Family of Congolese asylum-seeker pushes for his parole

KENDRA DITTO | UPTOWN NEWS

“We can use the bodies, voices, gifts, time, and talents God gave us to help Constantin and his family,” exhorted Pastor Laurel Mathewson at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in North Park on a Sunday morning in July. The church is calling on its congregation and other San Diego interfaith activists to organize for the release of Congolese father Constantin Bakala on parole while he awaits his asylum hearing. His wife and seven children spoke at the press conference to explain why they were pushing to be reunited with Bakala, who has been in immigration detention since November 2017.

“This makes us feel real sad because my dad is not here with us. I have to do everything by myself. I have to help my mom with some translation, documents. It’s the first time for me to do stuff like that. I am getting stronger but it’s not enough because I need my father back to support my mom and help her with everything that she will need. I’m doing my best to be more independent but it’s not so [easy] because I miss my dad,” said Bakala’s teen daughter Marie-Louise. “I hope that he will be here and we will be a family again.”

Mathewson said although those gathered cannot move Washington to take action on immigration reform, they can work to change the minds of two people: the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) assistant field office director for the Atlanta field see Asylum, pg 15

Plan for 30th Street bike lane stokes fears, hopes

KENDRA DITTO | UPTOWN NEWS

On May 16, Mayor Kevin Faulconer ordered the implementation of Option A on 30th Street, which eliminates 420 parking spaces in favor of a two-mile fully protected bike lane from Howard to Juniper streets. Over two months later, he has yet to revise this decision even as many people in North Park mobilize to preserve parking, including Councilmember Chris Ward, who issued a memo in July saying he supported Option B from Howard to Upas streets — a compromise which would have saved half the parking spaces in the business district.

In the wake of the Faulconer’s decision to add a protected bike lane with the support of North Park Community Planning Group after a vote on May 14, residents and business owners have pushed against the proposed plan. Save 30th Street Parking organized a rally; a petition with more than 2,000 signatures, and several business have put up signs decrying about the change. In addition, the Save 30th Street Parking group has retained attorney Craig Sherman, who is looking at the transparency and approval process of the plan.

Pat Sexton, who has led the group, claimed the bike lane will not be safer than sharing the lane with cars, which is the current system, because there will be so many breaks in the lane for driveways and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant parking spots.

“Between the driveways that will have no protected bike lanes and the blue-curbed areas that will have no protected bike lane, there’s going to be a lot of stops on 30th Street and the bicycle riders are going to have to ride in the traffic lane,” Sexton said.

Despite this, Matt Stucky, who is a member of the North Park Neighborhood Alliance, said over the approval process of the bike lane.

“Between the driveways that will have no protected bike lanes and the blue-curbed areas that will have no protected bike lane, there’s going to be a lot of stops on 30th Street and the bicycle riders are going to have to ride in the traffic lane,” Sexton said.

Despite this, Matt Stucky, who is a member of the North Park Neighborhood Alliance, said over the approval process of the bike lane.

Pointing out that area. I think the other big issue for us was that there seemed to be a lack of transparency during the whole process.”

North Park Main Street, which represents local businesses, has distinguished itself from people that see 30th Street, pg 11

A woman and her child hold a sign at the Save 30th Street Parking rally (Photo courtesy Sotol Neighborhood Alliance)
Exploring Uptown's burgeoning poetry scene

SUE TAYLOR | UPTOWN NEWS

Poets are sharing their art all around the Uptown area. Most of these spoken-word performances take place in coffeehouses, libraries, Balboa Park, event venues, and at least one North Park bar. Think about Ernest Hemingway and his writer friends in a café in Paris. Paired with coffee, alcohol, or just a good microphone, writers thrill listeners with poems and prose, beautiful words and brash expressions that take listeners out of their ordinary routines.

City Heights Coffee House recently held a spoken-word and visual arts event. A few known and novice writers read to a cozy crowd while sipping coffee and eating samosas. This was a fundraiser for The AjA Project, an organization that provides scholarships for underserved youth. Other writers frequent Lestat’s West, which regularly hosts an open mic night on Mondays from 6:30-11:30 p.m.

A little edgier is Queen Bee’s, in North Park, popular for its Tuesday night “Tyranny Exchange.” On the second Monday of each month, the venue also hosts The San Diego Poetry Slam. Admission is $5, and it’s said to be extremely loud, competitive, and trading on vulnerability.

Who can resist poetry readings called the “Gelato Series”? The sporadic event is held at Meraki Café in University Heights. “Meraki” means “to do something with passion, love or creativity.” While they do not sell gelato, sorbet is available for purchase.

Balboa Park is home to “The Poetical Party of Choice,” also known as the Poetry Party, put on by the city of San Diego’s Parks and Recreation Department. It is free and held the first Friday of each month from 2:30-5 p.m. They encourage people to “Come to read poetry, listen, or to be seen.” The tone is sometimes drolly funny, and always thought-provoking. The poets meet at Balboa Park in the Santa Fe Room, located at 2150 Pan American Road West, by the Puppet Theater. Also in the park, the Poetic Legacy Program occurs the last Friday of each month at 3 p.m. This is a monthly workshop exploring renowned poets. In July and August, the poets Kenneth Patchen and Patricia Smith will be read.

Walk through Tiger! Tiger’s restaurant and bar to the enclosed patio for this spot’s poetry readings on the third Sunday of every month at 7:30 p.m.

For writers who want to practice their own original poetry and prose expression, the Gypsy Writers practice their own original poetry and prose expression. The Gypsy Writers meet every Wednesday at Lestat’s in Hillcrest. They follow Natalie Goldman’s book, “Writing Down the Bones,” which recommends writing nonstop for a timed period, usually to a prompt from the leader or other participants. The Gypsy Writers normally write for 10 minutes straight, and then read their work aloud. This is a free, fun event, starting at 10:30 a.m. and lasting about 75 minutes. Lestat’s lets the group use a quiet upstairs room and purchased food and beverages are permitted. Everyone is welcome to join in (including dogs as it’s a canine-friendly establishment).

Another welcoming and nonjudgmental place to read and write poetry is at the Mission Hills/Knox Library. Participants study a selected poet each month. At the conclusion of the study, participants write their own poems using ideas from the selections they just read. Again, there is time to share. The library is a relatively new building with validated underground parking. The poetry studies run from 6-7:45 p.m. Finally, Uptown is lucky to have a small neighborhood book store at 30th Street and North Park Way. Veritas Books is an eclectic bookstore, with used and new books and it has been very successful in attracting an overflow crowd for its monthly spoken-word nights. The bookstore recently expanded, remodeling what was a dental office next door, so there are more seats for the audience. The event is held one Monday a month at 7:30 p.m.

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“Michael Blades at a poetry reading

Though Nell Rose Smith, one of the Gypsy Writers, says “she is the late to the game,” you don’t have to be an English professor or published writer to join in the fun. Life has already given us pages worth of experiences to write about. Poet Michael Icarus Blades said, “Heck, yeah!” when asked if he wanted to read poetry with the spaces provided by Park and Rec. Poet Christopher R, known for his outstanding poetry, seems to know everywhere in Uptown to read and listen. When not giving workshops. R is busy reciting. He will be signing his newly released book, “Intellectual Suicide: Poems to Die For,” at a launch party at Lestat’s on Saturday, Aug. 24, at 3 p.m.

– Sue Taylor is a retired English teacher and currently works as a private tutor and freelance writer. She has written for North Park News and Eddle San Diego. Taylor can be reached at suetaylor825@yahoo.com.
Blind Community Center leads the way to fun and friends

Contrary to negative stereotypes, vision-impaired people can have very full lives. They get out and about, sing and dance with friends, eat heartily and happily work or volunteer. The Blind Community Center (BCC) in the Balboa Park area is a place where many get started on a truly fulfilling life. This year, members of the BCC also won first-place prizes at the San Diego County Fair for their beaded creations.

The center, which is a nonprofit organization, is also the home of the Lions Optometric Vision Clinic, providing eye testing and glasses for those unable to pay.

On Saturday, July 20, about 75 people came to the center for a fundraiser. They enjoyed a homemade-Mexican meal of beef or chicken chilaquiles, rice, sour cream and lots of good salsa. Conversation flowed happily around the 10 tables while Shon Mackey, instructor of the Blind Rhythm class at the center, provided foot-tapping music.

Rick Hannum, a Lions Club member since 2009 and now a current board member, ate and chatted with David Shaw, also a Lions Club member.

“Just getting new glasses can be impossible for people,” said Shaw. “Even I could come in here and get fitted for new glasses with the glasses donated by other people.”

Hannum agreed. “This organization is one of the best to be involved in. That’s why I believe in it so much.”

After the hearty meal, Mackey acted as master of ceremonies, announcing the guests receiving prizes at the San Diego County Fair for their beaded creations.

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After the hearty meal, Mackey acted as master of ceremonies, announcing the guests receiving prizes with their raffle tickets.

“Miss Ethel, you sold tickets, and the purpose—is BCC. We are more than just what you see,” he said.

Formerly the Blind Recreation Center, the Blind Community Center of San Diego was an idea of C. Anthony Moran in 1947 when he was chair of the Sight Conservation Committee. Dr. Moran had been legally blind for 30 years, after which his sight was miraculously restored.

He was a former member of the Braille Club whose effort it was to raise money for a building where the club could socialize. The Lions Sight Conservation Committee made the building of a recreation center for the blind their major goal.

A piece of property was located on the north side of Balboa Park through the help of several Lions Club members, and a lease was made with the city to use the land for the building. Club members decided that the center should be run by the blind community and to incorporate as the Blind Recreation Center.

The building was completed and dedicated Sunday, May 8, 1949. The original building contained a 200-seat auditorium, a hobby room, and a kitchen. By 1961, the community had outgrown the building, and an expansion was made. The auditorium size was doubled, and the kitchen, restrooms, and craft rooms were expanded.

In that same year, the Optometric Association and the Lions Club formed the Lions Optometric Vision Clinic.

Membership to the Blind Community Center is open to all blind, legally blind or visually-impaired persons who are 18 years of age or older. Many programs and classes are available to members, including the popular ceramics class.

For more information, go to bccsd.org.

—Cynthia Robertson is a local freelance writer.
**City Council District 3 race update**

Financial disclosures reveal tight race between Dems

**KENDRA SITTON | UPTOWN NEWS**

The race between four Democrats vying to replace Chris Ward on the City Council is closer than initial fundraising numbers released on Thursday appear to show. While Stephen Whitburn, who has been endorsed by many local political groups, reported $60,000 in contributions to his campaign, a significant portion of that was his own money. Based on these numbers, he has a strong lead over his three opponents, two of which are first-time candidates. However, the range between Whitburn and all his other opponents drops to less than $10,000 once his own contributions as well as donations to the general election are subtracted. By looking at those numbers, he still leads with $37,015. Behind him is Adrian Kwiatkowski at $32,470. Olsen is running a YIMBY (Yes In My Backyard) campaign and has taken strong positions regarding increasing density as well as adding bike lanes. Toni Duran trails with $27,954. The only woman in the race, she was also the only candidate not to donate towards her own campaign. While she has the least amount of money to campaign with, she is backed by powerful politicians like Representative Scott Peters and Calif. Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara. These financial disclosures reveal the race is far from over and anyone could win come March.

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

Let’s put an end to summer hunger

**District 53 Dispatch  Susan A. Davis**

Summer vacation invokes images of going to the beach or trips with the family. However, for too many children in San Diego and across America, it can mean going without food.

During the academic year, millions of children from low-income families rely on free or reduced-price meals when they attend school so they can get the nutrition they need. We know that well-fed children engage and learn better in the classroom. However, when school lets out in the summer months, many of these same students lose access to these meals.

In San Diego County, over 90,000 students who benefit from nutritious, affordable school meals during the academic year miss out on these school meals during the summer. Barbun and Silvia each have two children who rely on free or reduced-price meals at the elementary school they attend in San Diego. But when summer comes along, they struggle to fill this gap and use local food banks to put food on the table.

To address this crisis, I reintroduced the Stop Child Summer Hunger Act to provide families who have children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals with an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card. This EBT card would provide $150, equal to about $60 per month, for each child eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. This will allow families to purchase groceries to replace the meals the children would otherwise have received at school.

The Stop Child Summer Hunger Act expands the successful Summer EBT for Children demonstration project, which has been piloted in 14 sites and 10 states (but not California) to all 50 states. This pilot program had positive results, decreasing hunger among children by 13%.

Despite the success of the program, low-income children could see this benefit taken away from them. The Department of Agriculture has recently announced that it will end the pilot program in Oregon. Which states could be next?

There is an existing federal program that provides low-income families across the nation with access to meals but its limitations mean not all children benefit. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) attempts to fill the summer meal gap by providing funding to nonprofit government, and religious entities to serve food to low-income children during summer breaks. However, while some areas of the country see great success with the SFSP, many barriers to participation in the program remain, including unfamiliarity with the program or sites, lack of transportation, and limited food distribution hours.

According to the Food Research and Action Center, in July 2017, 3 million children ate lunch on an average weekday at a summer meal site — only a fraction of the 20 million low-income children who participate in school lunch each day during the school year. Much of the participation is due to limited public funding available to support summer programs for low-income children to attend, and as a result, children around the country are more likely to be hungry during the summer.

The Stop Child Summer Hunger Act, in conjunction with the SFSP, would ensure that children across the country don’t go hungry when school is out. Providing families with an EBT card, which is how low-income families use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), will help those families who are unable to reach the sites where food is being distributed.

Expanding the summer EBT program is not only good for our kids but our economy. Using SNAP as a model, according to economists, every SNAP dollar that households redeem expands the economy by about $1.70. And many of the businesses who benefit from EBT use are small businesses.

No child should go hungry and no parent should have to worry about being able to feed their children. The Stop Child Summer Hunger Act builds on a proven and simple solution to fill the summer meal gap that millions of children face every summer. Expanding this program will be good for our kids, good for education, and good for the economy.

-- Congresswoman Susan Davis represents central San Diego, including the communities of Old Town, Kensington, Mission Hills, University Heights, Hillcrest Bankers Hill, North Park, South Park, Talmadge, Normal Heights, as well as La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley and parts of El Cajon and Chula Vista.
Uptown Democrats endorse Bry for mayor

In a debate moderated by Pat Byrne, three Democrat candidates for San Diego mayor went head-to-head. The Uptown Democratic Club decided to endorse City Council member Barbara Bry. Here are some highlights from the event.

Barbary Bry

**Top issues:** Increased transparency, local control of housing, building tech center Downtown

**Standout quote:** "Before I take a position on any issue, I do my research."

**Yikes moment:** Offering very few policy proposals when answering questions because she needed to know more about the issues.

**Best moment:** Several pointed attacks on Todd Gloria’s record, the favored candidate in the race, that positioned her as the underdog.

Todd Gloria

*(Todd Gloria was scheduled to travel before being invited to the debate so Campaign Manager Nick Serrano represented him instead)*

**Top issues:** Addressing housing crisis and homelessness, improving transit, climate action

**Standout quote:** “We want a new San Diego that works for all of us. It’s the same Assembly member Gloria that you’ve seen for years in this community that’s been working for you.”

**Yikes moment:** Not showing up (even though he did send Serrano in his place, people complained)

**Best moment:** Serrano’s command of the issues. He passionately and extensively explained Gloria’s track record.

Beatrice Marion

**Top issues:** Ending the practice of declawing cats, animal rights

**Standout quote:** “It’s not America’s finest city but it can be.”

**Yikes moment:** Not answering questions and instead talking about personal experiences.

**Best moment:** Leaning on her identity as an outsider in the race with no mainstream backers.
Financial planning for retirement: How to ensure you are saving enough

The first savings priority is getting the employer match. Don’t let your free money go to waste. If your company’s 401(k) will match up to 6% of your pay, then at the minimum, set your 401(k) savings at 6%.

The next priority is to build up an emergency fund. This needs to be three to six months of living expenses. That’s a lot of money, but you need this in case you lose your job, can’t work due to an injury or illness, or have a big car repair. An emergency fund protects you from relying on credit cards when those inevitable emergencies come up. The next step in your savings strategy is to pay off credit card debt. If you have credit card debt, save up a partial emergency fund of $2–$3,000 dollars. Then focus on paying off credit card debt as fast as possible. Once the debt is gone, go back to building up your emergency fund to the full target amount. But remember, keep saving the minimum to your 401(k) plan to get the employer match while you are paying off credit card debt and building an emergency fund.

Saving for retirement is something everyone needs to do as a part of their financial planning. Set aside some time and energy to think about your future and how you will pay for your retirement. You will need to save to retire. Here are some simple guidelines to save enough for retirement and do it in a smart way.

The No. 1 rule is to save 15% of whatever you make. This percentage should be based on your total income before taxes or any other payroll deduction. Saving this amount will allow you to retire at the normal retirement age of 65 to 67 years old. You can consider other financial planning strategies as well, such as ratcheting up this savings amount to 20% or 25% of your total income if you want to retire earlier, or if you are getting a late start on retirement savings. These days, it seems like most people are getting a late start on retirement savings. The average retirement savings of someone in their 50s is about $12,000 ($1,000 for every 5 years). The best way to get ahead is to save more. If you find yourself in this group, though, don’t beat yourself up! There’s always time to move forward and start saving now.

There are some general financial planning guidelines that can help you save in the smartest way. These recommendations apply to most people, but there are always exceptions. Talk with a fee-only financial advisor to work out your best savings strategy.
A thriving democracy: the vote center approach

Democracy thrives when all citizens are offered the opportunity to vote. Greater participation in democracy pushes us closer to a more perfect union. And making it easy for citizens to vote holds up our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

That is why I am excited that the Board of Supervisors supported my proposal to explore the addition of one-stop ‘vote centers’ for the 2020 election. Vote centers have been shown to increase access, turnout, and improve ease of voting.

Similar to traditional polling locations, a voter can cast a ballot in person at a vote center. But one-stop vote centers also provide almost any service and resource a voter could hope for. All voters are mailed a ballot, which they can return in the mail or drop off at a vote center, or can cast a ballot in person, and register to vote. Vote centers nearly eliminate the need for provisional voting, which can delay election certification. Language, access, and translation services are offered at vote centers without the need to visit the Registrar of Voters. Vote centers are open for multiple days before the election as well as on Election Day, allowing voters additional time and flexibility to cast a ballot.

Many counties have already adopted the vote-center model and the initial results are very promising. Additionally, more than half of California’s population live in counties that have adopted vote centers, rather than traditional polling locations. According to research from UCSD, average voter turnout increased by 4% in the five counties that adopted the model in 2018 (as compared with 2014 turnout). Turnout increased the most (around 7%) for youth, and in low-income and minority communities. If these trends held true for San Diego County, average turnout using vote centers would increase by almost 71,000 voters.

Vote centers build upon other changes to state law that I have long advocated for. This includes pre-registration for 16 and 17 year olds, paid postage on every absentee ballot, and automatic registration at the DMV. These...
While many older, historic buildings get demolished, some are saved.

Take the Sherman-Gilbert House, which has a long history and was moved from the Bankers Hill area to Heritage Park in San Diego where it has been on view since 1971.

According to Ellen Sweet, historian at County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation, it all started when John Sherman purchased the land where the Sherman-Gilbert House originally stood at 139 Fir St. in 1887 for $9,500. He contracted with architects Comstock and Trotzche to build the home, and they designed it in the Stick Eastlake Victorian style. Construction was completed in 1889.

Sherman then sold the home to W.E. Willis, who never lived in the house but rented it to others from 1889 until 1897 when Augusta Gilbert bought the home. Gilbert later had three children and two of them remained in the home until 1965 — Gertrude and Bess, artists, patrons of music and performing arts, and frequent hosts to internationally famous entertainers and soirees.

The Sherman-Gilbert home stood vacant for a few years, until 1969, when a developer offered to sell the structure to the Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO) for $500 — giving them two months to clean and move the house to a new location. Mary Ward, later County Parks’ first historian, was part of the fundraising activities. Multiple time extensions were granted, but SOHO was struggling to find a relocation site, according to Sweet. Ward prepared a report for the city’s Historic Board and had the structure declared historic while additional fundraising efforts ensured.

“In 1971, the County purchased a 7.8-acre property bordering Old Town Historic Park for the specific purpose of opening an 1880s-style ‘Victorian preserve,’” according to Jessica Geiszler marketing and public outreach manager for County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation. “Today, Heritage County Park preserves the mid-Victorian era and serves as a transition between the Spanish-Mexican, early-American periods and the modern city of San Diego.”

Private and public funds were used to acquire, move and restore these unique Victorian structures. The County Board of Supervisors budgeted $1.2 million over a 10-year period, and a HUD open-space land grant paid for paving, grading and landscape improvements, she added.

On May 20, 1971, the Sherman-Gilbert House was removed from its original location. It was split into two portions requiring three trucks per side. The move was no easy feat; utility wires had to be raised and the trucks had to navigate the steep grade of Juan Street hill! Moving costs alone were about $10,000, Geiszler said.

On June 16, 1976, the County Board of Supervisors approved the relocation and exterior renovation of three additional Victorian structures: The Christian, Burton, and Bushyhead residences. Senlis Cottage and McConaughy House were added by 1981.

“All of the houses at Heritage County Park were originally located in Downtown San Diego, roughly between Fir and Cedar streets and Union and Third streets in an area we now know as Bankers Hill, but that was originally referred to as ‘New Town’ by earlier residents,” Geiszler said. “Heritage County Park is an interesting property — full of history and intrigue, art and beauty. Victorian homes that are well over a century old have found new life in a park that’s dedicated to preserving stories from our past.”

The park is open sunrise to sunset, seven days a week, and free docent-led tours take place the first Saturday of every month at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

— Jill Diamond is a Southern California freelance writer with a penchant for interesting historical pieces. Reach her at JillDiamondHistory@gmail.com.
‘Rock of Ages’

JEAN LOWERISON | UPTOWN NEWS

What is it with big money and muddle-headed morality, that so often want to mess things up for kids who just want to rock out and have fun? Don’t spend a lot of time pondering this. I’m just setting up the plot for Cygnet Theatre’s latest offering, the jukebox musical “Rock of Ages,” playing through Aug. 25. Cygnet’s artistic director Sean Murray is at the helm.

Cast your mind back to the 1980s in Los Angeles, when kids were rocking to bands like Whitemake, Styx, Twisted Sister and the like, and be prepared for loud music from singers and bands alike. I mention “loud” because the theater will provide earplugs to all who request them.

Here’s the setup: The Sunset Strip has (among other things) a popular bar called the Bourbon Room and a strip joint called the Venus Club. The area is loud and more than a bit seedy, so along comes German developer Hertz (John Rosen), who decides the Strip needs cleaning up. Hertz drags his son Franz (Zackary Scot Wolfe) along for the... what, experience?

It only takes a suitcase full of money to convince the city council to let them tear down the Bourbon Room and build something more, you know, decent in its place. The lone political dissenter is city planner Dennis (Berto Fernandez), owner of the Bourbon Room, and Venus Club owner Justice (Anise Ritchie), but everyone’s attention is given over to the protesting as well. The story is narrated by Lonny (Victor E. Chan), who keeps the story straight and the traffic flowing. After Lonny has set the politics up for us, he realizes something is missing: the show’s love story.

Enter Sherrie (Megan Carmitchel), cute as a button. A Kansas girl from a good Christian background, she scandalized her parents by leaving for California’s Sin City to follow her dream. She’ll meet wannabe rock star Drew (down-to-earth Rory Gilbert), currently a busboy at the Bourbon.

When it looks like Hertz has won and the Bourbon Room will be razed, Dennis figures he can go out with a bang by hiring real rock star Stacee Jaxx (an amusingly preening Bryan Banville) to do the final show. When Staycee (Emma Nossal), who gets together with denizens of both clubs to loudly oppose the plan, Chief among them are Amanda Zieve’s lighting and TJ Fucella’s sound design make this a perfect 1950s housewife with two kids whose life gets turned upside down when her husband leaves her. Instead of falling to pieces, Midge swings back into the game by hiring real rock star Stacee Jaxx (an amusingly preening Bryan Banville) to do the final show. When Staycee... the story of Midge Maisel, a perfect 1950s housewife with two kids whose life gets turned upside down when her husband leaves her. Instead of falling to pieces, Midge surprises everyone she knows by bringing the stage and becoming one of New York City’s most colorful stand-up comics.

"Hanna" (1 Season)

Based on the 2011 film of the same name, “Hanna” is a brooding thriller about a young girl raised by her father in isolation in the woods and trained to be a lethal assassin. Thrust into the real world with no sense of social normalcy, Hanna skillfully dodges an off-book CIA agent while searching for the truth about her identity.

"Jack Ryan" (1 Season)

This political action thriller follows CIA analyst Jack Ryan, a character from Tom Clancy’s well-established “Ryanverse,” who is pulled from the safety of his desk job to work in the field.

Cox adds Prime Video app to Contour TV

Wondering which TV show or movie to watch when you have some time to unwind? Cox Communications just made it even easier to find a favorite show with its recent launch of Prime Video on Cox Contour TV.

Prime Video joins Netflix, YouTube, NPR One and others in the Contour TV library of apps. Cox Contour video customers can use their voice remote control to easily and quickly access their Prime Video subscription to watch critically acclaimed shows such as “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” directly on their televisions.

Other popular Originals include “Hanna,” “Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan,” “Guava Island,” “Homecoming,” and the political action thriller follows CIA analyst Jack Ryan, a character from Tom Clancy’s well-established “Ryanverse,” who is pulled from the safety of his desk job to work in the field.

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When it looks like Hertz has won and the Bourbon Room will be razed, Dennis figures he can go out with a bang by hiring real rock star Stacee Jaxx (an amusingly preening Bryan Banville) to do the final show. When Staycee... the story of Midge Maisel, a perfect 1950s housewife with two kids whose life gets turned upside down when her husband leaves her. Instead of falling to pieces, Midge surprises everyone she knows by bringing the stage and becoming one of New York City’s most colorful stand-up comics.

"Hanna" (1 Season)

Based on the 2011 film of the same name, “Hanna” is a brooding thriller about a young girl raised by her father in isolation in the woods and trained to be a lethal assassin. Thrust into the real world with no sense of social normalcy, Hanna skillfully dodges an off-book CIA agent while searching for the truth about her identity.

"Jack Ryan" (1 Season)

This political action thriller follows CIA analyst Jack Ryan, a character from Tom Clancy’s well-established “Ryanverse,” who is pulled from the safety of his desk job to work in the field.

Cox adds Prime Video app to Contour TV

Wondering which TV show or movie to watch when you have some time to unwind? Cox Communications just made it even easier to find a favorite show with its recent launch of Prime Video on Cox Contour TV.

Prime Video joins Netflix, YouTube, NPR One and others in the Contour TV library of apps. Cox Contour video customers can use their voice remote control to easily and quickly access their Prime Video subscription to watch critically acclaimed shows such as “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” directly on their televisions.

Other popular Originals include “Hanna,” “Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan,” “Guava Island,” “Homecoming,” and
Sherif has sold her 11-year-old cafe. “I’ll still focus on my love of baking, but without Uptown News. “I’ll still focus on living on.

Cardamom Cafe will close in late August, but its popular croissants will remain open through late November. “It’s time for a new chapter. Baker extraordinaire Joanne Sherif has her name is yet to be announced, although he plans on retaining Sherif’s employees. Cardamom will remain open through late August. Sherif plans on renting a commercial kitchen for conducting pop-ups and fulfilling catering orders via cardamomcafe@hotmail.com. She will also continue supplying her famous sweet and savory croissants to Seven Seas Roasting in South Park, Daniel’s Coffee in Spanish Village and Café Moto in Barrio Logan, adding that Atypical Waffle in North Park may soon start selling them as well.

Lola will transform the cafe into a restaurant specializing in scratch-made Italian meals. The name is yet to be announced, although he plans on retaining Sherif’s employees. Cardamom will remain open through late August. Sherif plans on renting a commercial kitchen for conducting pop-ups and fulfilling catering orders via cardamomcafe@hotmail.com. She will also continue supplying her famous sweet and savory croissants to Seven Seas Roasting in South Park, Daniel’s Coffee in Spanish Village and Café Moto in Barrio Logan, adding that Atypical Waffle in North Park may soon start selling them as well.

The much-anticipated Breakfast Bitch opened in Hillcrest on July 13 with a playfully profane menu. Under the “basic bitch” category are create-your-own pancakes. Selections from “skinny bitch” include light items such as avocado toast and kombucha smoothies with fruit and veggies, while dishes such as lobster Benedict and loaded croissant sandwiches await under the “main bitch” section. Those items and more are available from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, and until 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

The restaurant doubles as a late-night hangout from 12:30 a.m. to 3:30 a.m. on weekends, when spritzers, kombucha and coffee drinks are available. A limited food menu includes the “sweet and savory” taco featuring a waffle shell filled with eggs and bacon or turkey sausage.

Breakfast Bitch’s owners are former college and professional football player Dorell Hutson and his wife, Traci. The couple runs the Los Angeles-based lifestyle management company Elite Luxe, which caters to athletes and celebrities. 3825 Fifth Ave., 877-732-4824, catbreakfast-bitch.com.

The newly opened Arama is a six-seat “restaurant” within Il Dandy, which launched recently in Bankers Hill as a full-scale restaurant by Calabrian-born brothers Dario and Pietro Gallo. The chefs on board are Antonio Abbuzzinzio and his son, Luca, whose restaurant in Southern Italy garnered the duo a Michelin star.

Situated behind Il Dandy’s kitchen, the intimate space gives guests a doting experience involving 12-course meals and wine pairings that draw upon the culinary traditions of Italy’s Calabria region as well as other parts of Europe. There is only one seating per evening, and reservations are required. Prices range from $180 to $250 per person, depending on the number of guests in each party. Wine pairings begin at $70 extra. 2550 Fifth Ave., Suite 120, 619-310-5669.

— Frank Sabatini Jr. can be reached at fsabatini@san.rr.com.®
A straight shot down Bachman Drive from Hillcrest brings you to Bunz. (Photos by Dr. Ink)

The Champagne-based ‘sunrise sparkle’

Garlic-mushroom-onion “bites” topped with cheese

You can whip right by it in the blink of an eye while driving around the bend at Hotel Circle or when landing at the bottom of Bachman Drive from Hillcrest. And even if the place does catch your attention, you’d probably never guess that Bunz is the only eatery along “the circle” that focuses on sustainable, market-fresh ingredients.

Fronted by the Days Inn motel, it is owned by chef-author Jeff Rossman of Terra American Bistro in the College Area. Shortly after penning “From Terra’s Table,” a locavore’s guide to Southern California’s agricultural bounties, Rossman became something of a pioneer in San Diego’s farm-to-table movement. That was in 2010, about a year before he introduced to this touristy area gourmet burgers complemented by house-made condiments and thick milkshakes better known as “concretes.”

I never knew until recently that Bunz offered a daily happy hour, let alone that it had a beer and wine license. Taking for granted that burgers or sliders would appear on the discounted food menu, I was in.

My assumption proved wrong. While booze choices sufficed with a few wines and five craft beers on tap for $4.99 a glass, the nosh options were rather basic, with nary a discounted hamburger patty in sight.

I veered off the beer and wine lists and ended up ordering one of two Champagne-based cocktails better suited for Sunday brunches. But what the heck? Priced at $5.99, I chose the “sunrise sparkle” made with orange juice, bubbly and grenade — basically a jazzed up mimosa that thoroughly quenched my late-day thirst. The other, a “sangria spritz,” mixes OJ and Champagne with house-made sangria.

The happy-hour food menu featured only a quesadilla with protein and avocado options; chicken strips with a choice of sauces; nachos using freshly fried tortillas; or something called “garlic mushroom & onion bites.” I happily went with the “bites,” which featured a nice sautée of the stated ingredients atop toasted slices of baguette. The garlic was pronounced, but it didn’t linger long on my palate due to the refreshing fizzle from my cocktail.

Bunz escapes the cheap-motel restaurant feel with a down-to-earth, slightly retro design. The dining room features wooden chairs with padded seats, an elongated banquette, colorful wall musings about hamburgers and hot dogs, and a front patio with lush shrubbery blocking the unglamorous view of Interstate 8.

It isn’t a bad place to plop down and refuel when traversing between Uptown and Mission Valley. I just wish a juicy, discounted burger would factor into happy hour.

**RATINGS:**

Drinks: 4

The craft beer selection is the strong point on a drink list that features sangria, a few wines and two Champagne-based cocktails.

Food: 3

Judging only from baguette bites crowned with garlic, mushrooms, onions and cheese, the quality is good, but the noshes discounted for happy hour are basic and limited.

Value: 4

Savings on food and drinks range from 30-50%.

Service: 5

It took a few minutes for the lone waitress to emerge and discover me standing at the “wait to be seated” sign. Once she did, service ran smoothly.

Atmosphere: 5

Located in the Days Inn, the restaurant has a street entrance that leads into an L-shaped dining room with mid-retro touchies. There’s also a front patio secluded by greenery.
monday, aug. 5

the experiential movement lab
this workshop explores how physical movement can be a metaphor for finding balance in life and overall health. taught by internationally renowned author and founder of improvisation project network, patricia maldonado, the experiential movement lab will guide participants through how physical movement is connected to life balance and overall health. the series reenvision how people can break the sedentary patterns in daily life that lead to physical and mental ailments. attendees will learn to eliminate four and self-doubt in their interactions with the world around them, using movement as a catalyst. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. $35. at the tenth avenue arts center. registration at loudgridgetheatre.com/straight.

wednesday, aug. 7

flexible fleets webinar
sandiegomoblab will host a series of five, 45-min webinars to discuss its "big moves." these strategic sets the framework for a bold new transportation vision for san diego forward. the 2021 regional plan, which will enhance connectivity, increase safety and sustainability, and improve quality of life. each webinar will be available for free. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the balboa park carousel. $20 in advance, $25 at the door. at the entrance on j street and second avenue at the corner of j street and 2nd ave. registration at bpt.me/4273781.

saturday, aug. 10

saturday, aug. 10

saturday, aug. 10

saturday, aug. 10

a short walk home
several hundred san diego residents will lace up their sneakers and walk two miles to get active in solving the region’s home- lessness crisis. meet at the luther burbank park home. san diego’s only walk to end homelessness. get active in solving the region’s homelessness crisis. we will be holding an endorsement meeting in support of the san diego homeless commission valley district 78 of the california assembly and the san diego premier of “straight,” the provocative new play by dree fornerd and scott elmegreen, that deals with fidelity and the literary works of mark twain and the classic summer favorite, “the sandlot.”

sunday, aug. 11

sunday, aug. 11

summer family fun with arley loon's magic and many antics are sure to elicit laughter and clapping. this show is the last one being offered as part of mission valley library’s summer reading program. participants receive an information guide. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the community room inside mission valley library.

monday, aug. 12

live electronic music workshop
attendees will learn the elements of production and live performance with two-time grammy award winner ramon anezuela from bostich/nortec collective and an expert in the industry, ilan stiabach. registration is open for all ages. 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the bldg. on the bay near the embarcadero marina park south. shipping will turn data into real-time actionable insights that can shape the region’s mobility strategy. we will explore how physical movement is connected to life balance and overall health. the series aims to help people break the sedentary patterns in daily life that lead to physical and mental ailments. attendees will learn to eliminate four and self-doubt in their interactions with the world around them, using movement as a catalyst. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. $35. at the tenth avenue arts center. registration at loudgridgetheatre.com/straight.

friday, aug. 12

spit & sip
celebrate the end of one of tv’s most loved events at this shark week-themed spit & sip, featuring the movie and the first shark t-shirts pm-3. join us for some ice cream treats, music, and plenty of aperol spritzes to go along with it.

friday, aug. 13

the Not-So-Silent Short Film Fest: Steampunk Celluloid Soiree
what better way to kick off a quiet weekend than by taking in a short film festival? sandiegomoblab is proud to present the not-so-silent short film fest, featuring a screening of shorts made with award-winning soundscapes and visual artist scott paulson. costumes are encouraged at the family-friendly event! tickets include complimentary pastries from boichard and calif tea, gourmet popcorn, the film screening, and one craft cocktail. general admission $15. 7-9 p.m. at pod 101, 899 park blvd.

swim & spin Saturdays
kimonolomar is partnering with pf city adventures to offer mermaid core and spin rooftop fitness classes at upper east park. call (619) 223-1190.

monday, aug. 15

workshop on accessible design
the american society of landscape architects california chapter is partnering with workshop on accessible design. attendees will learn about the americans with disabilities act (ada) and integrating design accessibility into their projects. the workshop will include design and planning tools, mock-ups, trails, parks, and outdoor developed areas. 9-2 p.m. with check-in at 12:30 p.m. at the hotel del, 100 park blvd. 12:30 p.m. at the hotel del, 100 park blvd.

saturday, aug. 17

saturday, aug. 17

saturday, aug. 17

saturday, aug. 17

get spritzed
at loudgridgetheatre.com/straight.

friday, aug. 21

friday, aug. 21

saturday, aug. 24

friday, aug. 24

 comedy special filming
comedian phil johnson will be filming his fourth comedy special, “short for sensation” on friday, aug. 16, at the comic- palace, 8875’s Claremont mesa Blvd. 7:30 and 9:30 p.m.

sunday, aug. 25

sunday, aug. 25

bike the bay
in its 13th year, the iconic bike the bay event peddles back into town on aug. 25. offering riders from all over the u.s. a rare opportunity to cycle across the san diego coronado bridge bay. bike the bay welcomes cyclists of all abilities. participants can choose from five different courses, ranging from an easy 6.5-mile cruise to the bayshore baywalk route to the challenging 30-mile route. in addition, participants will also have a chance to embark on an optional off-road portion, adding 5.2 miles of off-road riding to the 30.7-mile challenge. all riders will receive an entry bib, a list of the top 100 riders, a post-ride photo, and a souvenir bicycle license plate.

sunday, aug. 25

sunday, aug. 25

sunday, aug. 25

sunday, aug. 25

sunday, aug. 25

sunday, aug. 25

sunday, aug. 25
North Park Main Street voted for Option B for the northern segment of the plan — Upas to Howard — because improved mobility is a top priority for our organization. We have concerns about the magnitude of the impact that Option A will have on our businesses. Option B is a middle ground and allows for cars and bikes to coexist safely by providing on-street parking and a protected pathway for bikes. This design is being implemented in other areas of San Diego and we are encouraging the city to implement it in North Park as well.

Downtown San Diego. Landsberg is working with the city to find a solution that will not harm businesses or residents. However, bike activists worry 30th Street is simply too narrow for cyclists. Each of the lanes would need to be at the city’s minimum standard of width if Option B was used. Despite the lead pushback, many of the original proponents of the bike lane still have unwavering support for the plan to bring more travel options to the area. They have approached business owners to discuss the bike lanes and urge them to take down the negative signs. In addition, they have organized a “Safe Streets for All Family Ride” on Sunday, Aug. 4 at 11 a.m. to call for the implementation of the bike lanes.

“We’re starting to see some real positive benefits from J Street and I think Sixth Avenue will [be] the same. It’s also about safer streets for everyone. It’s really about completing the streets and making streets more complete for people who bike, walk and run. There’s real benefits in having multiple safe modes,” said Andy Hanshaw, San Diego Bike Coalition’s executive director in a phone interview. He said every study he has seen showed positive benefits in adding bike lanes to business districts.

John Pani, the owner of Waypoint Public, is in support of the fully-protected bike lanes.

“As a business owner on 30th Street, I would say that it’s not without risk to take away parking. There’s evidence of places where biking has been made a part of the landscape and there has been positive benefits to businesses and communities and so forth. It might seem like just taking a bunch of parking spaces away could be a negative, but there’s some decent evidence out there that the impact won’t be as scary or detrimental as one might think,” he said in a phone interview.

For Pani and Stucky, North Park is already a quickly changing place and if the city does not proactively adapt, then those changes will be for the worse as more density is added and businesses bring in larger crowds from across San Diego.

“I wouldn’t say that because it’s harder to park today than it was 10 years ago, I wouldn’t want what’s happened in Kensington or North Park to happen, in terms of the growth. I just think it needs to happen in a smarter way. I think that adding in the bike lanes is potentially a step in that direction,” Pani, a Kensington resident, said.

For those opposed to the bike lane, many of them long-time residents, want no bike lane or any parking loss. While Option A eliminated all parking to make way for the bike lane. Option B from Howard to Upas streets would have made a floating parking lane to act as a barrier between moving cars and bicycles.

“North Park Main Street residents rally to save parking on 30th Street. City Council District 3 candidate Stephen Whitburn is in the back talking to people. He remains undecided on the issue. (Photo courtesy SoNo Neighborhood Alliance)
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30th STREET
Another city intervention is eroding the landscape they have known for years.

“Parking is already very challenging,” Guittierreza.

“I understand that the younger crowd that live in the new apartments ... can walk to the bars and stuff, but the basic people that live in North Park have bought homes and lived here for decades. Those people - their optimism is on 30th, their dentist is on 30th. They’re used to 30th Street the way it’s comfortable with, which brings density. What will keep them from shopping and going to appointments on 30th Street is lack of parking,” Sexton said.

“After 30th Street, there’s added density and removal of parking minimums in new developments will make it worse. Stucky agrees, he also sees a different solution.

“I don’t think if there’s going to be a whole bunch of more density and housing going in on 30th Street, it’s going to work for everyone to drive in their car and be guaranteed a free parking spot on 30th. So we need to start thinking about if this density’s coming in, what does that mean? What is the solution to make it comfortable with, how can it still get around? Bikes are part of it, pedestrian walking is part of it, transit is part of it, but you know,” he said. “We need to do something new or else it’s going to change for the worse.”

Much of the conflict surrounding the two-mile stretch of protected bike lane is emboiled in the very story of North Park: what was once considered a slum is now one of the most booming business districts in San Diego. The neighborhood benefits from the increased pull to the neighborhood, bike lanes threaten to upend a status quo they are benefiting from. Some fear that these bike lanes are alienating a small business and send North Park back to the way it was 30 years ago. Others see bike lanes as a way for the trajectory of growth to shift into a more people using different modes of transportation access the booming area.

— Kendra Sitten can be reached at kmh92@sanmar.com. o
FROM PAGE 1

ASYLUM

office and Bakala’s deportation offi-
cer Michael Morris.

Since St. Luke’s first met the family and started helping their asylum cases, Constantin has al-
ready had a few new victories. He was granted an emergency stay of removal and won the right to a new hearing — the first one he will have with a lawyer.

The last time the family was together was 20 months ago in Tijuana when they presented themselves at the San Ysidro Port of Entry for asylum. While the rest of the family was eventu-
ally released in San Diego pending their court dates, Bakala was separated from his family — a common prac-
tice at the time. He has been transferred to jails throughout the nation while trying to prove he will be murdered if he is returned to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Mathewson’s husband and fellow pastor Colin Mathewson said it is important to reunite the family, as Annie Bweta Kapongo has been a single mother throughout this time while facing her own trauma from her experi-
ence in the DRC.

“They’re struggling financial-
ly, emotionally, psychologically. It would just really be good for the whole family’s well-being if he was with them,” Colin Mathewson said.

According to a Feb. 27, 2019 article published by the San Diego Union-Tribune, when his hus-
band was kidnapped for his work teaching youth how to peacefully demonstrate, Bweta Kapongo went to the police for help. While locked in a room smelling of urine, three policemen reportedly beat and raped her despite her pregnant state.

Constantin Bakala and Annie Bweta Kapongo

She suffered a miscarriage in the aftermath of the attack. It has been a long journey filled with much paperwork and travel out of the DRC and to the U.S. As the Union-Tribune reported, the fami-
ly was robbed, poisoned and their dog was killed while Bakala was on the run for his advocacy in the opposition party.

“We people were looking for my dad to kill him, to do some things,” 15-year-old Emanuel said in a phone interview. The family reunited and es-
caped to Brazil. Then they de-
ecided to travel to the U.S. but nearly died in a shipwreck off the coast of Costa Rica. When
they made it to the U.S. border, Bakala’s suffering con-
tinued as he was placed in detention.

“The whole reason that the family risked their lives, I mean they thought they were going to be killed but also they risked their lives last months to make it from Brazil to the United States, [was because] they thought they’d be finding a safe place to be.” Colin Mathewson said in a phone interview. “Instead it’s just been this continuing nightmare for them.”

According to Mathewson, who communicates with Bakala daily while he is de-
tained, Bakala is worried the trauma of the journey here in addition to the long separation from a parent will have lasting psy-
chological effects on his children.

Email sent by Bakala to Mathews and notes she has taken based on their correspondence show Bakala has dealt with more than the emo-
tional pain of being separated from his family while in detention. He was at an Alabama facility earlier this year where inmates staged a hunger strike because the food was so inedible. In another jail, doors in need of repair were welded while inmates were inside the buildings, subjecting them to noise and heat without proper ventilation.

Since some facilities keep de-
tainees locked in for 23 hours a day without a chance to exercise, Bakala developed high blood pres-
sure. At one point, a nurse at a new facility refused to tell the kitchen to accommodate the low-salt diet he was prescribed at the previ-
uous detention center. Instead, the 48-year-old’s health has suffered as he has simply been put on higher doses of medication, which tests show are failing to help.

Bakala is frequently frus-
trated because he is treated like a criminal and housed with criminals despite commit-
ning no crime — the detention centers he has been in often serve as a county jail or feder-
al prison as well even though he is classified as a low-level detainee.

He said, “The problem is that the guards confuse the jail and the detention center, and worst of all, we are not crim-
inals, we are immigrants. This is an error of ICE for mixing immigrants in the same place as criminals.”

Colin Mathewson said Bakala’s story of real persecu-
tion illustrates why international laws of asylum were set up origi-
nally and why the U.S. has followed them for decades.

“If we can’t grant a family like Constantin’s asylum, there’s something seriously wrong with the way that we are living out the values that the country is founded upon,” he said.

Bakala wrote on June 11, “Without liberty, there is no value in even the greatest treasure. I was imprisoned in the Congo and now I find myself imprisoned in anoth-
er country where human rights should be respected.”

— Kendra Sitten can be reached at
kenb@sdnews.com.

FROM PAGE 7

VOTE CENTERS

policy changes break down barri-
ers to voting, and bring us closer
to the ultimate goals enshrined
in the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The vote-center model increases ease and accessibility for voting, particularly for communities that have been historically disenfranchised.

Most unfortunately, whenever discussions around expanding voting access is raised, there is always pushback from those who falsely believe voter fraud is rampant. This is simply not true. Ordinary voters are not conspiring to commit voter fraud. Ordinary voters are not the ones abusing the system, and claims of voter fraud are red herrings for those who wish to oppress and disenfranchise voters.

As part of vote center imple-
mentation, increased voter turn-
out should be a primary focus of the pilot program. A robust edu-
cation and outreach campaign can help ensure a seamless tran-
sition with the various pilot loca-
tions. An advisory committee can help guide implementation of vote centers throughout the county.

We know that the vote center works. Other counties that have implemented a vote center program, similar to what I have proposed for 2020. All voters will be able to visit their regular polling location, or try out one of a handful of vote centers. The results of the pilot program, along with the feasibility study, can help us identify what we need to tuck for future election cy-
cles. We can scale up vote centers across the county for 2022, but we need to take these initial steps to figure out what works. Let’s build and implement a voting model that makes it easier to vote and enfranchises voters.

We should all agree that more people voting is a good thing, and voting makes our democracy stronger. San Diego is a better place when everyone has the right, ability, and ease of partici-
pating in the democratic process.

— Supervisor Nathan Fletcher
was elected in 2018 to represent District 4 on the County Board of Supervisors.”

POLITICS/NEWS

We know that the vote center build and implement a voting

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From alley to gallery

North Park Main Street transforms unlikely spaces with art installations

The environmental planning group Walk Score recently named North Park one of America’s Most Walkable Neighborhoods with a Walk Score of 89/100. This summer, the ‘hood known for its craft beer and chic boutiques is giving visitors even more reasons to walk about.

Spearheaded by the North Park Property and Business Improvement District (NPPBID), a program managed by North Park Main Street (the local business improvement district), a project dubbed Interchange has commissioned a series of temporary, site-specific art installations woven into the fabric of North Park. Created by six San Diego artists, these projects transform the community’s existing architecture to generate art encounters in everyday existence.

The project transforms unlikely settings for art — like an alleyway, empty storefront, and vacant lot — into neighborhood galleries. “Business and commercial property owners in our community receive services above and beyond what is provided by the city, including graffiti and litter removal, sidewalk pressure washing, and beautification projects,” said Angela Landsberg, executive director of the NPPBID. “Creating art exhibits like Interchange is just one of the many things we do to create a more economically vibrant community by attracting customers to the streets of North Park to enjoy our many unique shops and cafes.”

In her tenure as executive director of NPPBID, Landsberg has expanded the popular SDCCU Festival of Arts in North Park and the neighborhood’s Thursday farmers market. She also introduced an innovative program where a full-time homeless outreach coordinator works to connect people living on the streets with access to housing and other resources needed to improve their quality of life. “Our goal is not to shuffle people off, but to make meaningful, lasting, and positive change in their lives,” she says.

Like North Park’s other cultural endeavors, the Interchange project seeks to facilitate meaningful exchanges throughout the community: between artists and the built environment, between artwork and observer, and among community members. By activating oft-overlooked spaces, the artwork creates unexpected moments of discovery. Awakening their senses and empowering them to engage in the act of looking, observers connect more deeply with the world around them.

The circuit of dynamic installations serves to enhance shared public spaces, encourage cultural tourism, strengthen the neighborhood’s local identity as an arts and culture destination, embed art and artists more deeply into the community, and enhance citizens’ pride and sense of place. Artwork will be unveiled across the community throughout the summer and a free one-hour guided tour is set for Saturday, Aug. 3, which begins at 10 a.m. at North Park Main Street, located at 3939 Iowa St., 92104.

“Interchange recognizes artists as essential in shaping community life and art’s ability to rethink urban space as a platform for creative expression and shared cultural dialogue,” said Landsberg.

Participating artists include Robert Andrade, Ashley Fenderson, Xuchi Naungayeg Egieleton, Scott Polach, Derek Weiler, and Allison Wiese. “We selected these artists because their work reflects the spirit of North Park,” said Landsberg. “It is thoughtful, provocative, and edgy. These artists all have something very special to say and we are honored that they’ve chosen to use our community as their canvas.”

For more information, visit interchangeprojectsd.com and @interchangeproject