bay in this prestigious penthouse at The Landing on charming Coronado. Spectacular bay views, 1,944 square feet, 2 bedrooms, 2 fireplaces, large left and fabulous amenities.

BAY VI
$399,000
Beautiful spacious west-facing, 2-bedroom with gorgeous views, a light and bright floor plan, generous rooms and wonderful upgrades. Short sale with an offer in the approval process, back ups still welcome.

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Luxurious Tuscan old world style, 3-bedroom home featured in Downtown by Designs Urban Lifestyles Tour with exquisite views. Elegant, quiet, warm and gracious, a serene sanctuary above it all in the sought-after Marina District.

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HARBOR CLUB
$999,000
A lovely 2-bedroom with beautiful views of the ocean, harbor, convention center sails and Coronado bridge. You’ll love living in the prestigious Harbor Club and especially treasure the lovely and spacious Master suite.

ICON
$340,000
Custom finishes, granite countertops, stainless steel appliance, hardwood floors, high-end carpeting and a private balcony make this beautiful one bedroom in the ball park district the perfect East Village value.

CROWN BAY
$449,000
A great location just across from the convention center gives you access to the best of the Gaslamp and Marina Districts from this 2-bedroom, fifth floor condo overlooking the airy interior courtyard. Low HOA, excellent value!

PARK WEST
$449,000
A great location just across from the convention center gives you access to the best of the Gaslamp and Marina Districts from this 2-bedroom, fifth floor condo overlooking the airy interior courtyard. Low HOA, excellent value!

CORONADO SHORES
$2,570,000
Completely remodeled 2-bedroom, 2-bath, elegant and modern penthouse with panoramic views of downtown San Diego, Coronado marina, Glorietta Bay, golf course and beyond. Floor-to-ceiling glass and wonderful beach access.

MERIDIAN
$649,000
Spacious, open and bright, one bedroom with a gracious and expansive great room concept plan ideal for entertaining, lounging and dining. Eastern exposure balcony to enjoy morning sun, moon rises and dazzling night lights.

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CORONADO  DEL MAR  FALLBROOK  LA JOLLA  POINT LOMA  RANCHO SANTA FE  SANTALUZ
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exhibited prominently at the Del Mar Fair. Hancova even helped spearhead trips abroad, having accompanied a group of students to Spain last year.

The world, after all, is the only authentic campus there is.

“What gives me perspective,” the 45-year-old Hancova said, “is the fact that I come from Europe. Even though I’m from a [formerly] communist country, the education was wonderful. It seems luxurious com- pared to what we have here. I was exposed to the arts so much. Research shows the correla- tion between being exposed to the arts and academic success. The facts are absolutely there.

She’s right. Wholesale studies reflect both sides of the picture — arts-based curricula yield higher standardized test scores and greater critical thinking, take ‘em away, and academic success plummets as dropout rates increase. The latter can’t augur well for Cali- fornia’s kids. In 2007, the SRI Research institute reported that 89 percent of California’s kids. In 2007, the SRI Research institute reported that 89 percent of the 2005-06 academic year. It’s at around 15 percent prepared for the potential homeowner clien- telle that seeks a true urban lifestyle in all its forms. One fewer set of shops and restaurants that might have attracted Ion patron- age and thus enriched the center- city cultural and residential scenes. Above all, one less “classroom” for the potential homeowner to visit in a city core already over crowded; each with a different opinion. One fewer instance of seeking to send an army of inspectors, each with a different opinion on code conformity — one thing led to another, and Ion was soon on its way to Mission Valley, where it remains today.

One less Downtown attraction for the potential homeowner is available at www.platt.edu. One fewer instance of seeking to send an army of inspectors, each with a different opinion on code conformity — one thing led to another, and Ion was soon on its way to Mission Valley, where it remains today.

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**Police investigate girl’s assault at Balboa Park**

San Diego police detectives are investigating the sexual assault of a 4-year-old girl in Balboa Park after she became separated from her family during a game of hide-and-seek.

The incident occurred near the Spanish Village around 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25. The victim’s parents and a friend started searching for her shortly after contacted a San Diego Fire Department personnel at the park.

Shortly after the victim was found, she disclosed she had been molested. She said the suspect walked up to her near the Natural History Museum and said he would take her back to her family. He then allegedly walked the victim to his car, parked in a lot near either the Natural History Museum or Spanish Village, and molested her. The victim was then released. Detectives do not have a description of the suspect’s vehicle.

The suspect is described as a white male about age 55, 5 feet, 10 inches tall and weighing 180 pounds. He has white hair and was wearing eyeglasses, a green windbreaker, tan pants and a hat.

Anyone with information concerning this case is asked to contact San Diego Police Department’s Child Abuse Unit at (619) 531-2260 or San Diego County Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477.

**Homelessness up 9% in 2 years, task force says**

The county Regional Task Force on the Homeless, which tracks, measures and analyzes trends in the homeless population, has reported that almost 7,600 county residents were without a home as of the end of January last year. This figure represents a 9 percent increase in homeless people compared with that of 2006 figures.

Some 400 enumerators on behalf of the task force recently fanned out across the county to conduct counts of those without homes. The point-in-time survey ended on Friday, Jan. 30. Despite the large volume of information, results can take up to a year to be sufficiently analyzed.

Officials from various agencies suggest there are many “first-time” homeless — the most recent and hardest-hit victims of the economic crisis — that are expected to drive numbers even higher.

The Regional Homeless Profile for 2008, a fact sheet and more information are available online at www.rhfd.org.

**Same-sex couples tout Freedom to Marry Day**

At marriage counts nationwide, same-sex couples will request marriage licenses on National Freedom to Marry Day, Saturday, Feb. 12, to raise awareness of the negative effects these couples and their families experience from not being able to legally marry.

Local couples in San Diego are participating in the national marriage licenses at the County Clerk’s Office from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. The event is co-sponsored by the San Diego County Administration Building complex at 1600 Pacific Highway Downtown.

The event is co-sponsored by the Marriage Equality USA San Diego and San Diego Equality Campaign.

Marriage Equality USA chapters have been holding the annual Freedom to Marry Day since 2001, calling on leaders and businesses to ensure an accurate count of the population.

This new local office, one of 12 opening in San Diego, will be the first to offer operations for the surrounding communities. During peak operations, the office will direct people from the surrounding areas.

The office is located at 1370 India St. in San Diego. For more information, call (619) 684-6100.

**Fire-Rescue looking for a few good men/women**

The San Diego Fire Department is accepting applications from those seeking to join it until 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11 — and the application is the easiest part of the process.

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and possess a high school diploma and an Emergency Medical Technician Certificate from the state of California or the National Registry. A CPR certification or its equivalent from an American Heart Association member organization and a valid California driver’s license are also required.

Following application approval, a written exam will be administered in April, and those who score highest will then take the city of San Diego physical ability test. Those who successfully jump these hurdles will go through a 14-week academy in fall, during which potential recruits will receive between $2,581 and $3,115 a month. Upon graduation, recruits will be promoted to Fire Fighter I, with a salary range of $3,275 to $3,715 a month.

If you feel you have the necessary stuff, the department strongly encourages you to complete an application. Information on the application process is online at www.sandiego.gov/fireandems/publicrecruitment.php.

**The Regional Homeless Profile for 2008**

The Regional Homeless Profile for 2008 includes people found living on the street, along with data from more than 90 agencies that provide emergency shelter and transitional housing programs.

**Census office opens for 2010 population count**

Massive job recruitment is expected prior to the once-a-decade U.S. Census Bureau population count — and the bureau is marking the loss with the opening of a new officethis week.

Meanwhile, the bureau has launched an outreach campaign to encourage leaders and businesses to ensure an accurate count of the population.

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USA Sevens set to run again in a real international duel

By RONAN GRAY | DOWNTOWNNEWS

Super Bowl Sunday has passed. The “world” championship of football has been decided for another year, and diehard fans across the nation are falling into despair. It is the beginning of the long, bleak months of the off-season. Across the nation, as they somberly pack away their war paint, oversize foam appendages and plastic Viking shields, many may very well be contemplating what could have been. Most have already resigned themselves to the boredom of spring and the long, hot days of summer before the return of football.

For those fans lucky enough to live in San Diego, though, the outlook may not be so bleak—especially if they are willing to broaden their horizons just a bit. In a few short weeks, a truly international football event is coming to town. Rugby—the well-spring of the American game itself—will take over the heart of Downtown San Diego for a weekend of nonstop action on Feb. 14 and 15 when the USA Sevens rugby tour touches down at Petco Park.

The annual competition, the largest international rugby tournament in North America, is in its sixth year and will be at Petco Park for the fourth year in a row. It will feature 16 nations competing in 44 games over the course of a two-day event. A fan zone inside the venue will feature music, fun and, of course, beer. The Sevens tournament will also feature a women’s competition for the first time—the perfect Valentine’s date.

At first glance, the two games seem vastly different—there are no pads or helmets on the rugby pitch, and the game is essentially played nonstop, with the same players filling both offensive and defensive roles. Passing the ball forward is not allowed in rugby, and only the player carrying the ball may be tackled or blocked.

The Sevens tournament at Petco will feature a variant of the full 15-player Rugby Union game, as the name suggests. Instead of 15 players, only 7 per side play in this fast-paced version of the game.

Rugby itself has been played in the U.S. alongside the modern variant of the game for many years. It is most popular along the Eastern seaboard, but there are teams in many colleges across the nation, including here in San Diego at SDSU and USCD.

Most amateur rugby players play a noncontact version of the game gaining popularity in San Diego. Pick-up “touch” rugby games can be found most weekends in area parks and at the beach in Del Mar and South Mission Beach. There are several more formal, 15-player or full-contact teams playing in the county too, including The San Diego Surfers, an all women’s team based at Robb Field in Ocean Beach, Mandy Wilson, who plays with the Surfers, says it’s a great way to stay fit.

Beyond that there is a great social aspect to the sport. “Rugby is the most team oriented sport I have ever played and is as much of a club as it is a sport,” said Wilson. “There is an opportunity for any age, gender, ability and experience to play rugby. Teams are always looking for players, and it is a great way to meet people and become part of a team.”

Ruth Oram has been playing touch rugby for more than 10 years with the San Diego Tumeke Touch Club (www.TumekeTouch.com), an informal group of men and women who meet on Saturday mornings to play touch at local parks.

“Touch is growing a lot [in San Diego], mostly from the help of transplanted Aussies and Kiwis,” Oram said after a game on a Saturday morning in Del Mar. On Feb. 12 and 13, The San Diego Invitational Rugby Tournament, an ancillary event to the USA Sevens, will feature play by some of the county’s and the nation’s best 15-player men’s and women’s teams at the Del Mar polo fields in North County. It will be a good place for interested locals to see the game, get a quick fix of full-contact sporting action and perhaps even get more information about playing locally.


Moores, Moorad sign pact on Padres sale

John Moores, San Diego Padres majority owner, and Jeff Moorad, a former Diamondbacks general partner of the Arizona Diamondbacks, have agreed on a pact to run the club at owners’ backs CEO, has five years to effect the team’s $240 million debt service.

In 2008, Forbes magazine valued the Padres at $385 million, $100 million to close his part of the deal.

In 2008, the Padres finished last out of five teams in the National League West race, losing 99 games.

At first glance, the two teams seem vastly different—there are no pads or helmets on the rugby pitch, and the game is essentially played nonstop, with the same players filling both offensive and defensive roles. Passing the ball forward is not allowed in rugby, and only the player carrying the ball may be tackled or blocked.

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Moores, Moorad sign pact on Padres sale

John Moores, San Diego Padres majority owner, and Jeff Moorad, a general partner of the Arizona Diamondbacks, have agreed on a pact that divests Moores of about one-third of his interest in the franchise.

Moores said the value of the club will ultimately be more than $500 million, including debt. Because of the team’s $240 million debt service, Moores still must come up with about $100 million to close his part of the deal.

In 2008, Forbes magazine valued the Padres at $385 million, 19th among major league baseball’s 30 clubs.

Moorad, former Diamondbacks CEO, has five years to exit the franchise. Until then, Moores will represent the club at owners’ meetings and sit on various committees.

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In some circles, last Nov. 18 was a day of national relief, and not just because the year in politics gave way to anticipation about our new crop of local and national leaders. On that day 30 years ago, more than 900 persons took their own lives at Jonestown, Guyana on the order of Peoples Temple founder and self-styled religious leader James Wicus. In a mass suicide, Jones was later found dead with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. With his death, there’s a little less evil in the world; and that’s evolution, as supposedly little else happens that way.

Anthony F. Smith, author of Jossy-Bass publishers’ “The Taboos of Leadership: The 10 Secrets No One Will Tell You About Leaders and What They Think,” recently dropped Jones’ name. No harm done — the co-founder and managing director of Rancho Santa Fe’s Leadership Research Institute was only trying to illustrate the effective reach of leadership on the unsuspecting, sometimes with grossly negative effects.

“Great executives,” Smith recently told San Diego Downtown (San Diego’s premium print people) “make a lot of people think like them” and that they know that “going to challenge the status quo. That goes against nature. We are encouraged to surround ourselves with people who think like us, look like us, sound like us and share our points of view. Ultimately, that doesn’t really make the better for effectiveness in teamwork, political, governmental or whatever the case may be.”

Similarly, Smith said, “When you make an investment in something, financial or emotional or whatever, you work hard at trying to justify that investment rather than disengaging and saying, ‘This was wrong.’ Effective governments… assign accountability to various people or policies and say, ‘If we don’t meet this, we need to go back to the drawing board.’ That’s just not what we have done [on a local level].”

Peter San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders, whose Jan. 14 State of the City address contained warnings about more cuts in city services and the sad state of the local infrastructure. Echoing a currently popular theme, Sanders called for wholesale community involvement in confronting the city’s ills — “They said it was OK not to care about the city as the whole,” he declared, “but only to care about your little piece of it.”

It’s the “they” part that has me stymied, because Sanders never really identifies “they” beyond “the culture” that got the city in its current fix. Asking his talking about City Council, he’s inferring that Council comprises a group of yes-men and women who think, and look and sound like another in setting policy. And not surprisingly, the same time, he encourages a set of equally like-minded folks to rally ‘round themselves and pitch in to help the city in its time of need, as if nobody around here volunteers for much at all on their own. The mayor sounds more like Smith describes such leaders — he generalizes about a failure to act, yet he doesn’t concede the myriad shadings within the so-called “culture,” some of which certainly qualify as anti-business as usual.

Sanders is a genuinely decent human being, and his tenure as a local elected official has been a testament to his passion and community service. Even so, he might want to look at Smith’s book, sometime. He might then see his speech as an extension of Smith’s assertions. Sometimes, social indolence is ghoulish.

Many of my friends whose parents have passed away are sorry they did not ask more questions of their history and even sorrier that they did not record or videotape their mother and father. I did it with my mother and found that it is important to ask specific questions to trigger memories, such as: What was it like living in the house you grew up in? How involved with you or your siblings were your parents? In what way? Tell me about your school, what kind of student were you? What did you do for fun? What do you remember as wonderful and as awful? How did you get along with your siblings, cousins, friends? How did you meet your spouse? There are questions about childhood, adolescence, young adulthood. Don’t forget to ask how they feel about aging, it might lead to some insights you can use. You can go on to leisure activities, books, food, the impact of political, social and grand-parents. How parents felt about having you as a child — their hopes and fears. Any surprises?

And so we live in the present, aware of our past and of a future in which we will not participate. We can, instead, extend ourselves into the distant past, linked to people not yet born, as well as into the distant future, linked to people not yet born.

Josefowitz is a regular contributor to the San Diego Community Newspaper Group.

Stuck in the past, poised for the future

BY NATASHA JOSE FOWITZ

Strange how we are interested in our past — children delight in stories of their. We close the loop by wanting to be children — some general in the Civil War or to America on the Mayflower is revered, and stories about grandparents who arrived in steerage young and penniless and made a fortune, or at least a good enough living to send their children to college.

Many of our friends whose parents have passed away are sorry they did not ask more questions of their history and even sorrier that they did not record or videotape their mother and father. I did it with my mother and found that it is important to ask specific questions to trigger memories, such as: What was it like living in the house you grew up in? How involved with you or your siblings were your parents? In what way? Tell me about your school, what kind of student were you? What did you do for fun? What do you remember as wonderful and as awful? How did you get along with your siblings, cousins, friends? How did you meet your spouse? There are questions about childhood, adolescence, young adulthood. Don’t forget to ask how they feel about aging, it might lead to some insights you can use. You can go on to leisure activities, books, food, the impact of political, social and grand-parents. How parents felt about having you as a child — their hopes and fears. Any surprises?

And so we live in the present, aware of our past and of a future in which we will not participate. We can, instead, extend ourselves into the distant past, linked to people not yet born, as well as into the distant future, linked to people not yet born.

Josefowitz is a regular contributor to the San Diego Community Newspaper Group.

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Stuck in the past, poised for the future

BY NATASHA JOSE FOWITZ

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Interest Rates are at historic lows and its a buyers market call now for a quick mortgage pre-approval!
San Diego, CA – Pets of all breeds and sizes are being abandoned in ever-increasing numbers due to record foreclosures, natural disasters like hurricane Katrina and the California fires. On average, shelters have 30 percent more animals than they did this time last year.

Through her feature length documentary film titled “Rescue Me”, which chronicles the journey of a group of dogs, some rescued, others lost or facing euthanasia—San Diego based, award-winning filmmaker Jude Pauline Artenstein became acutely aware of this national tragedy and it’s impact on the local dog rescue and shelter community.

In an effort to participate in positive action in her home community Jude decided to organize the upcoming 1st Annual Doggie Street Festival. This one-day pet celebration and adoption event will be held on Sunday March 1, 2009; at NTC Park in Liberty Station from 9AM to 4PM. Admission is FREE. This is a non-profit, 501c3 event. www.doggystreetfestival.org

More than 20 breed-specific rescue groups and local shelters, will be attending, with adoptable pets in an effort to find permanent and loving homes. Among them are Helen Woodward Animal Center, San Diego Humane Society and SPCA, Labrador Rescuers, Chihuahua Rescue, FOCAS and SNAP, The Dog Squad, Beagles & Buddies, It’s the Pits.

The 1st Annual Doggie Street Festival will celebrate our furry best friends, with fashion designers from Fashion Career College, walking the runway with adopted pets in their glam costumes, pet book booth where autographed copies of John Grogan’s recent movie Marley & Me will be auctioned, a free veterinary clinic to advise new “parents” on health issues for their dogs, live music, speakers on training, obedience and other topical issues, dog demonstrations, and a fantastic KIDS ART AREA, and of course varied and wonderful auction items, traditional festival food and merchandise for pets and their people.

Duncan
Pet Peeve: Dog owners who don’t clean up after their dogs.
Favorite Food: Natural balance turkey flavored dog food roll
Favorite Pastimes: Chasing pigeons
Favorite Toy: Frozen food filled Kong
Obsessions: Anything that flies (and horses)
Naughtiest Deed: Stealing other dog’s toys at the Dog Park

San Diego Pet Supply
619-234-3611
www.sandiegopetupply.com
Store Hours: Monday-Saturday - 9am-7pm and 10am-4pm on Sunday.
Located at the corner of 15th and Market street in San Diego’s East Village.
We have been serving San Diego since 1875. 4th generation mom and pop feed store. We stock all major brands of food for your pet. As well as shampoo, toys, aquatic and bird supplies. Our 6600 square foot warehouse is fully stocked. We are located at 1490 Island Ave. Downtown East Village.
Thank you San Diego for your continued support and we look forward to serving you at our bigger and better location West Nile Virus is active so pick up your FREE REPELLENT with us today!!! for more info.log on to: WWW.SDFIGHTTHEBITE.COM
The MerK Bistro Italiano: Pairing San Diego's Urban Cool with the Romance of Italy

Serving fresh, flavorful Italian cuisine infused with a cool, California twist, the new MerK restaurant captures the essence and ambiance of a fine dining cuisine, while remaining a welcoming, affordable environment for San Diego locals and visitors alike. Located in the heart of downtown’s historic Gaslamp District, the MerK’s chic design radiates cutting-edge Italian style, while the in-house DJ booth, illuminating stone bar and outside patio seating launch weekend party plans. Providing the perfect setting for special celebrations and entertaining outings, the MerK restaurants unique fusion foods are sure to leave a lasting impression.

No time for a sit down dinner? Grab a quick bite at the MerK’s express pizzeria, Krust. Named for its New York style thin crust pizzas, Krust pizzeria roles our fresh dough daily for pizza by the slice or full order pies.

The MerK Bistro Italiano, 820 5th Avenue, GASLAMP. (619) 814-MERK (6375)
“Imperial” Beers both Past and Present

By Tony Clarke

In the winter season we tend to see a host of heartier and stronger beers take up space on our store shelves and local taps. Along with these stronger beers you may see the tag, "Imperial" from time to time. What exactly is an Imperial beer you ask? Well, let’s look at the history a little closer.

In the Merriam-Webster’s English Dictionary, Imperial is defined in its third definition as, “- of superior or unusual size or excellence”. This is the closest and most literal meaning of the modern use of Imperial as it relates to craft beer. Imperial beers are noted for being stronger versions of their traditional counterparts. Stronger meaning they are stronger in alcohol content, and stronger in bolder flavor profiles. You can find Imperial versions of many popular beer styles today. Imperial IPAs, Imperial Brown Ales, Imperial Porters, and even Imperial Alt Ales are available around the county. But why the use of such a regal term? Is it pure marketing savvy, or is there something more? Let’s look deeper.

Upon a further inspection of the history of Imperial beers, we come across the first time “Imperial” was used to describe beer. In the 17th century, Peter the Great of Russia took a diplomatic trip to England in 1698 and they fell in love with English Stouts. They appreciated and enjoyed this beer so much that they requested the product be shipped to the Russian court via their Baltic Sea trade routes. To the embarrassment of the English, the stout beer that arrived for the Russian Czar was spoiled beyond salvage. This did not satisfy the royalties. However, Peter was subsequently removed from power by conspiracy in the mid 18th century and replaced by Catherine II, now title Catherine the Great. The spoiled beer being delivered from England did not amuse Catherine and she demanded a solution.

The Barclay brewery of London solved the problem, by making a particularly strong, bitter stout stable enough to make the long trip across the Baltic Sea to the Russian court. Barclay’s increased the alcohol content and increased the hopping of their stouts to help preserve the quality and flavor of the beer over its thousand mile voyage. The new imported stout was an instant sensation and became known as Imperial Russian Stout. This history closely mirrors the evolution of India Pale Ales (IPAs), where English Pale Ales were spoiling on the long voyage to British-Indian colonies. However, the moniker “Imperial” was not given to IPAs as they were produced for British subjects in service to their country, not royalty. The Imperial tag most correctly describes the beers made for the Russian Czar and the Russian Empire, hence the regal label.

Today, the terminology is used as a modification of its original meaning. Traditionally Imperial seemed to denote a beer that was produced for the Russian Court. But since it also described a beer that was a much stronger version of a popular style of the times, people tended to associate “Imperial”, with stronger styled beers.

Brewers in modern times use the term “Imperial” to market their artistic creation of stronger, hoppier versions of traditional old world beers and new world beers.

Is this in keeping with historic beer style terminology... probably not, but the beauty of the craft beer revolution that is taking place in America and at your local brewery is that we are reinventing what a great craft beer is and should be. Style guidelines are great for comparison and interpretation, but as we move into the unknown we need to be able to articulate our creative vision in relation to the great beers of the past. The term Imperial is a great example of local craft brewers paying homage to our brewing roots yet stretching the rules and opening up peoples minds to the future of craft brewing. Cheers!

Tony Clarke and his wife Liz own Airdale Brewing Company, located in San Diego. airdalebrewing.com

Catherine the Great of Russia (1729-1796)
San Diego has been invaded by crisp, fruity, foreign wine; top restaurants are pouring German Riesling, notable wine retailers; Whole Foods, San Diego Wine Company, Trader Joe’s and the Third Corner stock these wines. Very quickly German Riesling could become as common as California Chardonnay. When 30 plus Sommeliers gathered for a BBQ last Labor Day most brought bottles of German Riesling with them. Why the sudden interest in German wine? Why San Diego? What is it about Riesling?

Consistently, German Riesling prices pale in comparison to the wines of Champagne, Burgundy, Bordeaux, and Napa. German Rieslings are found in San Diego retail on an average of $12-$23 per bottle. Considering the price and the longevity of these wines in bottle, the value is tremendous.

Riesling is a grape native to Germany; it has been grown throughout the southwest along the tributaries of the Mosel River for over 2,000 years. Riesling can be super fruity and is always tart, low in alcohol, and almost never oaked. In the glass the aromas range from stones and lemons, to flowers, to melting flip flops, followed by a parade of tropical fruit and citrus flavors.

One of the coldest and most northerly climates to produce fine wine, German winemaking is highly respected for healthy farming practices and a pure expression of terrior. The German climate results in wines with low alcohol (8.5% to 11% on average) and extremely high natural acidity. Acidity and sugar are two of the keys to German Riesling's versatility in pairing with food, two characteristics that also insure a long life in bottle. San Diego's wide array of cuisine especially spicy foods, seafood, and Asian cuisines, all are wonderful paired with German Riesling.

Based in San Diego, Damon & Sabrina Goldstein’s Truly Fine Wine Company imports small, estate, grower produced German wines. Sabrina is originally from Germany’s Rheingau wine region. Truly Fine Wine (TFW) is helping German wine become part of the culinary identity of San Diego. In 2006, with no prior experience, the ambitious couple went to Germany and convinced a group of stellar producers to represent them, not just in San Diego, but the entire nation. “I think they thought we were cute,” Damon says, “I don’t think anyone thought we would be successful.” Acclaimed producers Hans Lang, Barth & Gutzler independently signed on and the “cute” couple was primed for success.

To learn more check out trulyfinewine.com, for a schedule of tastings and wines TFW offers.

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Born and raised in San Diego, Paris Driggers previously worked at George’s at the Cove and San Diego Wine Company, today he represents Thierry Thiese’s Wine Wise Company, a very savvy portfolio that contains some of the most sought after German wines. Paris’ client list includes Spago’s Beverly Hills, Sona, George’s at the cove, Jack’s La Jolla and Market Del Mar, among dozens of great restaurants in southern California. Speak to Paris for a few minutes and one thing is clear, this guy loves wine. Paris is not shy about his love for German Riesling; “At home I never have anything German in my cellar, I can’t keep my hands off them,” Paris believes many people already like sweet wines and don’t even know it; “People are always talking dry and drinking sweet, like Rombauer Chardonnay, that stuff is really sweet.” In San Diego look out for these wines that Paris represents: Dönnhoff, J.J. Christoffel, Hexamer, and Willi Schaefer.

Ted Glennon, previously of Restaurant 910, Arterra, & San Diego Wine Co, is the Wine Director of eNOlogy, a modern wine tasting room at the Hotel Del Coronado. www.enowinerooms.com

To learn more about TFW please visit trulyfinewine.com or drop by at 4060 Morena Blvd, Ste K. 92117 (1/2 mile before Costco on the left) – (858) 270-WINE (9463).
Callaway Winery, the first winery to open in Temecula Valley, boasts some of the best views in Temecula Wine country. With scenic vistas of often snow-capped mountain peaks, Callaway has a long standing tradition of wine making excellence and this year celebrates its 40th anniversary. Opened in 1969 by Ely Callaway of the famed Callaway Golf and now owned by the Lin family of San Diego, Callaway continues the legacy of premium winemaking. Callaway wines are only available online or at the winery, but they’re worth the visit. Looking out through the tasting bar at a backdrop of hillside and vineyard views is a relaxing way to pass the time as you sip Callaway’s award winning wines like the triple bronze winning 2003 Winemaker’s Reserve Sangiovese or the winner of multiple bronze and silver medals, the 2004 Winemaker’s Reserve Delcetto, my personal favorite. Callaway’s whites have also done very well collecting various awards including several gold medals. The 2005 Winemaker’s Reserve Roussanne took home Gold and Best of Class at the Pacific Rim International Wine Competition, Gold at the Taster’s Guild, Silver at Riverside International Wine Competition and Bronze at the I.A. International Wine Competition.

While you are visiting Callaway, be sure to check out Meritage, the winery’s outstanding restaurant with a multi-tiered terrace and panoramic views of the rolling hills and vineyards. New Executive Chef, Michael Henry, has merged his vast years of experience in the food industry with what his journeys throughout the world have taught him. At Meritage, Michael has designed an exciting Tapas menu with a Mediterranean flare, using seasonal menus that accentuate Callaway’s long history of fine Temecula wines. Pairing Callaway’s exceptional wines with fresh, carefully chosen cuisine, Meritage is worthy of its name. The word “Meritage” is a combination of the words “merit” and “heritage” and was created as a recognizable name associated with high quality blended wines.

A large gift shop features a wide selection of glassware, wine accessories and fun gifts. Callaway offers several venues for special events and weddings including the Vineyard Lawn, which accommodates up to 150 guests and features panoramic views of the mountains and vineyards. The outdoor Vineyard Terrace accommodates up to 225 guests and offers a bi-level terrace with beautiful vineyard scenery. The Barrell Room accommodates up to 250 guests and features muted tones, classic chandeliers and candlelit barrels. The Chardonnay Room is a more intimate setting for up to 50 people. Meritage is open daily for lunch at 11 a.m. and for dinner Friday and Saturday 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Callaway Vineyard & Winery is open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily for tours and tastings. Located at 32720 Rancho California Road in Temecula, Ph: (951) 676-4001 or (800) 472-2377. callawaywinery.com.

MONDAYS:
Lady Dottie & The Diamonds
TUESDAYS:
Mechanical Bull Riding - Free
WEDNESDAYS:
Live Music
THURSDAYS:
80s and 90s Mash Ups
FRIDAYS:
DJ Gabe Vega - Feel the Noise
SATURDAYS:
Dance Party Mash Ups
SUNDAYS:
Tribe of Kings, Reggae Vibes

Happy Hour Specials Monday - Sunday, 5pm - 9pm
$3 Wells, Beers & Calls, $5 Premiums
Stout Pub: All This And Guinness Too

At least for me, the main draw at Downtown’s Stout Public House has nothing to do with the food. It’s all in the Guinness, or, rather, its presentation. Not only do the bartenders pour it methodically and serve it at just below room temperature, the way they should; they configure that stout little shaker to rest on the top of the foam in the blink of an eye. They can get a little sloppier every now and then—once, one came out looking sort of like a big ginger wasp, touching off my phobia about sting insects and fueling a $3 billion nosed, nubile head of guilt that lasted 73 and a half years.

I lost. But before all that, Stout had served me some of the best cheese rats in this city, a few of which don’t necessarily comport with the Celtic idea behind the place. There’s nothing particularly Irish, for example, about spicy Thai chicken drumettes or pasta pri- muvera, but both are absolutely delicious, especially in the face of the price ($8 and 10, respectively). But the Irish character of the food here may center on the sheep- herd’s pie ($9.50)—it’s gotta be the lamb that makes it so good, and somebody knows how to marinate through Saturdays and noon to 6 p.m. Sundays (the number is 619-236-0000). You’ll get a lot here for not much money—and just think how superior you’ll feel rubbing elbows with the $110 crowd, whose members are and always will be intrinsically better than you.

—Martin Jones Westlin

Bacchus: The Market That Isn’t A Market

Bacchus Wine Market & Tasting Room is so cool it probably shouldn’t even be allowed to stay open. In the first place, the own- ers are lying in their jeans when they say a “market,” because this Downtown venue doesn’t look a bit like a store—the brickery, postmodern lighting and wall decor make you feel like you’re in one of those funkoid North Park art galleries, the ones whose plain exteriors can’t begin to illustrate the wonders inside. The setting is raveled and mellow—

and, as you’d expect, all that comes at a price, with Bacchus’ best fare weighing in at upwards of $10 a bottle. But the fine young peeps at Bacchus hadn’t forgotten the rest of us. Their tasting events are moderately priced (most run $15), as are the 10 or so selections at the wine bar, which change weekly. The hook, though, is in the venue’s under- $20 selections, which are no more than an aisle away from the three-figure stuff. Among them is the 2006 Argoulas Costera, a very good Cannonau from Italy’s Sar- dinia region—you might be thrown off at first by this one’s pepsy aftertaste, but that’s just the Cannonau grape’s way of wel- coming you to the table. And the table is where you belong with this one; its beautiful black cherry- red finish is definitely meant for big fat food, like big fat cheeses and big fat filet mignons and big fat beef dishes. By itself, it’s prob- ably going to strike big fat you as too sweet.

The Costera will run you $17.99 a bottle. You might even get it a tad cheaper if you join Bacchus’ wine club; if you want to learn to taste it like a pro, check out one of the venue’s classes. They’re held at 647 G St., which, oddly enough, is also the market’s location. Doors are open from 2 to 9 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and noon to 6 p.m. Sundays (the number is 619-236-0000). You’ll get a lot here for not much money—and just think how superior you’ll feel rubbing elbows with the $110 crowd, whose members are and always will be intrinsically better than you.

—Martin Jones Westlin

Dates with Grapes

ENO Wine Tasting Room at the Hotel Del Coronado Offers New “Eno-Versity” Classes for 2009

ENO, Southern California’s premier wine, cheese and chocolate tasting room at Hotel del Coronado, is thrilled to offer a new schedule of Eno-Versity classes for 2009. Renowned winemak- ers, cheese makers and chocolatiers join Wine Director and Sommelier Ted Glennon in leading Eno-Versity classes through an exploration of the histories, types and flavors of exquisite wines by suggesting cheese and chocolate pairings, each individually chosen to perfectly complement the selection of wines.

“We are excited to offer Eno-Versity classes to both hotel guests and San Diego locals so that they will have the opportunity to become wine connoisseurs in a fun, communal and comfortable environment,” says Glennon. “Both our novice and expert guests can interact and learn from the guest winemakers while enjoying new wines in an intimate setting.”

Eno-Versity’s Upcoming Classes

February 7th

David Corey

David Corey and his Core Wine Company out of Santa Barbara County continue to put out stunning and delicious wines year after year. Included tasting will be side by side 2005 and 2006 “Hard Core” Red blends, both of which were some of Eno’s best sellers.

February 14th

Chocolates for Valentines

Looking for something sweet to do this Valentine’s Day? Chocolate and wine—so many swear by it, but is it a match made in heaven or a complete myth? We are going to explore and enjoy this obscure obsession once and for all! Join Ted Glennon in a no-holds-barred choc- olate and wine tasting, featuring the unusual line-up of awesome chocolates by Jack Fisher and Isabella Valencia as well as some very special surprises.

February 28th

Peter Cargasacchi

One of ENO’s favorite guests, Peter Cargasacchi, Santa Barbara winemaker and farmer, crafts some delicious wines and tells some strange stories.

March 14th

Tempranillo

The noble grape of Spain, Tempranillo is now being cultivated in California’s central coast. Join Ted Glennon from a comparison of Tempranillos from different countries, regions and vintages.

March 28th

Blacksmith Cellars

Matt Smith worked for years at J.C. Cellars and Duke Cellars before launching his own label – Blacksmith Cellars.

April 14th

Pinot Noir

Pinot Noir fans are of the fanatic variety. It is a very old grape, believed to be cultivated in the first century A.D. A grape that can make every style of wine: white, sparkling, rosé, red and dessert. Join ENO for a journey through the many different faces of Pinot Noir from around the world.

Eno-Versity classes are held in the Eno wine tasting room from 4pm to 5:30pm and are $35 per person. Space is limited. For reservations, call 619-522-8546.

In addition to the Eno-Versity classes, Eno offers a retail com- ponent, selling any desirable wine, cheese or chocolate confection served in the tasting room, wine accessories and art. For participants interested in further exploration of the class theme, Glennon will make suggestions of select books or materials avail- able for purchase at ENO.

ENO is located at the renowned Hotel del Coronado in Coronado, California, located on 28 oceanfront acres. For more infor- mation please call 800-HOTEL-DEL or visit hoteldel.com/ENO-wines.

About ENO — Eno, an upscale wine tasting room, is the ideal destination for the appreciation and purchase of the finest wines in the world, with artisanal cheeses from around the globe and hand- crafted chocolates. Eno’s approachable and socially inviting approach to oenological exploration offers guests an interactive and educational experience. The design of Eno’s communal tables is intended to encourage conversation and discussion as guests are treated to one another and the sommeliers through their indulgence of these fine printed delicacies. Tasting note cards are pro- vided at each table, and guests are invited to keep them for future reference. Eno Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, California opened in December 2007 following the opening of Eno Ritz-Carl- ton, Laguna Niguel in May 2007 and Eno Inn/Continental Chicago in December 2006, the first tasting venue from Strategic Hotels & Resorts. Additional Eno wine rooms are at the Fairmont Chicago, The Four Seasons Washington DC and Union Square in San Francisco

To have your wine event added to this calendar, please send an email to: Jason@sdnews.com
POKEZ Mexican Restaurant and Vegetarian Cuisine

947 E St. / 10th & E EAST VILLAGE
619-702-7160

Welcome to Pokez! We make our food with love. We cook with vegetable oil (no lard). We use the finest ingredients including organic produce when possible. Our beans and rice are 100% vegetarian, low in fat and sodium (no artificial coloring, no MSG).

Royal India

Experience the finest Indian cuisine in the Gaslamp Quarter. Royal India offers impeccable service, a friendly wait staff and some of the most authentic North Indian cuisine in the city. Offering a full bar and a selection of wines and beers, Royal India makes for a perfect place to relax over cocktails. In fact, the restaurant boasts the largest outdoor patio in the Gaslamp Quarter. Royal India’s extensive menu includes tempting appetizers, warm decedent breads, baked fresh in the tandour, and a tasty selection of vegetarian, chicken, lamb and seafood curries. The ambiance of the restaurant alludes to grand Indian palaces, with its large open spaces, mosaic tiled arches, a custom carved wood bar, and 10 foot calming waterfall. Voted “Best Indian Cuisine” by San Diego Downtown Readers Choice Awards in 2008. Royal India serves a gourmet buffet with over twenty items to choose from (Mon-day through Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and on Monday evenings).

Hot New Winebar: Wet Stone

Chef Christian Gomez has opened an exciting new contemporary wine bar in Bankers Hill! Located in a Historic 1896 Building at 1927 4th Avenue (between Grape and Fir), Chef Gomez is serving his POWER LUNCH daily from 11a-2p Tues-Fri and his SMALL BITES & BIG GLASSES menu from 5p-10p Weds-Sun. Try some of his favorites such as Macadamia-crusted Ahi with mango and habanero salsa, or his farmers market greens with fuyu persimmons, pomegranate seeds, Danish Bleu cheese, carmelized mango and habanero salsa, or his farmers market greens with fuyu persimmons, pomegranate seeds, Danish Bleu cheese, carmelized walnuts and a toasted coriander seed vinaigrette. Having trouble finding parking? Not at The Wet Stone. After 7pm there is

Valentine’s Mexican Restaurant

Valentine’s Mexican Restaurant is family owned and operated and conveniently located at 844 Market Street in the East Village. Valentine’s offers downtown San Diegans quality traditional Mexican breakfast, lunch and dinner (also OPEN LATE for the bar crowds). In addition to the excellent burritos, tortas, tacos, and homemade salsa at the salsa bar, you can also choose from a selection of Mexican beers and fine wine when you visit Valentines. Call ahead to pick up your orders “to go”!

Just Burgers

Our Burgers are all made to order. We only use the freshest ingredients. You can pile on all you want at the most reasonable prices. We use an all natural beef from 100% composed cattle that has been raised its entire life on pasture, without chemicals, growth hormones, antibiotics, and with room to roam. The result is an unbelievably superb flavor! But that’s not all! We have some thing for everyone and every taste. Fresh ground turkey burger, Grilled fish burger, and our very popular veggie burger with 24 amazing ingredients are served daily from 11:00 am to 10:00 pm Mon-Sat and 11 am to 8:00 pm on Sundays. For Adults we have a wonderful selection of beer and wine at below market prices. Pet lovers, feel free to bring your pet to sit with you in our outdoor patio. Please visit our website at www.justburgers.biz for more info and Special Offers. PHONE: (619) 234-7826.

BONDi

Great Australian Food, Cold Australian Beer. Relaxed by day and bustling at night, Bondi Australian beer and food brings the contemporary flavors, sights and sounds of Australia to the historic Gaslamp Quarter. Bondi is all about top-quality Australian products and people. It’s also about the relaxed and casual Aussie attitude to life. Named after Sydney’s famed Bondi Beach, Bondi brings you ice-cold Aussie beer on tap, along with a large range of Australian and international bottled beer and the longest and strongest Australian wine list in the US. The food menu is fresh and contemporary, relaxed enough to snack on but substantial enough for a long dining experience, and served with the friendly casualness that makes the Australian lifestyle famous all over the world. Live DJs every Friday and Saturday night. No cover charge and no dress code. Winner - Lamplighter Award for Best New Gaslamp Restaurant 2007.

Richard Walker’s Pancake House

Richard Walker’s Pancake House, an upscale fusion of traditional and gourmet breakfast favorites, is now open in the Marina District in downtown San Diego. Serving classic-style griddlecakes, crepes, omelets and other specialties, this pancake house is certain to become the “premier” breakfast destination for San Diego’s residents, employees and the tourist community! Open 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. 7 days a week, and if you are unable to stay and enjoy the atmosphere, take Richard Walker’s with you as we prepare orders to go.

POKEZ Mexican & Vegetarian

Fine Dining

BONDI

Available Catering

Food & Drink

Go to: www.SDDiningScene.com for more dining information
It's a sign of the times, and a year ago, I never could have seen it. — Petula Clark

It all begins with a song. I’ll be going about my everyday busy-ness and a song pops into my head, playing over and over. That’s when I know it’s time to put fingers to the keyboard.

As I research the lyrics of the chosen melody, I don’t see an apparent connection between what is bubbling up inside me and whether the tune relates to our downtown life. Perhaps the lyrics written by Prince or Queensryche, under the same title, have more relevance.

Needless to say, Clark’s refrain just won’t be quieted.

As I walk the streets, it’s hard not to notice once-crowded neighborhood establishments disappearing, leaving windows blocked by tan paper and rubbish collecting in the entryway.

Now, the refrain words come clearly into focus.

Unlike other metropolitan centers, San Diego has a history filled with cycles of promise and disappointment. Many a man has stepped foot on our shores with the notion of hitting the mother lode. Blinded by irresistible avarice, they too often misses the sign of the times.

Which leaves those who live in this sunny paradise waiting. Waiting for the lights in tower windows to glow, waiting for businesses to provide life’s necessities, waiting for those exclusive eateries and boutiques to joyfully frequent. Waiting to be rediscovered.

Have you noticed how quiet our community has become? Where is the sound of the cars, people walking the sidewalks, restaurants with waiting lines, stores with shoppers?

I ponder: Is it the sign of the times, or is it the sign of our times? Even amid our various views, there’s a common thread among residents experiencing changing times Downtown.

“No doubt about it, these are difficult economic times. It’s sad to see a number of Downtown construction projects stalled and fenced off. As individuals, we need to be careful, keep our credit cards paid off, perhaps drive less and, of course, read books. Is it coincidental that I say this just as my third novel, ‘The Hindenburg Letter,’ comes out?” said Roger Conlee (Columbia Place) with a smile.

“Dan D’Amato (Park Terrace) shares his insights: ‘Normally, our sidewalks throb and pulse with voices, laughter and people; these days, though, they’ve been much quieter and with more space to maneuver. It’s my hope people remember to escape their homes, walk the city and once again make the heartbeat of San Diego strong.’ Beyond a reasonable doubt, and with absolute certitude, I see one sign in our future: Though I know not when, we will be rediscovered.

We live in the perfect urban paradise. Viva-city fostering a vibrant, welcoming community; where residents greet neighbors as friends!

Visit www.viva-city.info.
Action Sports Retailer (ASR) was in town at the San Diego Convention Center from Jan. 22 to 24. This expo showcases lifestyle and streetwear fashions in swim, skate, surf and snowboarding. Exhibitors and buyers come together from all over the world for this leading-edge show.

The highlight of the three days is always the ASR runway show, which showcases emerging trends. The theme was “fashion revolution,” taking fall and winter styles to the fashion underground and reinterpreting the grunge movement. The models came down the catwalk wearing smudged makeup, unkempt hair and high-top sneakers popular during the late ’80s. The styles were shown in muted colors, a stark contrast to the vibrant neon colors of the spring-summer runway show. A splash of color was thrown into these earthy tones, a handbag or shoes usually accenting the ensemble. Stripes and plaids were featured as a trend.

The main floor served as a showcase for eco-friendly businesses. Mama Om, a new business, offered the only organic swim line at the show. Mission Playground was on hand with its eco-friendly line, which can be seen at REI and Whole Foods. Satori Movement is another organically driven business, and Livity Outernational has a wonderful line of sustainable clothing and can be found at Eco-topia in Encinitas.

Surfmonk had a new line of comfy cover-ups made from luxurious eco-fibers. SnuggBuds came out with designer headsets in three fashion styles: Bling, CamoBuds (camouflage) and Mavericks. Zipz Shoes carries a new tennis shoe wherein the top can be zipped off and on with additional tops. Bandals footwear carries interchangeable bands for flip-flops. Krochet Kids International creates hand-crocheted hats in Northern Uganda. The sale of these hats gives a livelihood to the crocheters and returns the profits to help further the education and healthcare of youths in Uganda.

ASR will return Sept. 10 to 12. For more information, visit asrbiz.com.

The Princess Project runway show was held at the J6 Bar in the Hotel Solamar on Jan. 22. This was a Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM) dress competition hosted by The Princess Project and The Collective. Jodi Kodesh, the real-time traffic reporter at NBC, was the MC for the evening. First-year FIDM students had one hour to reinvent a prom dress. The students were on location with mannequins, scissors, pins and fabric, reinventing a dress just as it was done on Project Runway. These creations were judged by experts in their field: Travis Parker, Travis Parker Salon; Gillian Flynn, editor-in-chief, Riviera magazine; Mitch Thrower, financier-entrepreneur; and Mah-Juba Levine, fashion stylist. The winner was Arturo Mendez, who received a $100 gift certificate for his creation. Runner-up was Paul Hernandez. Guests were asked to donate a dress, handbag or accessory. A silent auction was set up, with wonderful prizes. Proceeds went to the Princess Project San Diego, a nonprofit that gives prom dresses to high school students who couldn’t otherwise afford them. This helps make their dreams come true and gives them the opportunity to attend their proms. If you would like to donate a dress, the drop-off location is Margaret’s Cleaners, 7511 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla. For more information about the Princess Project, visit www.princessproject.org.

For your information…

Thursday, Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m., Nordstrom Runway Fashion Show at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, 1100 Kettner Blvd. For more information or to RSVP, please call (858) 454-3541, ext. 192.

Diana Cavagnaro is a nationally recognized hat designer and milliner. Diana has been operating a fashion business for 27 years, the last 17 years in Downtown San Diego’s historic Gaslamp Quarter. She has been teaching in the fashion department at San Diego Mesa College for 17 years. Diana is an active member of the Gaslamp Quarter Association, the American Sewing Guild, the San Diego Costume Council and the Fashion Group International.

As the year progresses, everyone is looking toward first-quarter real estate sales for signs of a market change. After Fannie Mae’s announcement November 11th to support a streamlined modification program where in it suspended foreclosure sales on occupied single-family residences and placed a halt to any scheduled evictions through January, there has yet to be a decline in active foreclosure listings. However, what most people are unaware of with the foreclosure listings program is the amount of time it takes to get the listings active on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). Due to the legal eviction proceedings, the “Cash for Keys” program and the rehab that has to be done on certain property, the average time it takes to get a listing from Pre-MLS to active MLS is around 35 days (this number will also vary depending on the Bank Client). That being said we cannot focus on the active listing from November, December or even January. The direct results will not show the same slowdown in foreclosure inventory most likely until February. We spoke with Weichert, Realtors-Elite’s foreclosure division to see if they have experienced any listing reductions into their foreclosure inventory. Weichert, Realtors-Elite took time to share if his company has seen a significant reduction in their inventory, “our company handles over 150 bank clients across the country so when Fannie Mae dictates time towards a streamlined modification program you can bet we will see a slowdown in inventory. In September and October we would get anywhere from 40-60 new foreclosure listings per month. This inventory is still coming through the pipeline to MLS and I am sure the same is true with other real estate offices. We did see that in November and December our bank assignment where cut 50%, now we are receiving between 20-30 pre-MLS assignment per month.”

It has been said that Fannie Mae’s loan servicers are prepared to work with borrowers until Jan. 9 even if they had previously been unsuccessful with the other modification programs. Fannie Mae’s “Second Look” program will help delinquent borrowers by scrutinizing all options. This leaves me asking, will this streamlined modification program be the answer to keeping people in their homes and will we see signs of a normal real estate market if foreclosures dry up as direct effect of the modification program? Things are not likely to change so quickly due to the fact that very few delinquent borrowers will even qualify for the modification program. Qualifications include but are not limited to borrowers who are at least 3 months behind on their payments, have not filed for bankruptcy and owner-occupy their residences. Borrowers who meet the modification requirements will have three steps to reduce overall payment per Brian Montgomery, the Federal Housing Commissioner:

1) Terms will be extended (Ex: 30 year to 40 year)  
2) If extending the term isn’t enough to meet the 38% threshold, the interest rate could be reduced. (Ex: 6.5% or 3%)  
3) Finally, if those two steps don’t get the payments down enough, part of the principal will be deferred. “With the balance added to the back of the loan” Montgomery said.

Now that the holidays have passed, are borrowers willing to take any of the above options even if they qualify to stay in their homes? That is the lingering question that borrowers will have to evaluate based on what they have invested into their homes. Weichert, Realtors-Elite feels that, “if these borrowers bought in the height of the market with little or no money down it is very unlikely that they would work together. We hope that this modification program will help borrowers looking to stay in their homes. In fact we have been having classes on the modification programs for our sales associates because we know that we need to offer our clients all the options available.”

Representatives for Weichert, Realtors-Elite confirmed that although they saw an initial inventory reduction in November and December, they are expecting that the first quarter of 2009 will not show the same slowdown in foreclosure inventory regardless of the current streamline modification program. In fact, they hinted that the fauer is not even half open.

**Special to Downtown News**

By Eric Wierchert

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By John Olbrich, President of American Security Mortgage

During the early part of 2001, a married couple, who was given my name by one of my clients, approached me and, after exchanging pleasantries, asked: “We have found the most wonderful house that we want to try to buy. We have dreamed and prayed of owning our own home, but we just have never been able to afford a down payment. Is there any way you can help us to obtain a loan for us to buy this home?”

If you had seen this couple, your heart, like mine, would have been touched. You could not help but be moved by this dream, a dream that millions of Americans have also had... the American Dream, “owning your own home.”

There are many advantages for our society to help people own their own home. Many first-time homebuyers find that once they have bought a home, many other aspects of their life seem to fall in place. The security and peace of mind that come with home ownership is a great accomplishment in many people’s lives. Once they achieve this accomplishment, many find that other goals they had set out to achieve become much easier to attain. Home ownership can provide a great feeling of pride that can carry over into every other area of a person’s life, helping them develop a greater sense of belonging to the community, a greater sense of stability with their family, a greater desire to be involved in local events, a greater sense of commitment, a greater sense of freedom, a greater sense of value. And, if they have children, they may find that their children feel more secure when coming home to a house that is not owned by someone else. There are no worries that the children will be suddenly forced to change schools and re-establish their lives at the decision of someone else. They can also get to know their neighbors, and if their neighbors have children, lifelong friendships can be formed because everyone knows that they may be around each other for years and years. Overall, our society can be greatly benefited by the stabilizing effect that home ownership can bring to people.

In some sense then, any prudent lending policy that helps people, especially first-time buyers, purchase their own home is a good policy for our society. Such was the case with the creation of the 100% two-year fixed rate interest-only mortgages. This lending option enabled me to create a financing package that allowed this wonderful couple to have an opportunity that they would not otherwise have had. This financing package was the perfect loan for the young prospective homeowner that had not yet saved a large down payment, but saw income growth. This financing package enabled them to participate in the American Dream. This was the good.

As my clients that know me well will attest, I do not advocate lending unless I believe it is in the client’s best interest. However, the good lending policy that enabled people to purchase their first home was really turned into a bad lending policy in certain situations. I would ultimately be doing a disservice to my clients if I encouraged anyone to acquire property if the lending package is merely a short-term. I have been offering home financing in San Diego for the last 20 years because I have always viewed every client as a long-term relationship.

The 100% two-year fixed-rate interest-only mortgage is a perfect example of a good lending policy that was ultimately used, in many cases, in bad situations, creating what became an ugly nightmare for our society and “the perfect storm.” At the time when price increases initially hit double digits at the beginning of this decade, most of us believed the housing appreciation to be real, due to pent-up demand, low interest rates and a weak economy. In the early stages of those increases, I, like almost every other broker and lender, urged people to acquire these 100% two-year fixed-rate interest-only loans. These loans enabled so many more people to get in the game and realize their dreams of owning a home. However, as real estate prices continued to skyrocket, I, unlike almost every other broker and lender, stopped offering these loans. At the beginning those loans made sense, but as prices continued to increase unabated, those loans became very risky. In fact, I stopped offering those loans over 3 ½ years ago. The reason I stopped was because I felt that any mortgage that I, like almost every other lender, stopped offering those loans. That was the bad.

Unfortunately, for the real estate market, soaring real estate prices combined, along with a number of other factors, with the continued practice of providing 100% two-year fixed-rate interest-only mortgages created the “perfect storm.” Starting in July 2007, lenders realized that prices were dropping and lowered the maximum loan to value on Stat- ed Income Loans to 90%, then to 80%, then later to 70%, and now have all but eliminated them. The lending industry literally imploded, as homeowners could no longer refi- nance to a fixed rate before their payments on such loans would increase. Although I lost a lot of business and many of my clients moved to other brokers to obtain the riskier loans, I held firm to my conviction that those loans were too risky for my clients. However, other brokers and lenders failed to recognize the risky market conditions and continued to offer those loans. That was the bad.

Thankfully, I am in business today because of my convictions that good lending practices should not be used in bad situations. When you are seeking a loan for a purchase, make sure you get the right advice. The best loan for you will depend on all of the circumstances at the time. Good advice can help you avoid the bad and the ugly.
Loan modifications new trend

By Troy Moritz
Special to Downtown News

Many people are hearing about loan modifications and most have questions about what exactly they are. First off, a modification is not a refinance; it is a renegotiation directly with the lender. Typical outcomes include rate reductions, lowered payments, balance reductions, and forbearance agreements. Anyone can go directly to a lender and attempt to get the modification done. The catch is that the average borrower has no idea what the criteria are for an investor when okaying a loan modification.

This is why Loss Mitigation Specialists are popping up everywhere. Lawyers, negotiators, and former bank employees are using “inside” knowledge to package loan modification files to fit each lender’s criteria perfectly. A loan modification specialist will make sure that the modification that is offered is the best possible outcome. When a bank does a modification for you directly, its goal is to get you a payment that is the maximum that you can still afford and keep the home. Specialists attempt to get the lowest possible payment available and ensure that the borrower does not accidentally shoot themselves in the foot by giving too much or too little information.

The key is to find someone that you trust and have him do the work for you. Some companies even offer 100% money-back guarantees if they cannot achieve a modification. If you have any questions or would like a list of approved loan modification companies. Please don’t hesitate to give a call to 888-636-8666.

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As your area specialist, I spend a good deal of my time keeping an eye on what is happening in the Downtown community. This allows me greater efficiency when it comes to keeping you informed, as well as helping you with all our real estate needs. In addition, I own rental properties in the area myself so I can identify with the concerns of other owners. It pays to work with someone who is familiar dealing with management companies, homeowners associations, CC&R’s, condo bylaws, and other particulars related to condominiums.

www.downtownconsultants.com
You must see this warm and inviting loft in the historic Marina District! This top-floor cutie has been upgraded with rich hardwood floors, a luxurious bathroom, and a short walk to Seaport Village! Enjoy a private terrace, hardwood floors, and a price below market as part of a lender agreement!

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This stunning, newly-constructed luxury residence boasts amazing views from its 18th-floor location! The interior is Virtually brand new, this luxury home features a stunning view right at your doorstep! Enjoy a luxurious kitchen and bath, and lovely views of the downtown skyline! You’ll love this perfect pied a terre in the Marina District’s most sought-after, luxury high-rise communities!

For full details in a recorded message, call 1-800-709-1995, Ext. 5239

**Downtown · “Alta”**

For full details in a recorded message, call 1-800-709-1995, Ext. 5109

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Right in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter! This penthouse is a perfect pied a terre with a plush living area, hardwood floors, and a price below the competition! For full details in a recorded message, call 1-800-709-1995, Ext. 5299

**Downtown · “Horizon”**

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**Downtown · “Park Place”**

You’ll want to see this adorable residence in the popular downtown corner location! This home is a perfect pied a terre with a plush living area, hardwood floors, and a price below the competition! For full details in a recorded message, call 1-800-709-1995, Ext. 5360

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The aftermath

Duncan Sheik, Lauren Pritchard set next awakening at Anthology

By MARTIN JONES WESTLIN | DOWNTOWN NEWS

Duncan Sheik is in England at the moment, not that that means that much by itself. It’s the country’s fairly ice storms and numbing cold that color that little bit of news — and the inclement weather, in fact, led to Sheik’s begging off an interview with this paper. We can only hope he’s approached by an equal- ly monumental force of journalistic nature when stuff clears up, although, as you know, once-in- a-lifetime PR ops like ours are ever- fewer and farther between.

Per plan B, I’m listening right now to Sheik’s “Whisper House,” a new CD from which he’ll be playing a few selections at Anthology on Wednesday, Feb. 18. This is very special music for two reasons: a) it’s outstandingly conceived, and b) it comes on the heels of Sheik’s monumental work as the composer of “Spring Awakening,” the Broadway hit that snagged eight Tony Awards in 2007, including Best Musical, Best Orchestration and Best Original Score (Sheik personally won the latter two). Such a seamless blend of music and story is beyond rare in theater circles; if the play is not the most incredibly sensitive take on teenage self-discovery, then no such play exists.

“Spring Awakening” was mount- ed at The Balboa Theatre last sum- mer as part of the Broadway/San Diego play series, and Sheik’s ethereal, rock-tinged music spoke for itself. “Whisper House” has its sim- ilarities — like “Spring Awakening,” the Broadway hit that grabbed eight Tony Awards in 2007, including Best Musical, Best Orchestration and Best Original Score (Sheik personally won the latter two). Such a seamless blend of music and story is beyond rare in theater circles; if the play is not the most incredibly sensitive take on teenage self-discovery, then no such play exists.

Meanwhile, not a teen in sight. And not a trace of the compositions that yielded Sheik, 39, such untold accolades less than two years ago. But the rave reviews were just beginning at the 12th annual Patte Awards for Theater Excellence, held this year at the Westin Gaslamp on Monday, Jan. 19. The San Diego Musical Theatre’s “Dreamgirls,” which was honored for Outstanding Production (cast members Sabrina Sloan, Natalie Wacher and Jennifer Jones are pictured above), Below, Patte host and longtime the- ater critic Pat Launer poses with Rep artistic director Sam Woodhouse, who took home an award for Outstanding Direction (“Water and Power”).

The show’s over

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Biogardener breathes life back into the soil at SD City College

By JAN D. WELLIK | DOWNTOWN NEWS

One of the great “green” minds behind organic farming and college campus gardens in San Diego is Paul Maschka. Maschka’s hands-on ability to grow healthy soil played a crucial role in the development of the San Diego City College Urban Farm this last summer as well as that of Mesa College’s new Organic Culinary Gar- den.

His areas of expertise include bio- intensive gardening, sustainable land- scaping, beekeeping and permacul- ture, which he will be teaching about in the next few months for the San Diego Natural History Museum in Bal- boa Park.

Maschka, an Ocean Beach resident, was excited about working on the City College farm because funding was built into the program. “I’ve been working on school gar- dens for years, but without funding they slowly fade,” he said.

The college pays for part-time farm helpers and student interns who man- age the farm. The garden is located in a high-traffic zone on campus where lush rose bushes once grew. “Jaws drop,” he said. “This is a farm in the middle of skyscrapers.”

By transforming the heavily watered rose bush landscape, the school now uses less than an eighth of the water it used before, he said.

The farm is not a monoculture crop of rows of corn, like many think of when they hear the word “farm.” Rather, the farm is an example of poly- culture with meandering pathways of different shapes and sizes of plant beds growing both edible and ornamental plants. The large patch of amaranth, in its hold swarm of purplish-red, is often the big color draw of passersby. “I wanted to have them (students and faculty) walk by and stop them in their tracks,” he says of the farm design. The creative design has been a success and yields a bounty of vegetables each season. Currently growing are broccoli, Asian greens, rutabagas, baby greens and “a tapestry of colors and textures,” according to Maschka.

Southern California has basically two seasons — warm and cool — so harvesting produce is possible year- round, Maschka said. In the summer, the farm grows much of the standard fare, such as tomatoes, squash, corn and cucumbers. The college recently started a weekly farmers market on campus that sells the farm’s produce to mostly faculty and students, with long lines forming for the fresh, organ- ic produce.

Maschka is passionate about health- ful soil and growing organically. He is a member of the San Diego Food Not Lawns organization and president of Biogardener Paul Maschka says most people would be horrified if they knew how their food was produced.

PHOTO BY JAN WELLIK | DOWNTOWN NEWS

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The doubt you take home after "Doubt: A Parable" is your own. We’re talking about the 90-minute "Doubt: A Parable" innocent as Sister James, does. Sitton is lovely, quite "Sound of Music" and is a masterful score, continuing chaotic emotions between scenes and delivering a redemption with which Christians may identify. "Doubt: A Parable" continues through Feb. 8 at San Diego Repertory Theatre Space, 79 Horton Plaza (parking validated inside the lobby). Tickets are $25 to $53. Go to www.sdrep.org or call (619) 544-1000.

**Yonkers Joe** scores amid dad’s errant love

Yonkers Joe isn’t much of a let-down, according to Joe, Jr. The latter, a bewildered little special-needs boy in a strapping man’s body, is thus thrilled to be back in the company of the father who can swap out dice with Chazz Palminteri as the absentee principal. Guiry’s younger Joe is slightly nervous, vastly expansive and mercurial — but there’s also some maudlin quality to the story, which director Robert Stephens could have had a bigger hand in refining — but there’s also some melodrama currently playing at Stadium Cinemas and starring a 12-year-old boy in his class. Gaffney presents a multi-faceted portrayal of the boy’s perhaps realistic mother, who thinks that once her troubled son gets through grade school things will be better for him. Never mind his abusive father.

Initially, it appears that the slightly nervous, vastly expansive and seemingly well-intentioned Flynn must be innocent, that he is merely providing the fatherly concern and care the boy needs, especially after the lad is caught having drunk the Communion wine. This is much darker territory than “Boys Town” or “The Bells of St. Mary’s.”

Once he’s had his way with the audience, lurching us forth and back between innocence and guilt, Shanley delivers a masterful whammy, and we go home with further doubt and “Doubt” tucked into our handbags and psyches. No wonder it received the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for drama.

By the way, composer Michael Roth, frequently associated with La Jolla Playhouse, provides a masterful score, continuing chaotic emotions between scenes and delivering a redemption with which Christians may identify. "Doubt: A Parable" continues through Feb. 8 at San Diego Repertory Theatre Space, 79 Horton Plaza (parking validated inside the lobby). Tickets are $25 to $53. Go to www.sdrep.org or call (619) 544-1000.

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The sincerest form of flattery set to take shape at Anthology

And don’t forget Albert Lee: Tribute bands have become a staple of local venues in recent years, but few could match the sense of fun of Cactus Twang. Whyte Grano & Nash, appearing at Anthology on Feb. 13. Featuring such local music icons as singer Eve Sells and sessions drummer Larry Grano (Rockola, Four Eyed), the band can tackle the most detailed fretwork or intricate harmonies with ease, from folk to rock. Not content to focus on the music of one group, they will perform two shows, one featuring the songs of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and a second focusing on the works of Eric Clapton. Each performance will be amazing, but the edge goes to the Clapton set, which will include guest guitarist Albert Lee. Lee, a headline in his own right, played guitar in Clapton’s band for five years and has backed many other music icons, including The Everly Brothers and Emmylou Harris. Anthology is located at 1337 India St. in Little Italy. The show starts at 7:30 p.m.; tickets are $27. For further information, call (619) 595-0300 or visit anthologysd.com.

Duncan Sheik, composer of the Tony Award-winning “Spring Awakening,” was recently waylaid by the horrible weather in England. Maybe he’ll tell us all about it when he visits Anthology on Wednesday, Feb. 18.

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I had "kind of accidentally written a couple of songs," she explained, "and I found I had a knack for it. I had a voice teacher who knew a few writers in Nashville, so I started going there, sitting in on sessions to see if [writing and performing] could be something I could actually make do.

For six months, Pritchard "bugged the crap" out of her parents to allow her a move to L.A. on the recommendation of a casting director. From there, “Spring Awakening’ kind of turned into this mega-thing” following an audition and a move to New York. The magic transpired when Pritchard was all of 18.

“I know exactly what happened and I have no idea of what happened all at the same time," Pritchard said. On Feb. 18, you get to see a little of what happened. It’s a chance to experience the upshot from “Spring Awakening” up close and personal, with two phenomenal ensembles to allow her a move to L.A. on the recommendation of a casting director. From there, “Spring Awakening’ kind of turned into this mega-thing” following an audition and a move to New York. The magic transpired when Pritchard was all of 18.

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Every year at this time there is a ridiculous amount of commercial attention placed on the status of your heart – is it broken, lonely, filled, overflowing, fragile or hardened? Just how much chocolate does it take to mend a wounded heart? How many flowers prove one heart’s love? Another? How many sappy love songs confirm no one has the answer to the meaning of this thing we call love that suppos- edly comes from our heart? If this crazy, exploited hol- iday gets you thinking about your heart, then the most impor- tant question to ask yourself this month is: “How STRONG is my heart? Do I still have it? Am I in it for the long haul?” We’ve all been through a few daisies (“he/she loves me – I hope not”) and ul- timately get over it. What I mean is how are you feeling after your heart has time for that? Go. Leave the stress behind so you can turn to. Your heart’s chamber has failed and you’ll be back for more! The good news here is that un- less you have some pre-diag- nosed heart condition, you have control over how healthy your heart can be. Yes, you have the power to create a healthy heart through what you choose to put in your mouth, how you choose to use your body, and how you choose to live.

Unless you’ve been living under a rock for the last, let’s say ten years or so, you should have some idea of what you don’ts of eating healthy. It’s practically impossible to screw it up if you just use some common sense. Did it grow in the ground? Good. Is it wrapped in plastic? Not so good. Did you get it at a deal at the drive through? Run Toto Run!

You are what you eat – and that is not a cliché. We live in a world of convenience with quick bits and fast foods practically knocking on our doors. Unfortu- nately, the “good for you” food isn’t always around. Sometimes you have to search it out and that takes way too much of our precious allotted time for our feeding frenzy. But if you will simply make a daily effort to put fresh clean food in your body on a regular basis, the occasional slip of those pre-packaged, lip-smackin’, preservative-laden foods will not be as bad for you as regular ingestion of them.

Now back to your heart. Your heart is a muscle and to make it stronger it needs to be trained just like all the other muscles in your body. You do that by getting your heart pumping, by moving with vigor and energy. I know some of you think treadmills, stair climbers and cross trainers are the devil’s spawn, but under all that equipment, sweat and dedication exists healthy hearts, striving to maintain or improve their ability to sustain lives.

There are endless ways to raise your heart rate and strengthen your heart and they don’t have to be regimented to a piece of equipment. James Brown suggested many years ago: “Get up off that thang and dance til you feel better!” I agree, Dance! It frees the soul and is a great way to express yourself at the same time. Walk the dog, skate, swim, play tennis, take a bike ride or just walk. Remember, your Valentine’s turns out that even a good roll on the hay has its cardio advan- tages!

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Not only will your taste buds love these drinks, your body will love them as well. Our ingredients are 100% organic, fresh or freshly frozen and nothing has been exposed to heat in excess of 118 degrees. That combination means all the natu- ral enzymes are retained in the food as your body does not have to supplement any during the digestion process. Also, we do not use dairy products that are known to clog your body (not to mention the extra unwanted hormones and antibi- otics in dairy). And since our shakes and smoothies use nature’s sweetness of organic agave or raw honey, they do not need refined sugars or artificial sweeteners.

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Blueberry Smoothie  •  Carrot Juice  •  Carrot Smoothie
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Mango Shake  •  Orange Smoothie  •  Papaya Shake
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Christianity, after all, didn't real- ly exist since his life story is designed to say nothing of lofty romantic idealism every single year. Lupercalia was about as un-Christian as it gets.

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