Health center proposes housing project in El Cerrito

By KENDRA SITTON | College Times Courier

Family Health Centers of San Diego plans to replace the parking lot of its existing health center with two levels of underground parking, two levels of aboveground parking, one level of clinic space and five stories of affordable housing. The new building will be on the corner of Dayton Street and El Cajon Boulevard and border Gilbert Drive and an alley.

Family Health Centers of San Diego serves many low-income and uninsured San Diegans and

Architectural rendering of the proposed Family Health Centers housing project in El Cerrito (Courtesy image)
Support businesses, but take precautions

BY JOSE REYNOSO
College Area Happenings

Neighbors, as we get closer to approval and then distribution of a vaccine for COVID-19 we are finally seeing some light at the end of what has seemed like a very long tunnel. Unfortunately, the current surge in cases, and deaths have dimmed that light a bit. Also unfortunately, we are here again because we put ourselves here.

Many countries imposed mandates and guidelines to limit the spread of the virus. These countries are also experiencing a surge in new cases but their upticks are blips, compare to the dramatic jumps seen in the U.S. The guidelines are simple: wear masks, wash your hands, and avoid large crowds.

And from this perspective, from which we all suffer, many in our society have made wearing masks, for example, a partisan issue that infringes on their personal liberties and openly defy and rail against any limitations. Our national constitution lays out certain rules and guidelines in order to guarantee life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all. Just as murder is against the law because the taking of a life deprives that victim of their right to life, carelessness in spreading a blip, can be a fun group activity even with people who don’t actually live in your household.

Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanza or find other ways to spend time at home, the year-end is usually about special foods and sweet desserts. This year, the holidays can still be a great time to connect with family and friends, even if we have to think outside the “cookie box” to reimagine our holiday traditions. With some creative virtual planning, baking can be a fun group activity even with people who don’t actually live in your household.

Geri Sander is a resident of Alvarado Estates and a member of the San Diego Chapter of Les Dames d’Escoffier International (LDEI). Founded in 1976, with 45 chapters in five countries, it’s a group that encourages networking and provides educational programs for women leaders in the culinary arts and for those interested in pursuing careers in the fields of food, beverage and hospitality. This holiday, Sander has been taking part in culinary experiences with others by Zoom-style conferencing online.

“You can find recipes and online cooking classes all over the internet. They give me a chance to try new recipes and then I like to share my creations with others,” she said.

Using the Zoom app or another on-line video conferencing platform is a great tool to stay connected to family, friends and holiday traditions during the pandemic. You can host a meeting to bake at home with your family and your friends down the street and your parents across town and your grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins across the country. Virtually, anyone and everyone can bake “together” in the safety of their own home!

Start by forwarding recipes and needed ingredients for advance shopping and even drop off or help to arrange delivery for those who can’t get out. That way everyone can experience the fun of baking the same thing — from afar. To encourage individualized creations, ask everyone to follow a theme like baking something inspired by a holiday song or holiday movie. To create a sugar cookie decorating challenge, add things like candy canes, shredded coconut, M&Ms, sprinkles, little pretzels and mini marshmallows to the list of ingredients.

Look for recipes with ties to your family history. Cultural holiday favorites include: Pfeffernusse, Rugelach, and Mexican Wedding Cookies. Yum!

Whether your stay-at-home baking plans include a treat that has been passed down through the generations or you are trying a recipe for the first time, you’re sure to fill your home with the sweet smells and tastes of the holidays. To get you started, here’s a delicious recipe for Mexican Wedding Cookies provided by Maria Gomez, president of the San Diego Chapter of LDEI:

Ingredients:
• 1 cup of unsalted butter (soft)
• 1/2 cup of sugar
• 2 tablespoons of vanilla extract
• 2 cups of A/P flour
• 1 cup of chopped pecans
• 1/2 cup of confectioner sugar

Directions:
Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl, cream half of the butter and sugar. Stir in the flour and mix again with a spatula. Add chopped pecans and the rest of the butter again mix again with spatula (make sure you don’t over mix). Shape dough into balls or crescents, you can use a small ice cream scoop or a measuring spoon. This recipe should make about 30-40 cookies.
Place on a cookie sheet with parchment paper or silicone mat and bake for 15 to 20 minutes in the preheated oven. Remove from pan to cool on wire racks. When cookies ok to the touch, roll in confections’ sugar.

—Karen Austin writes on behalf of the Alvarado Estates Association.

Holiday baking, pandemic style

By KAREN AUSTIN

Hard to believe the holiday season is finally here, especially after such a difficult year in so many ways. This year, more than ever, we can use some holiday cheer. Since we all need to continue to prevent the spread of COVID-19, let’s deck the halls and stay safely at home.

Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanza or find other ways to spend time at home, the year-end is usually about special foods and sweet desserts. This year, the holidays can still be a great time to connect with family and friends, even if we have to think outside the “cookie box” to reimagine our holiday traditions. With some creative virtual planning, baking can be a fun group activity even with people who don’t actually live in your household.

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Congratulations San Diego County’s Teachers of the Year!

Tune in Saturday, Nov. 21 at 7 p.m.

Cox Ch. 4/1004 - Spectrum Ch. 4

Top to Bottom:
Arah Allard, Del Mar Hills Elementary School
Christine Hill, Ramona High School
Jose Melo, Valley Center Middle School
Paula Richardson, Wilson Middle School
Jay Tweet, El Capitan High School
President of Patrick Henry High School’s junior class, he and his fellow class officers faced a challenge none of their predecessors had ever faced before. Normally, junior class ASB officers plan and host a Winter Formal — the proceeds from which go into a bank for the following year’s senior graduation events like prom. But with gatherings and large events like dances cancelled, Chubb had to come up with a different way to raise money.

“I realized that [Winter Formal] was not going to be able to be a thing, and if we do go back next year, we need this money in order to have a good senior year,” he said. “The week I was elected, in the first week of ASB, I started looking around at more direct to consumer where there is no in-person, you work with a company online that’s all shipped to people’s houses.”

The junior ASB at Henry has now held three online fundraisers: A holiday decorations (wreaths, etc.) that raised around $600; a holiday shop (candles, snacks, jewelry, etc.) that raised around $400; and an ongoing holiday and sale that ships out hams and turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas that ends Jan. 1.

“That one has done pretty well so far, we’ve got like $400 and we still got a month to go,” Chubb said, adding that there is also now an online merchandise store that raises money for all of Henry’s classes. “So everything is just switched now, geared to all online since we can’t really do anything at all in-person.”

The online fundraisers help, but will unlikely make up for the kind of money an in-person event like Winter Formal brings in.

“Winter Formal is generally a pretty big fundraiser,” said ASB advisor Autumn Flores, adding that the annual dance held in the early months of the spring semester usually raises between $5,000 and $10,000, depending on the size of the junior class.

Also missing from the junior class fundraising are the weekly frozen yogurt sales and on-campus T-shirt sales, which by this time of year would have raised around $2,000. Still, Flores commended Chubb’s initiative, especially since other classes are even further behind in the fundraising they normally see by this time of year.

“The junior class has been kind of an outlier in that Devin has been incredibly motivated — not that my other officers aren’t motivated, they are — but he’s been very big on fundraisers,” Flores said.

Patrick Henry’s senior class is the most behind because it has lost not only its on-campus T-shirt sales and frozen yogurt sales, it has also lost one of its main fundraising sources — the annual Senior Alley where seniors purchase parking spaces they can paint and personalize.

“That’s also a pretty big revenue generator for our senior class, usually between $8,000 and $10,000 from that particular fundraiser,” Flores said, adding that all these kinds of fundraisers go toward making prom night and other graduation events affordable for all of Henry’s students.

“Last year, we did have prom, their tickets would have been $5 or, at most, $5.5.”

So how will senior prom and other grad events be funded when those events are allowed to continue? The short answer is there is no answer yet.

“I have a feeling that some of the things that we might have imagined could mean there may be a year where things are done more modestly,” Flores said. “Normally, we’d have prom at a hotel or a venue. We might be looking at old school hosting our prom in the middle of our quad with outside lights and creating our own venue here.

“To be honest, my seniors probably wouldn’t care as long as they got a prom, but those are the kinds of concession we might be looking at,” she added.

In the meantime, Chubb and his fellow ASB officers are doing what they can in promoting their online fundraisers through alumni social media pages and whatever else will help them get the word out.

Now with [our fundraising] being all online and these companies ship all over the country, I’ve gotten some sales from like Texas, Maine — all over,” he said, adding that the best way to support his and all the other classes at Henry is by following the school’s ASB Instagram page — @pathenryasb — which lists all current events and fundraisers.

**MIXED SUCCESSES**

High school associated students aren’t the only groups that have had to make changes in fundraising during the pandemic. PTAs from middle and elementary schools are also replacing their in-person fundraisers with online ones.

“We lost potential major fundraising from our biggest fundraiser of the entire year because most of it is straight up profit,” said Hardy Elementary School principal Laura Alluin. “We have a large Jog-a-thon scheduled in March or April and that’s our largest fundraiser of the entire school year. Obviously we weren’t able to do that.”

Although Hardy didn’t hold a fundraiser last spring to replace Jog-a-thon, it didn’t really need to because those funds are usually used for school activities like field trips, which were cancelled.

Hardy was also able to carry on with other fundraisers it usually holds — although now moved online — with mixed success.

The school continued its Family Dining Days that partners with local restaurants — Corbin’s Q, Woodstock’s Pizza, Chipotle, etc. — that offer a percentage of your purchase to be donated back to school.

The school also now an online merchandise store that raises money for all of Henry’s classes. “So everything is just switched now, geared to all online since we can’t really do anything at all in-person.”

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A night’s sales to the school. The Dining Days had varying degrees of success as restaurants at different times could only offer pick-up and not in-person dining.

The Hardy Dads Club also carried on its usual Christmas tree and greenery sales, with online ordering and payment for the first time.

“I heard it was not as successful as the past two years — there was a rock star family who was very successful who now graduated — but more profitable than the first two years we did it,” Allain said.

What was successful for Hardy was the online Raiser Craze event — a “kindness-a-thon” held as an experiment to replace Jog-a-thon.

“The kids make pledges online saying, ‘I’m going to three acts of kindness for each act of kindness that I complete’... Then they advertised to their friends, families and neighbors and sent out the links that say, ‘Will you pledge money for each act of kindness that I complete?’ And then they had to go back and take photos and write explanations of the kinds of kindness that they did. And the money came rolling in,” Allain said. The school hit its goal of $5,000 in only two weeks and ended up with over $6,500. “It was a windfall for over two weeks and ended up with school hit its goal of $5,000 in on

Although the Raiser Craze brought in much needed funds for Hardy, there was one event that was cancelled where the loss was more than just money.

In the fall, Hardy usually hosts a giant carnival in October that is open to the entire community that involved the Dads Club and other volunteers, including fraternity and sororities from SDSU.

“It’s a deep community connection event and, yes, we make some money, but we put so much money into it that it’s not a huge profit for us,” Allain said, adding that though the carnival usually raises only about $2,000, the intangibles like new students’ parents meeting the community and the PTA being able to meet and recruit them for membership or help was lost this year.

“And it’s just a fun tradition for us,” she said. “I was like surprisingly emotionally sad about the fact that we couldn’t have it. There was this huge loss to not have it, even though when it’s happening it’s like a major stress and so much hard work.”

Future fundraising plans at Hardy include replacing Jog-a-thon with a Dance-a-thon that can be held socially-distanced with children dancing in hoops safely separated.

CUTS TO PROGRAMS
Not every school has seen the successes that Hardy had with its Raiser Craze event. At Phoebe Hearst Elementary, a Move-a-thon event to replace its own Jog-a-thon event, the deficit in funds raised has meant cuts to programs at Phoebe Hearst.

“We have already cut some items from our budget such as reducing teacher mini-grants, which is money the teachers can use to buy much needed school supplies,” Berg said. “We’re hoping to keep most of our remaining items such as ArtCorps which is an interactive art program for kids. As of now, those items will stay and we will be rolling over less than the desired for next year, but still meeting our minimum goal.”

The school still has other fundraising opportunities for the year including Dine-in events (which Berg pointed out will likely be “dine-outs”) that are similar to Hardy’s Family Dining Days and a box tops fundraiser where students collect tops of cereal box for rebate money from cereal companies.

“We’re hopeful we can meet our goals on those or we may have to look at more cuts in the spring,” Berg added.

And like Hardy, the lack of events is not just about money for the schools.

“It’s a rough time for PTA, and fundraising efforts in general, as we don’t get the same face to face time with parents we normally do — that social interaction is everything and it also helps parents and kids feel more connected,” Berg said. “We did host some non-official off campus events at Lake Murray, but it’s not the same as greeting parents at the gates when they drop off kids and speaking to them in person at the rallies.”

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, Berg said she is “extremely proud” of her PTA team this year that was able to still provide an “awesome fall” for Phoebe Hearst students.

“We also created a new fundraising contest: the school foundation held a Halloween Parade, and we consistently showed up for supply drop offs and every chance we could get to see our parents and students,” she said.

And although fundraising for these special events and programs is important, Berg pointed out that it is not the most important issue schools, students and parents are facing right now.

“As the Tandem $5,000 resident, I can tell you I’ve received a lot of notes and calls from parents eager to get their kids back to school and concerned with the timeline of that possibility. Not one of them has been concerned about our love fundraising,” she said. “I don’t think raising money for the school is high on parents minds right now, but instead they just want their kids back in school. Sadly, I can’t give them the answers they want because I’m in the same boat they are.”

—Reach editor Jeff Clemetson at jeffc@sdsnews.com.

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How local churches can foster racial justice and reconciliation

By DAVID E. CUMMINGS

Bishop AB Vines of New Seasons Church in Spring Valley knows a thing or two about racial bias first-hand.

“If I get a ticket for a light not being lit, there’s free court- guaranteed, because I’m 5 foot 10 inches, 300 pounds. That’s not happening to you [looking at a black guy]. That’s not happening to me, and I’m not going to let it happen to me.”

I’ve been married for over 25 years, been in ministry for 30 years, I became vice president of the [Southern Baptist] Convention, but I still get nervous when a cop comes by. All he sees is a black guy. I should not have to have that fear. You [looking at me again] don’t have that fear. I live that fear every single day.

New Seasons is a large, multi-site church comprising a diverse array of ethnicities.

Everyone goes through pain, everyone wants to experience love, and we can’t survive without it, says Vines.

“Everybody at some point needs those three things. It’s universal.”

Despite our shared humanity, however, the majority population sets the standards for intelligence, success, and advancement.

“The Anglo population thinks or has been thinking or assuming that they are the model and the measure for success,” says Juan-Daniel Espitia, model and the measure for success,” says Juan-Daniel Espitia, Pastor of Hispanic Ministries at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church in North County. “The Anglo population, at a cosmic perspective, has criminalized whomever looks different, whomever has an accent, whoever’s skin is like mine [brown]. It has been criminalized and thought of as a thief or someone who is going to hurt you or me and our children, so we must get rid of them.”

While the church may not be able to undo four centuries of racial injustice entirely on its own, it is in a unique position to facilitate one of the greatest needs of our time.

According to City Life Church Pastor Dale Huntington, “there’s a lot of wisdom we can gain from people in these neighborhoods. For the longest time, that’s how we’ve spoken up on behalf of people, and now I’m trying to learn how to speak up for people to listen to other people. We need to help people to get that perspective from all people.”

As close communities with common beliefs and values, churches are ideally situated to foster open and honest conversations about race.

Epitia agrees.

“I think one of the things we need to cultivate is learning to listen to each other,” says Epitia. “There are a lot of assumptions and prejudices, judging before, and that means that there is fear and ignorance. We need to learn to listen with empathy and respect.”

Mid-City Church of the Nazarenes in City Heights takes this principle one step further by ensuring that multiple ethnicities are represented in the church’s leadership.

“I think the beauty in the multi-congregational model is in how we make decisions together and govern together when it comes to ministry or responses to say, Black Lives Matter,” says Mid-City Pastor Becky Modesto. “Because you have so many different cultural perspectives, you have to really listen well.

Taking time to have people who are different than you at the table really important.”

During recent protests in San Diego to police brutality, Mid-City didn’t unlaterally take action to express its opinions. Instead, they reached out to the local stakeholders to hear what they felt would be most helpful from the church.

“I called several leaders here and just asked, ‘how can we best walk alongside you?’” says Modesto. “It’s about listening to people’s stories, that empathy of just sitting there, just listening and understanding.”

Empathetic conversation with people who are not like us or with whom we disagree, however, is not easy. “One of the problems is that we’re not willing to see if perhaps we’re different in systemic racist and a racism and benefiting from it,” says Huntington. “We’re just willing to say, ‘I’m not a racist.’ And there’s so much more digging to do.”

Overt racism is easy to spot and easy to correct. It’s the implicit bias, the things we think and say and do without even realizing it, that are most insidious.

“If I go into an elevator, a white woman is going to hold her purse tighter. When I go shopping at Nordstrom’s, I’m going to get followed. Those things have to be really recognized and dealt with,” says Vines.

Epitia believes that the kind of dialogue that makes a real difference requires humility.

“Humility is the one characteristic that would allow us to see the others the way God sees them. Humility would be the prerequisite.”

With humility and empathy as the guiding principles, Espitia and Solana Beach Presbyterian Church held monthly meetings on hot-button immigration issues. “Many ministers are aware of these things, but they are scared of what their congregation is going to do,” he told me.

After a year of complex immigration conversations, they decided to ask a parishioner named Pedro who had migrated to the United States to share his story with the church body.

“When he presented his testimony, the congregation started to applaud and stood up.” No one, not even Espitia, expected that kind of gracious response.

“Churches need to find their voice, and they need to be the nourishing environment where open, honest, humble, and respectful conversations occur.”

Today, the local church has an opportunity – some would say a responsibility – to step up and make a tangible difference in the lives of people in our communities who feel unheard, unvalued, and often unwelcome.

The time has come to open our minds, our hearts, and our front doors to empathetic and humble conversations about racism in San Diego.

—Ibid

—David Edward Cummings, PhD is a professor of biology at Point Loma Nazarene University and author of “Everybody’s Got Bears,” available on Amazon.

News from your County Supervisor

By DIANNE JACOB

Triple-header: Three big, long-awaited projects are starting construction in Lakeside. Together, they are set to boost the town’s economy and quality of life

• Lakeside Equestrian Park.

The new 14-acre park at Moreno Avenue and Willow Road will include a covered arena, open arena with shaded bleacher seating and a multi-purpose building.

• Lindo Lake beautification.

The east basin is being restored to its natural state, while the west basin is also set for major improvements. Sediment will be removed, trees replanted and nearly 100 fish habitat and spawning structures will be placed on the lake.

Plus, additional amenities will include ADA-accessible walking paths, bird watching stations and a fishing pier.

• Lakeside Library. A new county library will be built on Woodside Avenue near Channel Road. The 16,400-square-foot structure will replace the town’s 5,000-square-foot library, built in the 1960s. It will include a 15,000-square-foot community room, five study rooms and a Friends of the Library bookstore. It is expected to open in summer 2022.

A huge thank you to all the community leaders who worked with me to make these great projects possible.

Meth is back: I recently stood with other leaders of the region’s Meth Strike Force to release the region’s annual meth report card.

There were a record 546 local meth-related deaths in 2019. There’s no sugarcoating it: Meth is destroying lives and families in our county. These tragic deaths were unnecessary and avoidable. The strike force includes the best and brightest in law enforcement and treatment services, but we clearly need to do even more as a region to address this deadly addiction.

In 1996, when we created the strike force, there were so many meth labs in San Diego County that it was known as the “Meth Capitol of the World.” That’s no longer true, thanks to the hard work of this group and the community.

—Dianne Jacob represents District 2 on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. For questions or comments about your county supervisor, call 629-531-5522 or email dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov.
In Trump vs Democracy, Trump keeps losing

By SEAN QUINTAL

November 2020 marked the 57th presidential election in the United States. Since 1800, when Thomas Jefferson, of the Democratic Republican Party defeated the incumbent John Adams of the Federalist Party, the ensuing 53 elections in America have stood as examples to the world of how a vibrant and free democracy respects both the will of its people and the rule of constitutional order. Adams set a critical precedent. His departure from office marked the first peaceful transfer of power between U.S. political opponents, now a foundational element of our nation’s democracy. Since 1800, the loser of every presidential election has willingly, peacefully and constitutionally surrendered power to the winner. Every loser, that is, until Donald Trump.

Before the election, Trump repeatedly declined to say he would accept a peaceful transition of power and now it is clear that he never intended to accept defeat. Last month, the American people decisively chose Joe Biden as their 46th President. Nonetheless, since the election Trump and his GOP enablers have waged an unprecedented attack on American democracy. The fact that the execution of their scheme has been comically ineffective should not obscure the grave risk it poses to the soundness of our political system.

To this day, Trump not only refuses to concede to the President-Elect, he persists in offering bizarre conspiracy theories and outright lies to claim that he actually won the election. The degenerates and liars who constitute his absurdly inept legal team, headed by the vampiric Rudy Guiliani, have waged a frantic effort to delegitimize a certifiably fair election. They have filed some 60 lawsuits in several states, seeking to set aside the electoral votes of Wisconsin. Brian Hagedorn, of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, observed the following in his opinion rejecting the outlandish request from Trump’s lawyers to invalidate that state’s election results:

“Something far more fundamental than the winner of Wisconsin’s electoral votes is implicated in this case. At stake, in some measure, is faith in our system of free and fair elections, a central feature to the enduring strength of our constitutional republic... Once the door is opened to judicial invalidation of presidential election results, it will be awfully hard to close that door again. This is a dangerous path we are being asked to tread.”

But Trump’s attempt to subvert a free and fair election through the court system is just part of his anti-democratic flirt. This month, the American people personally watched a sitting U.S. President call on state legislators to violate their oaths and to reject the results of their own constituents’ votes. Trump and his legal team have implored various state legislatures to invalidate November’s elections, defying the will of their states’ citizens. Trump personally called the Republican Governor of Georgia to demand he call a special session of the state legislature to override the popular vote and to nullify conservative values. We are still WOMEN FOR TRUMP!

If you are looking for other sources of information please consider the iheartradio app for news and editorial podcasts which aren’t biased with a liberal slant. You can listen to Rush Limbaugh, Rudy Giuliani, Ted Cruz, Mark Levin and Candace Owens as well as many others on your phone or computer.

Although Republicans are disappointed that President Trump did not win with a landslide victory and continue his common-sense leadership for a second term, we must remain optimistic for the future, knowing the challenges ahead. One of the greatest examples of persistence is Abraham Lincoln. If you want to learn about someone who didn’t quit, look no further.

Born into poverty, Lincoln was faced with defeat throughout his life. He lost 18 elections, twice failed in business and suffered a nervous breakdown. He could have quit many times, but he did not. Because of his tenacity and dedication to our country he became one of the greatest presidents in our history. An inspiration for us all.

Pat Boerner writes on behalf of the Republican Women of California–Navajo Canyon.

 Republican Women discuss election at Legacy Resort Hotel

By PAT BOERNER

Navajo Canyon members and guests were thrilled to attend the November meeting at the Legacy Resort Hotel in Mission Valley. We learned that with polls and projections our ladies were eager to get together and catch up on all the political frontline happenings.

To understand that this election cycle has been a roller coaster ride is clearly an understatement. Locally, Republicans have a lot of statewide victories to celebrate because elected officials and propositions which passed or failed, but will the presidential election end up in the Supreme Court?

Voters have been made aware of the vulnerability of our voting system and should be demanding transparency and tighter controls in future elections. We must all ensure we will even require voters to present identification. They do in Canada with no terrible repercussions, so what is preventing that require reform?

How a vibrant and free democracy can thrive in the face of unceasing attacks on its structure is a testament to the resilience of our nation. Adams set a critical precedent. His example is a call to action for all who love our democracy.

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SEE LMFDIC, Page 11
said David Wellis, CEO of San Diego Blood Bank. “The need has already increased over the last couple of weeks and we anticipate even more requests from hospitals as we head into the new year.”

Appointments are required to donate blood and convalescent plasma. To see if you qualify, please visit sandiegobloodbank.org or call 619-400-8251.

MISSION TRAILS WATER PROJECT CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

When looking from the right vantage point towards Mission Trails Regional Park, a large mound of dirt can be seen in the park. What is it? It’s a construction project by the San Diego County Water Authority to upgrade a section of the regional water delivery system. Rest assured, once construction is complete, the dirt hill will be restored and revegetated with native plants – many seeded from the park itself.

Work efforts on a new flow regulatory structure (FRS II) are beginning to take shape with many of the wall sections installed. The FRS II will be an underground concrete water tank that will store slightly less than five million gallons of water and be used to balance flows in the aqueduct system. FRS II will be the second underground water tank in the park – both work to efficiently move water through the region.

Biden’s victory. To his credit, the governor refused; Georgia’s Republican Lt. Governor publicly refuted Trump’s false claims that the election was “stolen,” and he condemned Trump’s “mountains of misinformation.”

Disturbingly, the integrity shown by those Republicans is atypical. Trump’s vile and venal affront to our democracy has been tolerated and countenanced, through either silence or affirmation, by a majority of national GOP office holders. One month after the election, 249 Republican Representatives and Senators were asked who had won. Only 27 answered President-Elect Biden; 220 either said the results were unclear or refused to answer (two actually insisted Trump had won). It appears the instinct to subvert elections, norms, and the law itself to serve Republican interests is hardly in retreat.

The health and propagation of American democracy depends on holding these unpatriotic(parans in check. That fact makes Georgia’s two US Senate seats on the ballot in January all the more critical, as majority control of the chamber is at stake. Those of us in California can lend our help to the good folks in Georgia working to secure those seats. Various organizations have phone banks where anyone can participate in reaching out to Georgia voters.

For more information, please visit Stacy Abrams’ FairFight.com, actblue.com, or Indivisible’s website, tinyurl.com/y5qq8fw.

Thanks to the dedication and patriotism of tens of millions of Americans, and to the integrity of our judicial system, our constitutional republic weathered the brazen and shameless attack from the most un-American president in our history. We secured, for the 57th time, a free and fair presidential election. But as Trump has made ominously clear, if the American people are not vigilant, there is no guarantee we will enjoy a 58th.

—Sean Quintal writes on behalf of the La Mes’ Foothills Democratic Club.
San Diego State University has entered into an agreement with the government of Mexico that paves the way for the expansion of binational cooperation across a wide range of initiatives. The non-binding memorandum of understanding (MOU) between SDSU, the Secretariat of Public Education of Mexico and the Secretariat of Public Education of Baja California will serve as a framework for future collaborations in research, academic and educational activities, joint events, private sector partnerships and other areas.

“This is a historic moment for our university,” SDSU President Ada de la Torre said. “We’ve long embraced our proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border as a unique opportunity for mutually beneficial collaboration and partnership. This agreement builds on that success and sets San Diego State on a course to become the premier binational university in the U.S.”

The MOU outlines a number of areas for potential collaboration, including border research, faculty and student exchanges and other areas that are sensitive to the challenges and opportunities of our borders, from an intercultural, binational and bilingual perspective,” Concheiro Bórquez said.

The signed MOU strengthens our institutions and proves our mutual respect, reciprocity and will to collaborate in projects that are sensitive to the challenges and opportunities of our borders, from an intercultural, binational and bilingual perspective,” Concheiro Bórquez said.

Added Zavala Máquez: “In the education sector, for the Baja California State Government, and for the Secretary of Education this Memorandum is of great relevance. Without a doubt, it will be favorable for long-term improvement of teaching practices and the construction of common curricula, particularly in teacher training and the search for graduate profiles that meet the needs of the diverse multicultural society in our Cali-Baja megaregion.”

**NEXT STEPS**

SDSU and its partners in Mexico next plan to engage in a series of webinars to discuss action steps for future collaboration in multiple areas. The MOU was announced at SDSU’s RE: BORDER binational conference in November. The second annual conference exploring key regional issues and innovative solutions drew more than 1,200 registrants and was held virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The RE: BORDER conference itself served as the first collaborative project between San Diego State University, the Secretariat of Public Education of Mexico, the Secretariat of Public Education of Baja California, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (El COLEF) and Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC).

Tony Thurmond, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, was among the officials who participated in the conference. “I am grateful to Super-intendent Thurmond for his participation in RE: BORDER as well as for the support he has shown for strengthening binational relations between the educational systems of California and Mexico,” Alfaro said.

**COMMUNITY BRIEFS**

**CHANGES IN REPRESENTATION FOR EL CERRITO**

Georgette Gomez, who has been the El Cerrito City Council representative for the past four years, threw her hat into the ring earlier this year for the U.S. House of Representatives seat being vacated by Susan Davis. In doing so, her seat on the City Council was open.

Though Georgette was not the elected candidate for the House position, she has a lot of interest in San Diego and we are certain to see her in the future. Best Wishes to you Georgette. Please keep us posted on your new adventures.

**Happy Holidays**

to you and your family and a Happier 2021.

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**COMMUNITY BRIEFS, Page 11**

**ONLINE EXHIBITION TO FEATURE ARTWORK HIGHLIGHTING HERITAGE AND MIGRATION**

San Diego State University Gallery is hosting a virtual online exhibition of work by artists Phung Huynh, Adama Delphine Fawundu, and Claire A. Warden. The exhibition, “Upon Closer Inspection,” will be on view from Dec. 10 through March 31 on the KunstMatrix virtual exhibition platform.

“Upon Closer Inspection” brings together artworks from three female artists working across different media who are exploring personal identities, narratives, and lived experiences related to heritage and migration. The exhibitions looks into the complexities of how cultural identity, agency, and representation inform everyday life. Through drawing, painting, photography, textile, and performance, the selection of artwork in the exhibition visualizes family histories past and present.

“Choosing artists for this exhibition, I was intrigued by how Fawundu, Huynh, and Warden, use their practice to convey such deep elements of their lived experiences and relationship with identity, heritage, and our country,” said Chauntel Paul, SDSU’s gallery and exhibitions coordinator. “I hope that collectively the artists and their work can connect with viewers to offer understanding and solidarity, or to perhaps offer a new perspective about belonging.”

The exhibition brings focus to different paths of understanding personal and American identities. From experiences of being the first in their family to be born in the United States to those that encompass arriving as a refugee and immigrant, the artists’ stories interlock and diverge, using visual art to share their unique perspectives. Each artist responds to social interactions that have made a lasting impact on how they navigate the world around them.

As a child of refugees herself, artist Phung Huynh believes it is vital to share and honor migration stories through her art, her family’s, but others. “Becoming American cannot be painted in broad strokes,” said Huynh. “It is a distinct experience informed by my family’s living history as refugees and inspired by research and interviews with people with a shared history. My artwork unpacks the complexities of resettlement, immigration and cultural assimilation.”

SDSU Galleries will host virtual programming with the artists in the exhibition in February, 2021. More details about these events will be available in the new year.
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of him. Stopher, we will miss you and hope to see you again soon.

Congratulations to Sean Elo-Rivera, who was elected to be the District 9 City Council member on Nov. 3. District 9 includes El Cerrito and many of our neighboring communities.

The El Cerrito community got to know Sean during his campaign for the primary and general elections this year when he attended our community meetings. Sean’s inauguration will be on Dec. 10, 2020 and his term will then begin. Congratulations Sean, we look forward to working with you.

Todd Gloria, a long time San Diego representative, was elected to be the new Mayor of the City of San Diego. The El Cerrito community got to know Todd while he was on the City Council a few years back.

Todd Gloria’s inauguration will also be on Dec. 10, 2020 and his term will begin. Congratulations to you Mr. Mayor, we look forward to working with you.

El Cerrito resident Sara Jacobs was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives on Nov. 3.

Congratulations Sara, we look forward to working with you. The new House convenes on Jan. 5 or 6 of 2021.

—Submitted by El Cerrito Community Council.

ROLANDO HOLDS HOME DECORATION CONTEST

Things have been a bit different this year, but the Holiday Home Decoration Contest is the one event presented by the Rolando Community Council (RCC) Community Events Team that remains the same.

Yes, it is the time of year we all love to decorate our homes for the holidays. What fun we have going out in the evening enjoying all of the festive lights, saying “Ooh,

—SEE COMMUNITY BRIEFS, Page 19—

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Health center

is one of the ten largest Federally Qualified Health Centers in the nation. With over 50 sites across the county, the organization is seeking to leverage its property to help the affordable housing crisis.

“We have a lot of properties all around San Diego. With the housing crisis, we decided we have parking lots with a lot of unused space above them...” [We were looking at how to help the housing crisis to increase the number of units in the market to make it more affordable and helping people stay in San Diego,” said Anthony White, the center’s director of community and government relations.

Even the health centers own staff members have struggled to find housing in the area. The building will have 42 of its 162 units of affordable housing set aside for employee workforce housing, including medical residents. The units are studios, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. For the rest of the residents, the building brings housing and supportive services together.

White said they are doing the project in El Cerrito because of the zoning. While the zone has no height limit, some community members worried that although the project is allowed, it will not be aligned with the existing community’s character.

“It’s really unfair to our community... Even by right it doesn’t fit the community,” said ECCC member Laura Riebau.

Riebau was one of the few dissenting voices. Most members of the council said the project heralded an exciting new chapter for the neighborhood and brings in necessary affordable housing.

“I think it’s time to get this type of building across our community,” said Melissa Steele. “I think it’s a great improvement for the community.”

Some members envision more large buildings coming to the area bringing business and housing, similar to North Park a couple decades ago. They pointed to the thriving business and walkability of the neighboring community as what El Cerrito could look like in the future.

“It’s time to move forward into the 21st century,” Eva Yakutis said. Some council member pointed out the same arguments used against the project were used two decades ago against the area’s first mixed-use building, which now fits seamlessly into the changed community.

In the initial plans, Family Health Centers proposed including a coffee shop. After pushback from the community, businesses were eliminated from the plan so as to not compete with other businesses already in the neighborhood, including a nearby coffee shop.

Much of the 246 parking stalls will be used by staff and patients, not residents who may not be able to afford a car or need one because they live and work in the same building. Family Health Centers hopes this will alleviate parking and traffic issues in the area.

Matthew Winter, an architect designing the project, said the building is long so they intentionally broke it up to fit into the residential area. The base of the building will all be the same, but the residential units will be broken up into rectangular buildings with window corridors and green space in between. To cut down on street noise, there will be a solid building profile facing El Cajon Boulevard.

Despite its height, a nearby cross will still loom much higher than the affordable housing project which is set lower on the hill.

The garage is already under the city’s review with the rest of the project bringing forward soon.

—Reach contributing editor Kendra Sitten at kendras@sdnews.com.
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Continuing a family heritage in La Mesa Village

By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON

Carol Tolosko created Centifonti Restaurant as a nod to her great-grandfather Cosmo Centifonti who immigrated with his wife Carmela, in the late 1800s from Abruzzi, Italy to Burlington, New Jersey. Cosmo started his “One Stop Shop” — a delicatessen, with an ice cream parlor, candy store, smoking lounge and a bar. Tolosko wished to emulate the concept with her own eatery located in the Village of La Mesa.

Centifonti is a restaurant with an eclectic menu of Italian and Californian favorites — something for everyone, children and adults. You’ll find a bar featuring 25 craft beers on tap, a gelateria and also a candy store.

Carol and her daughter are fourth and fifth generation chocolatiers who make their own chocolate goodies. Carol’s mother, until recently, made the candy and caramel apples so loved by patrons.

The restaurant, which is open daily, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

A unique breakfast favorite is the Southwest Breakfast Bowl. This is a bread bowl filled with Centifonti potatoes (red potatoes with red and green bell peppers and onions) smothered in house-made chili, two eggs any style, cilantro, tomatoes, avocado and sprinkled with cheddar and cotija cheese. If this isn’t enough, you can have it topped with chipotle cream.

If you prefer a sweeter meal, try the French toast with thick Texas toast dipped in a custard batter flavored with Amaretto, cinnamon and vanilla sprinkled with sliced almonds and grilled to a golden brown.

For a healthy alternative try their house-made granola with a mixture of grains, nuts and raisins, sweetened with honey. Cover with your choice of milk. Soy milk or almond milk.

Lunch and dinner offer an assortment of burgers, paninis, soups and salads, as well as full entrees of American and Italian food. If Italian food is on your wish list, try the Spicy Penne Pasta, Lasagna, Spaghetti and Meatballs, Ravioli and Fettucini Alfredo. Not all entrees are Italian, but all are flavorful and made from fresh, local ingredients. The good news for gluten-free eaters is they offer gluten-free pasta.

For the competitive beer drinkers, try the 128-ounce Das Boot filled with your favorite brew. Or for the not so competitive, try the 64-ounce option. Ring the bell once you’ve finished.

“My mottoes are: Something unique sells and treat the customer like family,” Tolosko said. And it’s working. Centifonti’s has been in business for 15 years and going strong.

What’s next for Tolosko? A speakeasy with dining and dancing. Like her food, she has an eclectic assortment of musical acts who are waiting to transport San Diegans away for an hour or two. For current hours and specials go to centifontis.com.

—Robin Dohrn-Simpson is a local freelance food and travel writer. Reach her at dohrnsimpson@hotmail.com.
Mission Trails Park users share their stories

Recently, the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation highlighted three park users to help illustrate how much the park means to the San Diego community. As one of the park’s neighbors, you know how popular the park is and has become, especially during the pandemic.

Protecting and maintaining 8,000 acres as well as providing educational and other resources to Mission Trails’ estimated 2.2 million annual visitors is an immense responsibility. We at the MTRP Foundation support the park and its staff in this endeavor by raising funds for trail maintenance, habitat restoration, education programs and more. We all need the park, and now, we need you.

December is our most important fundraising month and it’s also when the majority of us make our charitable gifts. This year, please make a gift to support Mission Trails and take advantage of the special charitable giving incentives in the 2020 CARES Act. Learn more about these incentives, giving to Mission Trails, and make a donation at mtrp.org/giving.

Now, meet some of our regular park users, people like you who love MTRP.

THE RUNNER

On runner Jenny Nakamura’s first trip to San Diego to visit her boyfriend and now husband Sean, he took her to Lake Murray and Cowles Mountain.

“Both places are special for us. Lake Murray is one of my favorite runs. I love getting to the turn around and seeing the bulbies at the end,” she said.

Nakamura runs 20–30 miles a week and lives near Mission Trails.

“It’s really cool to have trails in the city. I love that there is so much variety, from paved paths to trails with hills, single track, and even the occasional water crossing depending on the time of year.”

On Instagram as @runnylegs, Nakamura shares photos of her runs at locations near and far, including at MTRP. Remarkably on a run earlier this year, she shared, “I remember doing a sunset run at Lake Murray the Thursday before everything locked down in March. It’s such a beautiful place to see the sunset.” We concur.

THE BIRD WATCHER

Liz Dorski has been coming to Mission Trails since 1983. I remember walking the old potholed Junipero Serra road from what is now the Visitor Center to the dam. We had to climb across a large water/sewer pipe to get over the river and hike through the grasslands area. Now, with the establishment of the regional park status, the park is professional and lovingly cared for and protected, which is invaluable, not only for people, but for nature.

Dorski is an avid birder and enjoys bird watching at MTRP.

“The best time to spot birds is either morning or dusk, but really any time of day will be fruitful if you are observant. So much of birding is listening, and being quiet and still. A large water/sewer pipe from predators.”

In addition to volunteering at MTRP, Dorski has more recently been one of the newsletter contributors, so she knows the park, its staff and volunteers well.

“Don’t a day goes by that I don’t recognize how fortunate I am to have a home, good health, social support, and resources; and I am enormously grateful to be able to donate my time and money to MTRP to help keep it going for years to come. It’s not only our backyard, it’s home to many critters and plants and it adds to the park’s beauty, and they deserve our respect.”

THE MOUNTAIN BIKER

When Ramon Galindo isn’t working as a reporter at NBC 7, you’ll probably find him at Mission Trails where he’s been a frequent visitor for the past six years. In his job, he’s done stories about Mission Trails, including about hiking safely and our rattle snakes.

In pre-Covid times, Galindo also volunteered at the MTRP Visitor Center.

“I was looking for volunteer opportunities and after completing the 5-Peak Challenge, it occurred to me that volunteering at MTRP would be a great opportunity to share my knowledge of the park’s trails while helping out the place where I love to spend my free time. When I interned with the public at the Visitor Center, I can discuss with them the park’s diverse plant life, fascinating geology, and the rich history of the Kumeyaay.”

In addition to hiking the trails and up Mission Trails’ five peaks, Galindo likes to mountain bike, especially on the trails near East Fortuna Sluicing Area.

“It’s a good workout and there are a variety of trails so you can bring friends of all skill levels,” he said. “I have been going to the park during Covid, but usually early in the morning and on the weekends to avoid possible crowds. It’s still important to enjoy nature for physical and emotional health.”

Make a donation to support Mission Trails at mtrp.org. Donors of $100 or more will receive our new thank-you gift, an MTRP license plate frame! You can help keep the park today.

—Jennifer Morrissey is executive director of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation.
This year, Patrick Henry High School — along with all the Henry cluster schools — are going through the process of becoming No Place for Hate schools. At Henry, our goal is to create a learning community free of prejudice and build a community based on inclusivity.

As a learning community, we must advocate for equity and combat any type of racism that seeps into our lives. We must analyze our cultural frame of reference and widen our cultural aperture to understand the people around us.

James Baldwin once said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” Our purpose is to address institutional racism and explicit/implicit biases in order to unite and become a community that is bound by integrity, purpose, and options.

Our competitive teams have been practicing diligently since the middle of June and are anxiously waiting to play games for which they may have to wait until 2021 to be played.

Our professional competitive and volunteer recreational coaches have all risen to the challenges of teaching soccer skills to players with ever changing COVID-19 protocols. There were no off-the-shelf guidelines for coaching players who initially had to remain social distanced from one another and still concentrate on soccer.

Tryouts of our competitive teams are set to begin in January 2021. The dates and times will be announced on our website, crusaderssoccer.org.

Beginning Dec. 15, registration for our 2021 recreational spring season for boys and girls born between 2007 and 2017 will commence. Visit the Crusaders Soccer website at crusaderssoccer.org for more information and registration. The eight-week season is currently scheduled for March and April. Teams will play on Sundays.

The Crusaders Soccer Club would like to thank Dan and Mary Buxton, the owners of the Play It Again Sports in La Mesa for donating the large portable soccer goals now being used on the lower Lewis field for the Saturday scrimmages.

The Crusaders Soccer Club’s Board of Directors sincerely thank the players, parents, coaches, and grandparents for helping make 2020 a successful year despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus. As 2020 comes to an end, we wish everyone a happy and safe holiday!

Join us on and off the soccer field in 2021 as we celebrate 50 years of serving San Diego’s East County.

—Jay Wilson writes on behalf of Crusaders Soccer Club.
probably deadly disease, directly or indirectly, also deprives its victims of their right to life. Unfortunately, when the top leadership of our country claims that the restrictions are worse than the disease because of the economic impact, apparently it doesn’t take much more to get millions of followers to follow suit and resist sensible guidelines.

I am convinced that adherence to the safety guidelines would have prevented the surge in cases that is probably going to drive us into another crushing economic shutdown. I recently learned that right from the start of the pandemic, the municipality where I was born in Mexico had instituted fines for not wearing a mask, and they are enforcing them. The result has been that aside from low businesses in our area the dark side right now in the shadow of our country is killing us, literally or indirectly, also depriving people of their right to life. If the restrictions are worse than the disease, the top leadership of our country is killing us literally and economically.

It will work anywhere. Clearing the streets of downtown San Diego of masses of people and contact-tracing are working there to keep the disease in check. It will work anywhere. Local businesses have seen minimal impacts and continue to thrive. The reckless disregard for common-sense protocols in our country is killing us, literally and economically.

We need to get ourselves out of this mess. Clearly, aside from the death toll, the worst side effect of this pandemic has been the economic impact — the loss of jobs and livelihoods from business closures. But this, too, can be overcome.

Our local business community has not been immune to the economic fallout. Let’s work together to support each other. My family, has made it a point to continue this support. We increased getting take out from local restaurants and go dine outdoors whenever possible, leaving larger than normal tips to show our support. We shop and get services whenever needed, all the time, showing the respect that we owe our fellow man by wearing masks and following any protocols that the establishments deem necessary.

A couple of weeks ago, my wife and I went to a favori- te restaurant in University Heights to celebrate our aniversary. Dining had been moved outdoors, with the parking spaces in front of the restaurants removed, covered and set up with dining tables. There wasn’t a huge crowd but our server told us that the previous weekend they had seen similar pre-pandemic-sized crowds. They continue to thrive by setting up protocols for the safety of their customers and staff. The public sees that and supports them.

Restaurants in the College Area are taking similar steps. Please help them out. Maybe the city will wise-up and allow businesses in our area the same leeway, and close off part of El Cajon Boulevard to allow for outdoor expansion. It could give us a glimpse at what a more people-friendly commercial corridor could look like, as opposed to the sometimes speedway that it can be.

I apologize if I’ve been too preachy, but we are in a dark spot. With a light not far off and the city will wise-up and allow businesses in our area the same leeway, and close off part of El Cajon Boulevard to allow for outdoor expansion. It could give us a glimpse at what a more people-friendly commercial corridor could look like, as opposed to the sometimes speedway that it can be.

I apologize if I’ve been too preachy, but we are in a dark spot. With a light not far off and the public sees that and supports them. The result has been that aside from low business closures. But this, too, can be overcome.

You are probably quite aware of the rising home prices occurring statewide right now. For example, regarding single family homes in 92115 the median home price is up 5% year to date to approximately $640,000. Zip code 92119 has seen a 6% increase in median price to approximately $717,000 and 92120 has seen an 8% increase in home price to $778,000. The days-on-market for all three zip codes is below 20 days.

Desirable properties are receiving multiple offers and going pending in just a week or two. You can say this housing market is red hot with too many buyers and not enough inventory. Renters are coming out in droves looking for a nice place to own. Suddenly a home office, backyard, and garden area are highly in demand. But unfortunately, there is a darker side right now in the shadow of our country is killing us, literally or indirectly, also depriving people of their right to life. If the restrictions are worse than the disease, the top leadership of our country is killing us literally and economically.

Whether you are a new or experienced home buyer or seller, you need the expertise of a real estate agent, the best tool in the market today is www.SarahWardRE.com where you can search thousands of homes in your area.

Activities will be held weekly in the community center starting 8-9am. Local restaurants will provide the food! We look forward to seeing you there.

The purpose of this article is not to alarm readers but to make read- ers aware of the undercurrents in this market. It is something to think about. The market could switch from less of a seller’s market to more of a buyer’s market if the economy doesn’t pick up soon and if quite a few homes hit the market in late spring and summer of 2021. Foreclosures are not expected to surge currently because with high home prices few homeowners are under water right now and people would simply list and sell their properties to extract some equity instead of just walking away from an underwater property and handing it over to the lender.

I am staying positive right now and hoping for a quick rollout of the vaccine, getting businesses back up and running, and hoping for a more normal real estate market and lifestyle in the next six months. The vaccine is highly effective and tens of millions of doses are in waiting for approval and distribution. In June we may be sitting back inside Petco Park watching a ballgame! Hoping for the best. Call me with any real estate questions or to schedule a no-obligation meeting to discuss your options. 858-413-6043.

—Sarah Ward is a realtor with Fine Coastal Real Estate. Reach her at sarahward0213@gmail.com.
Sarah Ward, Your Local REALTOR®

IN ESCROW
4904 Chaparral Way
San Diego, 92115
4 Bed | 2 Bath | $650,000

SOLD
204 Garden Grove Lane
El Cajon, 92020
3 Bed | 2 Bath | $671,000
Represented Buyer!

IN ESCROW
6210 Agee St. #241
San Diego, 92122
1 Bed | 1 Bath | $365,000

SOLD
4531 Winona Ave #2
San Diego, 92115
2 Bed | 2 Bath | $367,000
Represented Buyer!

Ready to find your dream home, but not sure how to maximize the equity in your College Area home?

With this much money on the line, and so many tedious details to keep track of, you’re right to want to approach this carefully.

Understanding your local market is an important part of a successful move. You deserve to get a strong return on investment and with the right information and preparation— you can! 

My hands-on approach takes the stress and confusion out of selling your home because I sweat the small stuff— allowing you to stay focused on this move. 

From start to finish, I work with you to help prepare your home, attract buyers, and facilitate a successful sale. Thanks to my proven system and passion for real estate, I’ve built a reputation for routinely providing a seamless and successful experience for my clients.

Call Sarah Today For Your Initial Consultation!

858-431-6043