The city of La Mesa has decided, after four years of effort, that it’s time to start the process of actually setting up a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program to take control of energy costs.

CCAs are becoming the way to go for increasing numbers of local governments interested in renewable energy supplies, to meet state requirements for lowering the use of fossil fuels by 2045. This is part of the overall La Mesa climate action plan passed by the City Council in March of 2018 — in fact, it’s the major portion of that overall plan.

The city’s Environmental Sustainability Commission held an open meeting on June 17 to tell interested citizens what they might expect to see when this all goes into effect.

On July 15, the commission will present its draft plan to actually make all this happen.

Scott Anders, of CCA 101, told the audience that things will change for them on their utility bills once the CCA is up and running.

“This will place control of your electric rates in the hands of local governmental agencies,” he said.

Since the July Fourth fireworks display and music festival at Lake Murray was brought back in 2017 after a six-year hiatus, thousands of residents of the Navajo neighborhoods, La Mesa and visitors from all over San Diego County have enjoyed the event and its high-quality family fun and entertainment. This year’s festival promises to deliver much of the same. However, organizers are worried about a lack of money raised to seed next year’s event and are calling on the community to step up and donate what they can to ensure the local celebration of our nation’s birthday continues into the future.

According to the Lake Murray Fireworks and MusicFest GoFundMe page, the group has raised $60,000 of its $85,000 goal, with much of those funds coming from sponsors such as title sponsor Stormberg Orthodontics. Despite the $25,000 shortfall, the show will go on.

“Right now it’s happening,” said Rob Hotz, a volunteer organizer of the fireworks festival. “We have enough to pull this year off. We have dipped into the majority of our savings from previous years in order to do that.”
Grossmont Center plans Wednesday farmers markets

By JEFF CLEMETSON | La Mesa Courier

Grossmont Center is going big on markets.

In addition to a craft-oriented market it already holds on some Saturdays, starting July 24 the shopping center will hold a farmers market on Wednesday afternoons. And also, Grossmont Center has thrown its hat into the ring to take over La Mesa’s Friday Farmers Markets as well.

Trevor Moore, Grossmont Center’s director of public relations and events, explained how the new Wednesday market would differ from the shopping center’s existing and possible future markets.

“It’s going to be a producer-only market,” he said. “We are not really going to support the local artisanal community or crafters or self-makers at this particular event. We have another market on the last Saturday of every month for the local artisanal community or crafters or self-makers or self-makers at this particular event.

The next Shop Local market is June 29, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and will be partnered with a health fair put on by East County Chamber of Commerce and Sharp Healthcare.

“We are trying to provide a home for other organizations to partner with us that are good for East County,” Moore said.

For the Wednesday markets, Grossmont has teamed up with the La Mesa Parks & Recreation Foundation and some of the proceeds from the events will go to fund park projects in the city.

“I am all about sustainability,” Moore said. “My feeling is that if you have a really decent cause for what you’re doing and supporting that with your dollars, that’s really, really good, not only for your own business but also for who you’re donating those dollars to.”

The new Wednesday markets won’t be the first time Grossmont Center has held farmers markets.

Moore said the center held a market that was “short-lived” a few years ago.

“It didn’t end up panning out,” he said. “I think the location of it, the produce that was there, the food trucks — there wasn’t a booth. A city staff suggestion to operate a shuttle was left out of the new RFP because it was cost prohibitive. The LMVA would consider reducing hot food vendors — another suggestion by city staff — if granted another CUP, although Soutwood said the association members would do so gladly.

Soutwood said the Village is still the best place to hold the market because of its walkability and proximity to transit — and also its aesthetics.

“The market is — as much as the stands [vendors] — it is the experience of being somewhere lovely, and the Village is the loveliest place to have the market,” he said.

There are two proposals that would bring the farmers market back to its previous location of the Civic Center parking lot. One of those proposals is from current market manager Brian Beavers, who would prefer to stay with the LMVA and operate the market in the Village but has opted to have a backup plan in case the City Council votes to remove it from downtown.

La Mesa Chamber of Commerce also proposed a market that it would manage in the Civic Center parking lot. Chamber president Mary England said bringing the chamber’s expertise and hundreds of volunteers to enhance marketing and make the markets successful in the old location.

SEE Farmers Market, Page 3

Competing proposals for La Mesa’s Friday farmers market

By JEFF CLEMETSON | La Mesa Courier

The final RFP was from Grossmont Center to move the Friday market to its parking lot. Trevor Moore, Grossmont Center’s director of public relations and events, said that moving the market would provide stability for the event.

“People want something to be done that will at least solidify the long-term plan for that market,” he said. “It’s been in a state of flux the last few years, which is not good for farmers markets in general. So we feel, with our long-term vision for the center and where we’re going as a shopping center in 2020, we feel that we should be the long-term host of either that market or [a] market of that sort that makes sense for the people of East County.”

The City Council is expected to vote on the farmers market proposals at one of its July meetings, most likely July 21.

Besides the RFP to run La Mesa’s Friday market, other groups in the city are also considering starting markets of their own.

Brew Coffee Spot owner Joe Paraiso said he is considering hosting markets in his parking lot, which has already hosted car shows in the past. And activists representing the west side of La Mesa have previously floated the idea of operating markets in that part of the city as well.
whole lot to attract people to this market and it didn’t end up being consistent.”

Moore also believes that the partnership with the La Mesa Parks & Recreation Foundation could mean the difference in success for the new market. “I think that was the sustainable piece that we missed with the last market, engaging the community in a way that you’re not just supporting a shopping mall and farmers, but you’re supporting local parks,” he said. “I think that that is a much better way when you’re thinking about voting with your dollars to ensure that that is a much better way when you’re thinking about, is it sustainable? Is this going to be the right thing long term?”

Parks & Recreation Foundation partnership with the La Mesa Farmers Market, it will need to take over the La Mesa Friday Farmers Market, as it is now, supports the idea, but admits, “the devil is in the details, isn’t it?”

City Councilman Bill Baber, who sat on the Sustainability Commission, thinks it’ll work. “I completely support the concept,” he said. “I’m all in favor of it. But we have to make it work in reality.”

—Doug Currie is a freelance writer and former television news personality.

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What that means is there will be no seed money for next year’s event. Seed money is required for the necessary permits and fees, and for the vendors that need deposits several months in advance to provide fencing, portable restrooms, the concert stage and even the firework display itself.

“They need the money well before the core of our fundraising effort for that year, so dipping into our savings this year as much as we have does put a damper on to our savings this year as much as we have,” Hotz said. “We don’t want to pound people over the Fourth of July,” Hotz said. “I don’t know why that is,” Hotz said. “It’s hard to raise money too early from the community because they are not thinking about the Fourth of July in January.”

This year, the door-to-door fundraising only received donations from a few hundred families out of many thousands of envelopes that were delivered to homes.

“There’s more than 300 families that go to the fireworks every year so we have a huge population that is not donating and they come to the fireworks. I don’t know why that is,” Hotz said. “To me, that’s a giant frustration. If everyone who went to the fireworks just donated a couple bucks, we’d be there.”

Festival organizers always have a booth at the event with a jar to collect donations and typically raise around $6,000 during the festival, Hotz said, but it is not something he and the other volunteers prefer to do.

“All of us as a committee have made a very concerted effort to say when the Fourth of July event is here, we’re here to enjoy the Fourth of July,” Hotz said. “I don’t want to pound people over the head and beg for money on the Fourth of July, that’s not what the day is about.”

Festival organizers prefer that people who plan on attending the festival make a donation in advance at the GoFundMe page or by sending in a check in the envelopes they received on their doorstep. The suggested donation is $10 per household but anything people can give is appreciated, Hotz said. To donate, go to bit.ly/2Ufr4MR. For more information about the event, visit lakemurrayfireworks.org.

In addition to funding for the July 4 event, the festival organizers are also in need of volunteers on July 5 to help make sure the park and surrounding neighborhoods are clean. The cleanup begins at 8 a.m. and will finish around noon. Coffee, water and donuts are provided and it is an excellent chance for students to get community service hours logged. People interested in volunteering can sign up at signup.com/go/MEEPFDa.

The Lake Murray Fireworks and MusicFest runs 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the Fourth of July. Food vendors participating in this year’s event include: Corbin’s O. Dang Brother Pizza, Windmill Farms, Primo’s Mexican, Finest City Kettlecorn, Doggos Goo and Rita’s Italian Ice. A variety of children’s activities will be held throughout the day including a scavenger hunt.

The festival draws a rotating crowd of more than 3,000 people, while the 9 p.m. fireworks show can be seen by an estimated 100,000 people throughout La Mesa and San Diego’s Navajo neighborhoods of Grantville, Allied Gardens, Del Cerro, and San Carlos. The music stage is located at Lake Murray Community Park, 7001 Murray Park Drive, in San Carlos.

—Reach Jeff Clemenson at jeff@sdnews.com.

COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY FOR FORMER CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Friends of former La Mesa City Council member Guy McWhirter have started a GoFundMe page to help pay medical bills stemming from a recent diagnosis of stage 4 non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

The GoFundMe page shows that just over $12,300 from 147 donors has been raised toward a $30,000 goal. The page was put up at the end of February of this year. An update to the page on June 6 reads: “Unfortunately our friend Guy has had a rough couple weeks. He has been in and out of the hospital with various complications and is really struggling. With this, he is completely unable to work and expenses are mounting. If we can gather a little more together and help relieve this added stress, it would be greatly appreciated more than you can imagine. Guy and family have been so grateful for the donations they have already received and it has meant so much to them to help cover expenses and alleviate some of the strain from not being able to work. There are not enough thank you’s for all who have, and continue to support Guy.”

To donate, visit bit.ly/2IUc7Y.

LA MESA RECEIVES URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN GRANT

The city of La Mesa has been awarded a $385,000 grant from Cal Fire. The grant will support the continued growth of La Mesa’s urban tree canopy and implementation of the city’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), Through the grant, La Mesa will:

• Develop a comprehensive Urban Forest Management Plan through a public process to manage the health and growth of the city’s tree canopy for the next 40-50 years.
• Conduct education and outreach to the public around urban forestry best practices to promote proper care and stewardship of urban trees.
• Plant 200 trees along the right-of-way and in public parks to expand the urban canopy within the city.

La Mesa will partner with multiple organizations to implement the grant, including the Corps of San Diego County, La Mesa Beautiful, Tree San Diego, and West Coast Arborists. The project is expected to begin this...
Thank you la mesa and to all who voted uneeke boutique “best boutique’ in la mesa for 2019. I am beyond grateful and truly humbled to have received “gold” this year and i look forward to the upcoming year!

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a girl with a dream, able to do what she loves and who never takes one day for granted!

—Reach Jeff Clemetson at jeff@sdnews.com.
Guest Editorials

San Diego school districts should consider building teacher housing

By Mark Powell

[This guest editorial first appeared on the Voice of San Diego website on May 30. Visit bit.ly/2RPh6dU.]

California is experiencing a teacher shortage — even though the enrollment in teacher credentialing programs is rising, the numbers just aren’t high enough. Many California teachers have already departed to less-expensive states where housing problems are more in line with salaries, which has exacerbated our teacher shortage.

In San Diego, a school teacher needs to make $1.058,986 a year in order to afford a median-priced single-family home. With the average public school teacher salary at $61,113, purchasing a home is unlikely. San Diego is one of the most expensive cities in the US, with rents among the highest in the state. The only option for most new teachers is to rent — an expense that can eat up over 50 percent of a teacher’s pay, and that’s not including utilities. To make ends meet, many teachers often take on second and even third jobs.

To avoid paying high rents, many teachers work multiple hours each day commuting long distances to work from areas where rents are less expensive.

District-owned affordable housing projects aren’t a new idea — they have been built in Los Angeles, Santa Clara and San Mateo over the last 20 years. But the idea is new for San Diego, where recent state laws make building employee housing easier for school districts.

California’s Teacher Housing Act of 2016 allows school districts to provide affordable housing specifically for district employees and their families.

The previous law required that homes or apartments be open to anyone who meets the low-income requirement if they used state and federal low-income housing funds or tax credits. But another law passed in 2017 exempts school districts from some of the usual requirements related to the sale or lease of property if it will be used for employee housing. Districts no longer have to convene an advisory committee or allow tenants to sell, lease or rent surplus property. The bill also exempts the district from property tax on the complex. Building affordable housing can help take off some of the financial pressure for new teachers, allowing them to focus on teaching kids, not paying the rent.

As school districts in San Diego County struggle to pay salaries that keep pace with the high cost of living, many are trying to entice teachers by designing bonuses to attract and retain new teachers. Affordable housing projects for teachers are one more incentive. Building more housing will also help address San Diego’s rental crisis by increasing the housing inventory, non-profit organizations, such as district-owned affordable housing programs that are issued by school districts and community colleges, to finance the construction of facilities. Other funding mechanisms include subsidies from the city, loans, low-income housing tax credits and federal grants. The school district that is providing the property does not need to sell the land and can opt for a no-cost, long-term lease.

Having teachers live in the neighborhoods they work in benefits students and parents, because most teachers want the opportunity to connect with the community and families they teach. District-owned affordable housing programs can help make that happen and help create stability in our schools, which is vital, especially in low-income areas, where it is needed the most.

There is no arguing that San Diego has a housing problem, and most agree that there is no individual method to tackle the housing crisis. We will most likely need a multifaceted approach to increase the number and affordability of homes. There is complexity in the problem, innovative solutions such as district-owned affordable housing projects need to be given serious consideration, because San Diego is still behind in building housing, which is keeping rents and home prices too high, especially for teachers.

—Mark Powell is a San Diego Association of Realtors board director and San Diego County Board of Education trustee. He’s also an adjunct professor at National University.

Throwaway plastics threaten our oceans

By Takhmina Bazarkhanova

[Editor’s note: This op-ed was written for Rebecca Sklarrod’s sophomore English class as part of a Call to Action anti-plastic project submitted separately to La Mesa Courier.]

Today, everyone knows that our beloved oceans are under a threat of severe pollution by trash, especially throwaway plastic. According to Mark Spalding, president of The Ocean Foundation, it is “a problem that is both contributed to by most of humanity and powerful enough to harm to all of humanity.”

Pollution is not a new phenomenon; it is older than most people realize. Throughout the centuries, the pollution of water was a catalyst for many typhoid and cholera outbreaks. According to the history of pollution, it was all initiated in “ancient Rome, where sewers carried human waste into the Tiber River. The river was so polluted the Romans had to construct aqueducts to obtain clean drinking water.”

The ocean pollution issue deserves big attention and solutions and should be considered a world problem. There are a couple of reasons for that: plastic never goes away, poisons our food chain, affects human health, threatens humans and wildlife, and many more.

Who causes this whole mess? People. And who can end it? People. According to Ryan Schleeter, a content editor for Greenpeace, “corporations like Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Nestle, and others are literally choking our planet with a substance that does not just ‘go away’ when we toss it into a bin” — up to 1.27 million tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year. Americans alone discard more than 269,000 tons of plastic into the ocean per year. They fill up the plastic with the ocean, which can have devastating consequences and wipe out animals, and potentially harmful to all marine life.

As a world facing this problem, we should all practice individually, like recycling and using reusable bags, cups, and water bottles. But for companies, it is more about understanding the bigger picture of pollution and making” eco-friendly” products, switch to biodegradable materials, and use less plastic in their packaging. As a consumer, we should be more conscious of the products we buy, especially those that come in single-use plastic, like straws, cup caps, and utensils. And it should be our responsibility to put pressure on companies to stop using single-use plastics and invest more in research and development of sustainable alternatives.

Since the discovery of plastic waterways, scientists have been working on ways to clean our oceans and make them healthier. One of the most successful projects is called Ocean Cleanup Foundation. They have developed a system that can help remove plastic waste from the ocean and create a sustainable ocean environment. They have set a goal to capture 50% of ocean plastic by 2030. The project is called “Ocean Cleanup Interceptor.”

Scientists predict that by 2040, 96% of ocean plastic will be removed. They are working on a system that can help stop plastic pollution in the ocean, which is a huge step towards a cleaner ocean. They are also working on creating a sustainable fishing industry, which can help reduce the amount of plastic waste in the ocean. They have developed a system that can help remove plastic waste from the ocean, which is a huge step towards a cleaner ocean. They are also working on creating a sustainable fishing industry, which can help reduce the amount of plastic waste in the ocean.

In conclusion, it is crucial for everyone to take action and make changes in their daily lives to reduce plastic pollution. Simple actions like using reusable bags and water bottles, properly disposing of waste, and supporting companies that use sustainable materials can make a significant difference in protecting our environment and preserving the beauty of our oceans.

—Takhmina Bazarkhanova is a La Mesa High School freshman.
Of course, recycling alone will never end the flow of plastics into our oceans. Drink companies produce over 500 billion single-use plastic bottles annually; there is no way we can recycle our way out of a problem of that scale. What we can and must do is to cut the source of the problem — slow down the production of all this plastic waste. What I am urging you to do is to start thinking about the place you live in; is it clean or is it dirty, think about how can you contribute to make it much cleaner, and think about how are you able to keep it that way, even make it into a habit of yours. The same exact thought process is needed for the ocean pollution problem: Think about what caused this issue and how does it affect you, your friends, or the overall community; think about how you can leave your mark on solving this issue, and think about how you are able to stem the source of it forever.

Here are some effective solutions to the ocean plastic pollution issue:

- For storing and preparing food, invest in stainless steel food containers with lids rather than in plastic items.
- Use real plates, cutlery and glasses, and cloth napkins, if possible.
- Eliminate unnecessary disposable items, like straws, drink stirrers, topchucks, and lids for cups, or make available upon request only.
- A river was the starting point of pollution, so let’s make an ocean the ending point.

—Tatbirna Bazarkhanova is a student at Helix Charter High School.

TASTE OF SAN DIEGO — EAST A SUCCESS

On June 1, the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce hosted its inaugural Taste of San Diego — East event at the Town and Country San Diego in Mission Valley. The event is a rebranding of the Taste of La Mesa event that was held in the city of La Mesa for 10 years.

The new location and name was a risk for the chamber, but was deemed a necessity because the event had outgrown its previous location at the La Mesa Community Center.

Patrons did not seem to mind as the large ballroom at the Town and Country was mostly filled all evening long. Guests began arriving around 4:30 p.m. and were treated with sample bites of grilled steak, pulled pork, platters

California: Starting July 1, 2019 a law will go into effect that will require all newly installed residential garage door openers and new door installs be equipped with a battery backup. After the deadly California wildfires that killed 44 in 2017, Senator Bill Dodd pushed for revisions of SB-969. Of those who died during the fire, at least 5 were due to the inability to open three garage doors due to power outages. A majority of homeowners use their garage door as the primary point of entry to their home. In times of emergency or a power outage, the battery backup will provide up to 24 hours of usage. A battery backup will engage when power is cut from the garage door opener. Insuring your garage door opener is equipped with a battery backup is a step towards having a peace of mind if the occasion arises.

Garage Door Medics has been serving Southern California since 1990. Over the years we’ve developed a distinct familiarity with the neighborhoods and communities we work and live in. Many California residents have older garage door openers and have one-piece tilt up doors. Garage doors can weigh anywhere from 80-150 pounds or more. During times of crisis and power failure, manually opening the garage door may be difficult, especially for senior citizens or those with disabilities. Many residents are unaware of the Battery Backup law itself, and how it will affect them. At Garage Door Medics, safety is one of our top priorities. We find it important to keep our neighbors and customers informed and up to date with current available options.

OCEAN THREAT

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**Ballot measure threatens Prop 13 protections**

Carl DeMaio will be the guest speaker at the next Republican Women of California-Navajo Canyon meeting. (Facebook)

Susan Shelly, vice president of communication for the Howard Jarvis Tax Association, gave an eye-opening talk at the May meeting of the Republican Women of California-Navajo Canyon. Shelly reminded us how important it is to fight to retain the benefits of Proposition 13, which imposes limits on how much our property taxes can be increased.

Before Proposition 13, taxes were based on the assessed market value of your home and taxes were 2.67% of this amount each year. After it passed, taxes were figured on a base of 1% of the purchase price and yearly increases were limited to 2% regardless of any changes in the market value. As an example, a home currently valued at $500,000 without the protection of Proposition 13 would currently be taxed $13,400 per year. Housing in San Diego is already expensive, and the loss of Proposition 13 benefits of Proposition 13, which makes the dream of home ownership impossible for many people. Of course, rents would also be affected. This is not just hypothetical rhetoric — there will be a measure on the 2020 ballot that will cut off all California businesses from Proposition 13 protections. That means all businesses! Any place you shop will be hit by higher taxes, and these costs will be passed on to the consumer. Some businesses will choose to just leave California.

SEE RWNC, Page 23

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**Big Blue Wave Independence Day Celebration**

There's no admission charge for The Big Blue Wave Independence Day Celebration that will feature great candidates and public servants from all over San Diego County. We may have a surprise guest or two as the lead up to the election year heats up. California's primary election is early next year and we should have a big say in which candidates will further our progressive ideals on all levels of government, including president. No matter what, we must all work together to end the disaster that is the Trump administration bent on undoing decades of diplomacy abroad and compassion here at home. Our planet's future depends on a new governing regime in Washington not beholden to fossil fuels, corporate welfare and special interest lobbies.

We've invited the San Diego Democratic Congressional Delegation, all statewide office holders, local Assembly members and Senators, city officials, County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, other significant local Democrats, and all Democratic candidates for San Diego City, County and East County offices at all levels. Celebrate Independence Day with a party in the park like no other.

Our large and active club represents the communities of San Carlos, Allied Gardens, Del Cerro, La Mesa, College Area, Santee, Mt. Helix, Casa de Oro and Spring Valley and other close-by areas. We normally meet the first Wednesday of each month at the spacious La Mesa Community Center, 4975 Memorial Drive, just north of University Avenue in La Mesa. Please join us as a guest or become a member, with our modest annual dues starting at $30. However, at our Big Blue Wave Independence Day Celebration in July, new members can join for as little as $15 each for the remainder of 2019. Like us on Facebook and check out our new website at lamesafoothillsdemocraticclub.com.

—Tina Rynberg is president and Jeff Benesch is vice president of programming for the La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club.

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**Amber McWhirter-Griffith**

ByPATBOERNER

June 28 – July 25, 2019

La Mesa Courier

By TINA RYNBERG

June 28 – July 25, 2019

La Mesa Courrier

By JEFF BENESCH

June 28 – July 25, 2019

La Mesa Courier

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Congress must codify Roe v. Wade into law

By REP. SUSAN DAVIS

Women’s health care is under assault like we’ve never seen before.

States around the country are racing to enact laws on abortion, which will do nothing more than put women’s lives at risk.

So far, eight states have enacted bans. Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, and Ohio have been described as passing bills that fall short of an outright ban. These so-called heartbeat bills prohibit abortions after six to eight weeks.

Since most women don’t realize they are pregnant until around 15 or 16 weeks, the laws in these states are outright bans.

The most extreme laws are coming out of Missouri and Alabama, where there are punitive measures included with their bans.

Alabama would jail a doctor for performing the procedure for 99 years. Missouri would subject women who seek an abortion to prison for up to five years. This law is not about preserving life, it’s about punishing women.

It’s also difficult to believe these laws are about protecting life when many states with restrictive abortion laws also have some of the highest rates of infant mortality. Where’s the legislation to bring down these rates?

The supporters of these bills are clear in their objective: to restrict Roe v. Wade. It’s time to settle this issue once and for all.

Congress must pass the Women’s Health Protection Act (WHPA) to codify the Roe v. Wade decision into law. I joined in introducing this legislation in May.

The WHPA is straightforward. It simply prohibits states from imposing the limits and restrictions being put on women.

Existing restrictions in some states require women to drive miles to visit a clinic, incurring travel expenses and having to miss work.

No one is pro-abortion. It’s an incredibly difficult decision for a woman to make. If abortion opponents want to really reduce the number of abortions, I invite them to join us in making child care more affordable.

Seventy-five percent of women seeking an abortion are economically disadvantaged.

Financial constraints are regularly cited in a decision to end a pregnancy. We need to help working families afford child care.

The Child Care for Working Families Act would also have a positive economic impact, creating 770,000 new child care jobs.

This new workforce of child caregivers will allow 1.6 million parents, primarily mothers, to go back to work. It would also lift 1 million families out of poverty.

Another way we can help hardworking Americans with family-related costs is to pass the FAMILY Act.

Taking time off work to care for a sick child or loved one can create an economic hardship. It’s time we provide paid leave for families who find themselves in this unfortunate situation.

These are proven policies that help bring down abortion rates.

Bans don’t end abortions, they just make them less safe, putting women’s lives at risk.

A recent study by the Guttmacher Institute found that countries with the most restrictive abortion laws have the highest rates of abortions.

Some states are recognizing this and moving in the opposite direction. In Nevada, where women are a majority of the state’s legislature, legislation has been passed to reduce restrictions.

Nevada is ending requirements mandating doctors to explain the emotional and physical implications of having an abortion. Nevada is also ending the more ridiculous provision requiring doctors to inquire about a woman’s marital status.

Illinois is also looking to reduce restrictions.

Congress needs to follow the lead of states like our own state of California as well as Nevada that understand a decision to get an abortion is best left to a woman and her doctor.

Pass the Women’s Health Protection Act now.

—Rep. Susan Davis represents central San Diego, including the communities of Grantville, Al clit Gardens, Del Cerro and La Mesa.

Wildfire worries: San Diego County is stepping up its fire preparedness ground game.

Following up on proposals I announced in my State of the County address earlier this year, the Board of Supervisors recently OK’d several initiatives to better protect people and property in our most fire-prone areas.

The improvements include doubling the number of annual property safety inspections, from 10,000 to 20,000, and the creation of a grant program to encourage homeowners to install ember-resistant vents and other fire-resistant materials.

Deadly fires last year across California, and the tragic destruction of places like Paradise, remind us that disaster could strike here again any time. The county has invested more than $500 million since 2003 on fire protection improvements.

Go to readinesssandiego.org and see how you can better safeguard your family during a disaster.

Our beautiful backcountry: Thanks to a recently approved land purchase, the county is expanding the scenic Ramona Grasslands by 121 acres.

The acquisition means the preserve now spans more than 3,600 acres — bigger than Del Mar and Solana Beach combined.

Thanks to the community and county staff, the preserve is turning into a real treasure and it’s a perfect spot for families to enjoy the great outdoors.

Public safety first: Community leaders, first-responders, wildfire evacuators and others recently joined me next to state Route 67 to call out SANDAG’s executive director for his plan to shelve badly needed safety improvements on the highway and other arteries across the county.

As many of you know, the fall 2007 wildfire season was a nightmarish. A half-million people were ordered to evacuate their communities and had to use escape routes like SR-67.

SANDAG promised voters it would improve these major roads, these lifelines, not leave them high and dry. Public safety must always come first.

—Dianne Jacob is chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and represents District 2. For more District 2 news, visit diannejacob.com or follow her on Facebook and Twitter. For assistance with a county issue, call 619-531-5522 or email dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov.

La Mesa Courier

POLICS

News from your County Supervisor

Dianne’s Corner

By DIANNE JACOB

— The Child Care for Working Families Act would also have a positive economic impact, creating 770,000 new child care jobs.

— The supporters of these bills are clear in their objective: to restrict Roe v. Wade. It’s time to settle this issue once and for all.

— Congress must pass the Women’s Health Protection Act (WHPA) to codify the Roe v. Wade decision into law. I joined in introducing this legislation in May.

— The WHPA is straightforward. It simply prohibits states from imposing the limits and restrictions being put on women.

— Existing restrictions in some states require women to drive miles to visit a clinic, incurring travel expenses and having to miss work.

— No one is pro-abortion. It’s an incredibly difficult decision for a woman to make. If abortion opponents want to really reduce the number of abortions, I invite them to join us in making child care more affordable.

— Seventy-five percent of women seeking an abortion are economically disadvantaged.

— Financial constraints are regularly cited in a decision to end a pregnancy. We need to help working families afford child care.

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— This new workforce of child caregivers will allow 1.6 million parents, primarily mothers, to go back to work.

— It would also lift 1 million families out of poverty.

— Another way we can help hardworking Americans with family-related costs is to pass the FAMILY Act.

— Taking time off work to care for a sick child or loved one can create an economic hardship. It’s time we provide paid leave for families who find themselves in this unfortunate situation.

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— Congress needs to follow the lead of states like our own state of California as well as Nevada that understand a decision to get an abortion is best left to a woman and her doctor.

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of cheeses and carved meats, mini cakes, shrimp cocktail, pizzas and much more. There was also a silent auction for guests to bid on.

LOCAL STUDENTS WIN COX SCHOLARSHIP MONEY

On June 6, Cox Charities hosted its annual Cox Scholars celebration at Coasterra Restaurant. This year, in celebration of its 20th anniversary, Cox Charities awarded a total of $100,000 in scholarships to 20 students — $5,000 each — the largest amount ever awarded in scholarships by the foundation. Helix Charter High School student Elias Gracia was one of three Grossmont Union High School District students to be awarded the scholarship. Gracia will attend Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania in the fall to study behavioral economics and be the first in his family to earn a degree from a four-year university. He is passionate about the importance education has on breaking the cycle of poverty and shedding stereotypes. Gracia volunteers on a bus route through the community to help bring people to church free of charge. He currently lives in Lemon Grove. Another GUHSD winner is Spring Valley resident and Monte Vista High School student Jeanette Chen, who became a student ambassador through the Better Business Bureau after a family member fell victim to a scam. She plans to pursue a career in finance. Steele Canyon Charter High School student Ian Hurv was recognized for volunteering at a local food pantry that serves war refugees, despite having Asperger’s syndrome, which makes it difficult for him to deal with social situations. He plans on studying physics. Cox Charities is the philanthropic arm of Cox Communications and is funded by employee donations, matched by Cox, and overseen by an advisory board consisting of employees who volunteer their time. When Cox Charities was established in San Diego in 1999, a scholarship program was created to help local youth in their quest for a higher education, particularly those who stayed focused despite facing adversity in their young lives. Through Cox Charities and the company match, Cox employees in San Diego have awarded $1.6 million in scholarships to more than 650 students.

For more information on the Cox Scholars program, visit coxcharitiesca.org.
By DAVID DIXON 
PowPac, Poway’s Community Theatre

Lohmann didn’t always plan to become an actor. For a senior project at Helix Charter High School, however, he decided to direct and write a short film, while his friend directed a play. They agreed to help each other out in their respective projects.

“I auditioned for his production of ‘Ten Little Indians,’ and I told him to give me the smallest part,” he said. “He ended up casting me in the biggest part, and I fell in love with acting.”

After studying acting in college and performing in various plays, Lohmann took a five-year break from the theater. After hearing about auditions for “Puffs,” however, he decided to audition for the show.

“I spoke with my wife about it, and we both felt like it was the one show. I spoke with my wife about it, and we both felt like it was the one show," he said. "When he was younger, Lohmann was more invested in the “Harry Potter” movies than the books. This changed in college, where Lohmann gravitated towards, and made friends with, “Harry Potter” fans. His enjoyment of Rowling’s work grew, and the franchise made a positive impact on his life. It provided me, and a lot of people in my generation, with a way to view the world," he said.

As a result, the actor started a YouTube channel devoted to the books. Owning the time involved in starring in “Puffs,” however, this endeavor is currently on a hiatus, but he plans on launching a fourth season of a “Harry Potter” book club on the channel.

The play tells an original story. Lohmann plays the American boy Wayne Hopkins who, after finding out that he’s a wizard, goes to London to begin classes at the legendary School of Magic and Magic. Of the four school houses that students are placed into, Wayne is chosen to be a Puff. Along with his new housemates and friends Oliver (Kevin Phan) and Megan (Sterling Amara), Wayne hopes to make an impact on the world. Unfortunately, the students in the Puff house are underdogs and generally unpopular.

Given this, an aspect about Wayne that Lohmann really appreciates is the confidence that the character maintains throughout the script.

“I love that he believes in himself and that he’s special,” he says. “Wayne takes his knocks along the way, but he always finds ways to keep training and believing that he’s at the center of the tale being told.”

Lohmann has had ties to La Mesa for most of his life. Although he grew up in Lemon Grove, his high school education was in this part of the county.

“It wasn’t where my house was, but it was my home,” he said. After Lohmann and his wife returned to the county, they moved to La Mesa when he started to study for his Master’s degree in 2013.

The star of the show lives around the Lake Murray area of the city, and he loves walking around the reservoir. Other favorite activities include eating Mexican food at El Atleca Taco Shop and spending time with his daughter at one of the local parks.

“Puffs” isn’t the only thing that Lohmann has been working on in the theater world. He is currently working as the associate director of marketing at the San Diego Repertory Theatre.

Lohmann wouldn’t want to be involved in future acting roles if they get too much in the way of his work or the time spent with his family. Still, he hopes to be a part of other shows when he feels he can make the time to perform.

While Matt Cox’s script is a comedy, Lohmann loves the underlying theme of the plot.

“This play is really for people who don’t feel like they are the main character in their own story,” he said. “I think they’ll realize that feeling isn’t always true.”

“Puffs: Or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic & Magic” is running at PowPac, Poway’s Community Theatre through July 21. For tickets or more information, visit theeasternsd.com or call 619-768-3821.

—David Dixon is a local freelance film and theater writer.
La Mesa AYSO girls net trip to Hawaii

By DAVE THOMAS | La Mesa Courier

It is not every day that a young soccer player gets to pack their bags and head off to the nation’s 50th state.

That said, this is exactly what a young group of La Mesa area girls are doing as June comes to an end. The La Mesa AYSO girls’ under-12 team was drawn in a national lottery (National AYSO) to see what regions, age ranges, and genders get the nod to go to the National Games (June 30 – July 7), according to parent Cara Hinchman.

“Invitations to try out for the team were open to all girls that played in the fall 2018 La Mesa AYSO U12 girls core (non-club level) program,” Hinchman commented. “There are 12 players comprising our national team. Most are from the La Mesa area, though some are from outside La Mesa, but all East County.”

As with any big undertaking such as this one, fundraising plays a key role in making sure the kids can travel. When the travel involves a destination as far away as Hawaii, you can bet some funds need to be raised.

“Our team started fundraising in December by running a coffee cart and snack bars at various soccer tournaments, hosting restaurant fundraisers at multiple restaurants in La Mesa, holding a rummage sale, and a raffle for SeaWorld tickets,” Hinchman pointed out. “The kids were the main workers for the snack bars and rummage sale: parents just supervised to make sure all was going well.”

It should not come as a big surprise that there is a fair amount of interest in soccer in the La Mesa area, especially when it comes to kids. According to Hinchman, the La Mesa AYSO serves some 1,000 East County residents on a yearly basis.

AYSO is an all-volunteer organization, dedicated to developing and educating young people by encouraging their interest and participation in soccer. In AYSO, everyone plays, teams are balanced, registration is open to all children between the ages of 4 1/2 and 18, and good sportsmanship is a primary goal enabled by positive coaching.

For now, though, the focus is on Hawaii. According to coaches John Butler and Al Watson, the young ladies have been working very hard over the last seven months in their preparation for playing in Hawaii. They added that it has been fun to watch the girls grow as a team. Both point out that it will be fun to see how the girls stack up against teams from all over the country.

Butcher and Watson also wanted to be clear that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to play at the highest competition level for young core AYSO. Experiencing all Hawaii has to offer isn’t too bad either.

For any parents and kids looking to find out more about registration info for the team, visit LaMesaAYSO.org.

Hinchman added that volunteers are always needed and highly encouraged to coach, referee, organize picture day, be a team parent, and other various positions. As he pointed out, volunteers make the program what it is.

With that being said, let the games begin.

—Dave Thomas is a San Diego-based freelance sports writer. Reach him at hoopsthomas@yahoo.com.

Celebrate 20 years of Parks & Rec at Marina Village fundraiser

La Mesa AYSO girls’ under-12 team (Photo courtesy Cara Hinchman)

We have a lot to revel in La Mesa. We have a warm city, inside and out. Our community isn’t too big or small, and, to borrow from Goldilocks, “It’s just right.”

It’s no secret one of my favorite things about our city is its parks. They’re fresh, fun and free, which means, as a mother to two young children, they’re always included in the mix when mulling over weekend activities.

Shucks, I love our green grassy venues so much there was no question where we were going to throw my rambunctious 4-year-old’s birthday party: Aztec Park, a hidden gem off Baltimore Drive. I didn’t have to worry about whether things were being cleaned enough to ward off disease while the little kids ran, jumped and swung everywhere before gobbling up pizza and chocolate cupcakes. (Crums are OK at parks, another reason to dig the outdoors.)

This year, the La Mesa Park & Recreation Foundation turns 20. Established in 1999, the organization facilitates projects and programs in our local parks. New playgrounds and summer concerts and movies are just a few items on its monthly agenda.

To commemorate its 20th anniversary, the foundation is holding its annual fundraiser, La Mesa Rocks, July 20, at the Seaside Room in Marina Village. Guests are being asked to don formal white party attire.

As it has in previous years, the night will feature a special guest. It makes sense to toast a native son, who likely used La Mesa park facilities when he was a kid: Basketball Hall of Famer Bill Walton, a Helix High School graduate and UCLA alum who played professionally for the Portland Trailblazers, the San Diego Clippers and the Boston Celtics.

At just $50 a pop, the party is a steal. There’ll be glitter cocktails, delicious eats and dancing by the bay. (Picture the same kind of party I threw my preschooler except for adults so, instead of pizza and cupcakes, it’s adult bites and the Kool-Aid has more of a kick.) I can’t think of a better way to get down with the people who help make our city live up to its nickname of “The Jewel of the Hills.”

Visit lamesaparks.org to buy tickets or for more information about La Mesa Park & Recreation Foundation’s La Mesa Rocks. The event will be July 20 from 6 to 11 p.m. at the Seaside Room at Marina Village, 1970 Quivera Way, San Diego.

—Genevieve A. Suzuki is a local attorney who lives and works in La Mesa.
Helix Charter High School

Congratulations

to the Helix Charter High School Class of 2019

We are proud of all you have achieved and all you will accomplish in the future.

Good Luck at your colleges, universities and military branch of choice.

Oh, The Places You Will Go!

June 28 – July 25, 2019

La Mesa Courier

Note: Student names in red type are honor roll graduates.
Grossmont grads honored with traditions

For 98 years, Grossmont High School’s students and staff have taken great pride in the traditions surrounding graduation. Thursday, June 6, 440 seniors became part of an amazing group of more than 37,000 Footiller graduates.

At the beginning of the ceremony, three retiring teachers were recognized for their service to Grossmont: Denise Bates, Tony Camara, and Deb Potter.

Since 1936, graduating seniors have been led into the ceremony by students carrying the Daisy Chain, an 83-year tradition. Each year, the teaching staff selects 50 outstanding juniors on the basis of their school activities, scholarship, and citizenship; being selected is the highest honor awarded juniors. The day before graduation, the students create a reminder of the legacy binding our school, now the district office. Each year at graduation, outstanding seniors are recognized for their achievements. This year, five students were recognized for their academic excellence: Valedictorians Preston Burke (4.886 GPA) and Daniel O’Laughlin (4.886) and Salutatorians Benjamin Hale (4.875), Janet Ngú (4.833) and Vailiant Smith (4.813).

In his valedictorian address to the class, Burke looked ahead to the future, using the movie “Christopher Robin” as a metaphor for life. “It is not money that makes us rich — it’s simplicity, love, friendship, and family that make our lives rich,” he said. "Success does not bring happiness. Happiness brings success. Follow your dreams because sometimes life is about risking everything for a dream no one can see but you... When times are tough, look to your friends, family, and loved ones for support, but when times are good, look to those same people because they’re the ones who make it all worthwhile.”

Valedictorian O’Laughlin believes, “Since Grossmont is a special place, the skills we have acquired will form the stepping stones to success... The magic in our evolution lies in our teamwork. As we stand shoulder to shoulder, we are not a collection of individuals, but a symbol of unity. We thank our faculty, our fellow students, and our families and friends. You have been the driving force for our determination. I encourage all of you here today, students, faculty, administrators, and families, to live every day with the determination that is the cornerstone of character that embodies a Grossmont Footiller. It is truly great to be young and a Footiller.”

Yearly, three perpetual graduation trophies are awarded to seniors. The most prestigious service award given at graduation is the Norman Freeman Award, first given in 1953 as a memorial to Norman Freeman, AIB president, Class of 1947. The trophy is engraved “For the Grossmont student who has most strengthened democracy through participation and leadership in student government.” This year’s recipient, the 66th, is Kennedy Dirkes.

Since 1927, two identical silver loving cup trophies have acknowledged one outstanding young woman and one outstanding young man. Each trophy has the name of the 91 previous recipients. Joining them this year are Megan Collantes and Benjamin Hale.

In 1925, outstanding seniors were first recognized with a Circle G, which was the highest award then given to graduating seniors. In 2019, for the 94th year, six seniors were honored for their all-around excellence in academics, leadership, citizenship, and service: James Bond, Dominic Espino, Rachel Gallegos, Jayme Gonzales, Leykyn Solomon, and Calista Zaeger. Each student received a gold pin — a G enclosed in a circle, a reminder of the legacy binding GIS graduating seniors.

Since 1965, the Principal’s Letters of Commendations have been awarded to students who have demonstrated leadership in many areas. This year, Principal Dan Barnes recognized 13 students: Tanner Askey, Savannah Baird, Jocelyn Brown-Hill, Jordan Browne, Xira Chong, Emily Fennick, Autumn Maas, Simone Mattia, Daniel O’Laughlin, Kim Sokolnicki, Taylor Vassar, Cameron Williams, and Salem Yohannes.

During the ceremony, Principal Dan Barnes, reflecting on the Class of 2019 and their accomplishments, stated, “Tens of thousands of graduates have crossed this stage before you and many thousands will follow. You are part of a remarkable tradition, one that probably included many grandparents and parents here in the audience this afternoon. So, graduates of 2019, as you celebrate your achievements today, make sure that you take special pride in that tradition.”

To discover more about Grossmont’s historic traditions, visit our website at footiller-museum.com or visit the GIS Museum Wednesday, July 3 or Aug. 7 from noon-3:30 p.m. or by appointment. Contact: 619-668-6140 or email ghsmuseum@gulsd.net.

Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum.

Outside the box

Local artist and fine art teacher Jessica Velazquez and a group of students from St. Martin of Tours Academy have added their own touch of beauty to the city of La Mesa. As part of a beautification school project, they painted three utility boxes on El Cajon Boulevard. Under the guidance of their instructors, and with the approval of the design template by the city of La Mesa, the students had fun while developing their artistic skills. People walking by the utility boxes have responded positively to the finished product. Principal Diane Harbey was very pleased with the beautiful boxes and hopes the remaining two boxes along the boulevard will also be approved for painting by the city sometime soon.

(Photos courtesy St. Martin of Tours Academy)
Graduation, foster youth and honor roll award

Beltz is one of those. He entered the foster care system having experienced more trauma than any child should experience. After many failed placements in the system, he was finally placed with a family who was willing and able to support his many needs, and they ultimately adopted him. Through their incredible efforts, Beltz was able to overcome many of the obstacles in his path, graduating from Smith’s alma mater, Helix Charter High School, and continuing on to college.

The ASF has been an integral part of Beltz’s college journey. In 2018, ASF awarded Beltz with the Karen Martin Scholarship, providing him with $8,000 to attend California State University Northridge. At the Helix High School Foundation (HHSP) Highlander Golf Tournament at Carlton Oaks Country Club, ASF partnered with the HHSP to present Beltz with the scholarship scholarship for a second year to allow him to continue his education at Northridge.

Our Helix High School Foundation motto is “It is never too late to give back.” We are honored to be part of the community through which a deserving young man like Ilyas is able to continue his education,” said HHSP president, Judy Kirk. “Alex was a huge part of Helix High School and we can’t thank him enough for supporting a fellow Highlander with his foundation scholarship again this year. We would also like to thank the family of Karen Martin for carrying on her memory in the work she loved.”

Beltz shared his story with donors and tournament participants to let them know how their efforts and involvement in each of the foundations have affected his life.

“We are pleased to award the Karen Martin Scholarship to Ilyas Beltz,” said Pam Smith, ASF board member. “Alex, a proud Helix High graduate, understands the importance of education. He has dedicated his foundation work and resources to help former foster youth achieve a college education in order to build a bridge to a successful life. Ilyas has shown his resilience and hard work to overcome huge obstacles to succeed and we are delighted to support him”

HONOR ROLL AWARD

The following is a message from Helix Executive Director Kevin Osborn:

On behalf of the Helix school community, I want to congratulate our students and entire staff! Our school was recently recognized as a 2018-2019 Educational Results Partnership (ERP) Honor Roll School for our high achievement in student success. The ERP Honor Roll program, sponsored by the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence (CBEE), is part of a national effort to identify higher-performing schools and districts that are improving student outcomes.

The 2018-2019 ERP Honor Roll utilizes public school student achievement data to identify successful schools and districts. Our school stands above others in the state because of our demonstrated ability to get students to grade-level achievement and beyond. Schools that receive the ERP Honor Roll distinction have demonstrated consistent high levels of student academic achievement, improvement in achievement levels over time and a reduction in achievement gaps among student populations.

Through national research, ERP has identified a common set of success factors in higher-performing honor roll schools and districts. The work of the Helix staff is focused on these success factors that include clear, specific learning objectives aligned to college and career readiness, along with:

- Evidence-based instructional practices.
- A defined system-wide mission of college and career readiness for all students.
- An investment in human capital.
- Maintenance of data and assessment systems to monitor school and student performance.
- Resources and guidance to support schools’ efforts in preparing all students for college and career.

We did not apply for this award. Our results led them to us! Because of our accomplishment, we will be featured on the ERP Honor Roll website at edresults.org. To view our school’s data, please open the hyperlink, scroll to the bottom of the page, click on the “View Honor Roll Data” bar, and then filter by county (San Diego) and school (Helix High).

We are thankful for the hard work of our students, teachers, and staff here at Helix Charter High School. This recognition is a testament to the sustained focus on academic results and commitment to student success that our school and community have shown over the years.


Karen Martin Scholarship recipient Ilyas Beltz (center) with Doug and Pam Smith, representing the Alex Smith Foundation (Photo courtesy Helix Charter High School)
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Thank You La Mesa for Voting Us
Best Breakfast, Dinner, Juice & Smoothies
History shines brightly on Casa de Pico

By FRANK SABATINI JR. | La Mesa Courier

What started out in 1971 as a humble Mexican restaurant with only 17 tables has blossomed into one of San Diego County’s most colorful dining destinations. The 500-seat Casa de Pico is a lesson in endurance. After launching almost 50 years ago in San Diego’s Old Town district, the restaurant expanded slowly and steadily until transforming into a bus-thing environment that drew locals and tourists alike.

As owner Diane Powers recalls in a conversation I had with her earlier this year, she always hired employees who were “really dependable” and has that maintained a sharp eye for hardworking chefs and cooks who display a “keen aptitude for flavors and food presentation.” Powers lost her lease in Old Town’s Bazaar Del Mundo in 2005, prompting her to move to its current location in La Mesa. It now resides in a sprawling structure fronting Grossmont Center mall, and features fiesta-style décor that flows attractively throughout various indoor-outdoor dining areas, including a bright, windowed section resembling a solarium.

Tequila lime shrimp

As part of her family’s “casa” restaurants, Powers also owns Casa Guadalajara in Old Town, Casa de Bandini in Carlsbad, and Casa Sol y Mar in Carmel Valley. Tequila lime shrimp is a long-time favorite — and a shrimp lover’s dream. The plate features about a dozen of the large crustaceans, which are sourced from Baja waters. They’re peeled and deveined, and then butterflied and cooked in house spices along with the boone and citrus. It fell as though I had landed upon some all-you-can-eat shrimp fest due to the generous portion, part of which came home with me. The dish also includes Mexican rice, tender black beans and a choice of corn or flour tortillas, both made in-house at a grill station just inside the entrance. Visiting with a vegetarian friend, I also ordered a pair of tacos, one with shredded beef that tasted under-seasoned, and the other filled densely with lean, flavorful minced chicken. I find that in many Mexican restaurants, poultry comes off as plain and boiled-tasting. This escaped those pitfalls.

From the menu’s limited vegetarian section, my friend ordered the chile poblano fresco plate and an avocado-veggie enchilada. He was impressed by both. And so was I after my wandering fork snagged a few samples. The non-buttered fire-roasted poblano chilies were filled with a medley of zucchini, yellow squash and corn, all seasoned gently with achiote. The cheese factor was scant, but the silky jalapeno white sauce on top provided adequate richness. You don’t always know what to expect when biting into poblano peppers as some can turn up rather hot. These were of the milder variety.

The enchilada had a similar construct with sautéed vegetables inside and a trace of cheese. It too was topped with the jalapeno sauce in addition to red “salsa espanola,” which was chunkier and livelier than traditional enchilada sauce. Margaritas come in several varieties and sizes, with the largest climbing to 12 ounces. I saw one pass by our table in a glass so large it could have seemedly held a cantaloupe. The short wine list grabbed our attention instead, luring us with a cabernet by the glass ($6.95) from L.A. Cetto winery in Mexico’s Valle de Guadalupe.

The wine boasted a medium body and a bouncy or “hot” finish. Though compatible with our food choices, I imagine it would pair particularly well to beef, such as the restaurant’s famous carne asada tamatiquena crowned with grilled onions and Anaheim chilies. (I remember the dish fondly from a visit several years ago.) Casa de Pico’s menu is a compendium of recipes brought into permanent status. Dishes go through the rigors of taste-testing before appearing first as specials, and with some eventually graduating to permanent status. All these years later, the choices are vast. They range from chicken-mango quesadillas and steak picadas, to house-made tamales, Tex-Mex fajitas, taquitos ranche-rros, assorted enchiladas, street tacos and more. With its stimulating décor and comfortable seating designed for both large and small parties, you can essentially skip the drive to Old Town — or across the border for that matter — and make due with festive meals and drinks in this renowned, welcoming casa.

—Frank Sabatini Jr. is the author of ‘Secret San Diego’ (ECW Press) and began his local writing career more than two decades ago as a staffer for the former San Diego Tribune. You can reach him at fsabatini@san.rr.com.
July featured artist: Midge Hyde

Midge Hyde, artist, art teacher and art promoter, is the featured artist at the Foothills Gallery in July. Her work will be on display July 12-31 and she hopes that you will visit the gallery to view and enjoy her work. Hyde is fascinated with color and the way it influences the canvas narrative. Whether the subject is more realistic or abstract, she enjoys the artistic journey.

Hyde was born and raised in San Diego and graduated from SDSU with a fine arts/liberal arts degree. She also studied at the University of Hamburg in Germany and at Chelsea College in London. Her artwork is shown in collections in Germany, Montreal, Kuwait, San Diego, Los Angeles and New York.

For years, Hyde has taught adults as well as children in Montessori schools, after-school art classes, and classes at the San Diego Children’s Museum. Her work has shown in public places in murals and on many electrical boxes, and she has painted for private commissions, as well. You can learn more about Midge Hyde by visiting bit.ly/2IQSUdM, or her Facebook page, or Instagram. You can contact her at midgy Hyde@gmail.com or 619-466-3711.

The Foothills Gallery, located at 4910 Memorial Drive in La Mesa, is free to the public and is open Tuesday-Saturday 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

—Linda Michael is editor of Footnotes, the newsletter of the Foothills Art Association.

New children’s librarian shares her favorite books

Happy summer, La Mesa! This is the busiest season at the library because kids are out of school and parents are looking for ways to keep ‘em busy — and reading is a great, safe and fun way to do that. Our Summer Reading Challenge launched on June 1 and continues through Aug. 31. All ages can sign up online at sdcl.org/summer to complete activities in exchange for prizes.

This summer is extra special for La Mesa because we’re welcoming a new children’s librarian to our team. Her name is Ramona and she has already jumped right in providing storytimes and fixing up our children’s area to make it better than ever before. This month, we’re highlighting Ramona’s top-rated reads!

For children, she recommends “All the World” by Liz Garton Scanlon. This Caldecott Honor picture book is a calm and peaceful read for young ones and their caregivers. With a gentle rhythm and positive message about appreciating the world around us, it’s a great bedtime story to read again and again.

“Journey,” by Aaron Becker, is another Caldecott Honor book for children. This is a wordless picture book best for kids ages 4-8. A little girl is bored and draws herself a door that leads to adventure. Whether she’s exploring a castle, a city, or a forest, there is so much beauty and intricacy in the illustrations that words aren’t necessary.

Have a tween looking for something to read this summer? “Larklight: A Rousing Tale of Dauntless Pluck in the Farthest Reaches of Space,” by Philip Reeve, is a science fiction adventure of a house that hurtles through space. Join Art Mumsby and his sister Myrtle as they embark on an escape to save the universe.

And, of course, Ramona loves the “Harry Potter” series by JK Rowling! Ramona doesn’t only read children’s books though. She’s also an avid reader of adult fiction, and here are a few of her favorites.

Nominated as one of America’s best-loved novels by PBS’s “The Great American Read,” this book takes place in the One,” this book takes place in the 1980s pop culture and nostalgia.

“Blackout,” by Connie Willis, follows the adventures of time-traveling historians as they are thrust into World War II Britain during the Blitz and begin to think that they can change the past.

Author Donna Tartt won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for “The Goldfinch,” but Ramona favors her earlier work, “The Secret History.” A group of classics students fall under the cult-like spell of their charismatic professor, ultimately leading to disaster.

If you love fantasy, then check out “Name of the Wind” by Patrick Rothfuss. Also called “The Kingkiller Chronicle: Day One,” this book takes place in the fictional world of Temerant and follows the life of Kvothe as he travels through childhood tragedy to happiness as a young man and ultimate exile from his hard-earned success.

Stop by the library to meet Ramona and check out the exciting programs we’re offering all summer long!”

—Chelsie Harris is managing librarian of the La Mesa Branch of the San Diego County Library. Call the library at 619-469-2151, visit in person at 8074 Allison Ave., or visit online at sdcl.org.
Mission Trails Regional Park, already considered to be one of the best regional parks in San Diego, is poised to become an even bigger and brighter gem for outdoor enthusiasts.

On May 21, San Diego City Council approved a plan to improve a master plan update (MPU) for Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) that maps out how the park will grow, improve its infrastructure, provide more outdoor activities, improve trails, and better protect habitat and natural resources.

"Mission Trails is a special place for me, just as it is for thousands of other San Diegans," said Councilmember Scott Sherman in a statement after the vote. The area was my playground as a child even before it became an official park, still impressing me with its natural beauty and serenity. I am proud to still carry today. I thank the City Council for approving this update so we can continue investing in this unique resource.

The most significant change in the MTRP master plan update — it’s first since 1985 — is the addition of new acreage in the East Elliot Landfill property. Other sections of the park will increase the size of MTRP from 5,380 acres to approximately 9,780 acres, creating one of the largest multi-use open space properties in the future — mostly from a planned annexation of the Sycamore Landfill property. Other areas of park expansion would be from private landowners in East Elliot.

As of now, there are no legal trails in East Elliot. Current trails are utility access roads and user-created trails that cross public and private land and are not formally designed or planned and have no legal access. The MPU contains recommendations that provide guidance on the long-term development of a trail network within East Elliot area that can be implemented as lands are brought into public ownership or are permitted for private development. It is anticipated that trail linkages within the area may eventually provide a connection to trails within the county’s Green Ranch Sycamore Canyon Preserve and the West Sycamore area of MTRP.

As the park adds acreage, there will be more rangers added to the West Sycamore area of MTRP. The habitat/species recommendations provide guidance on fencing in the park, monitoring of plant and animal populations, dealing with invasive species and specific plans to protect various endangered or sensitive species.

The recreation recommendations set standards on how trails should look and where and how they should be built. In addition to the planned improvements to the new sections of the park — East Elliot and Sycamore West — the MPU also lays out specific recommendation for the other sections of the park.

For Lake Murray, the MPU includes a plan for the Mission Trails Golf Course property in the case that running the golf course is no longer viable for the city. If that were to happen, the plan calls for the city-owned turf sections of the golf course between Jackson Drive and Navajo Road to be used for active and passive recreation, family and group picnicking and to build meandering trails and a fine ear open play area that connects Lake Murray to Cowles Mountain. Also, the city-owned land south-west of Jackson Drive and north of the lake would be turned into a tree-canopied area for picnicking and small group day use.

Another area slated for improvements in Lake Murray is the undeveloped area south of the ballfields between Del Cerro Bay and Cowles Bay, which would be developed with a group picnic area with small shade tables and benches.

The Lake Murray plan also calls for building a new trail connection between Del Cerro and Cowles Bay and extending an existing utility access road and creating an improved trail connection to Sunset Park in La Mesa. For MTRP’s most popular hiking area, Cowles Mountain, the MPU recommends designing and building an off-street gravel parking area at the Barker Way entrance and another in the area just north of Golfcrest Drive off Mission Gorge Road adjacent to the San Diego County Water Authority pipeline access portal to provide noherally access to the Pyles Peak trail and a potential rock climbing area. The MPU also proposes relocating parking at the south end of Mesa Road and revetegating the existing parking area while keeping the existing trailhead kiosk and gate.

Proposed changes to the Cowles Mountain trails include building a more formal trailhead entrance; restoring trails and closing off user-created paths; and constructing a new trail connection from the Padre Dam water tank to Big Rock to create a portion of a large loop on the east side of Pyles Peak and north of Cowles Mountain.

For the Mission Gorge area of the park, the MPU recommends MTRP consider acquiring the 200-plus acres of land owned by the city of San Diego’s Public Utilities District on Knaya Paay as dedicated parkland.

A major re-naturalization effort is also recommended where the park would coordinate with adjacent landowners to restore the perimeter around Kumeyaay Lake and redirect the San Diego River back to its former course to reduce sedimentation and spread it out.

Facility and recreation upgrades for Mission Gorge include installing EV charging stations at the Visitor Center; operating Kummeyaay Lake as an overnight campground; expanding the bike skills area; constructing a parking lot on the eastern side of Father Junipero Serra Trail between Mission Gorge Road and Visitor Center; building a permanent restroom at the Old Mission Dam staging area; and constructing a Deerfield Canyon Nature Park in the 2 acres next to the bike skills area with picnic tables, fitness course and children’s play area.

The MPU also recommends building a path along the river in accordance with the San Diego River Park Master Plan and constructing a suspension or truss bridge for pedestrians and bikes to cross the river.

The Fortuna area of the park has the most recommendations in the MPU, almost all of which are to either assess new trails or close and restore existing ones.

“The trails in the Fortuna area were not created as recreational trails but for use by the military and other agencies with easements in the area,” explained Leonard on why the Fortuna area is in need of so much restoration work.

Now that the MPU has been passed by City Council, the final hurdle before any of the recommendations can be implemented is a vote by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, although a date has not yet been set.

“We are looking forward to support from the County Board of Supervisors and setting priorities so we can get started on some much-needed trail improvements,” Leonard said.

To view the MTRP master plan update, visit bit.ly/2MEGJ0R.

—Rechf Jeff Clemenson at jeff@sdsnews.com

Mission Trails clears hurdle toward expansion

Jeff Clemenson | La Mesa Courier

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—Rechf Jeff Clemenson at jeff@sdsnews.com
San Diego commemorates 250 years

Once a dusty hamlet and a boomtown gone bust, today San Diego is the eighth largest city in the nation. Put on your party hats — July 16 marks the 250th anniversary of America’s Finest City and the celebration is underway.

“The San Diego we know today began on July 16, 1769, with the dedication of Mission San Diego de Alcala by Spanish friars, Fathers Junipero Serra and Juan Crespi,” notes San Diego History Center historians Dave Miller, Ph.D., and Andy Straßmann, Ph.D.

Of course, some 2,000 years before the arrival of the Spanish, native Kumeyaay were settled in the area. Miller and Straßmann note that, “Archaeological evidence of earlier inhabitants supports many elders’ belief that Kumeyaay ancestors have been here far longer, perhaps 10,000 years.”

Originally, the mission was located on Presidio Hill. Two hundred years earlier, the same bit of soil had been acclaimed in 1542 and named San Miguel by Spanish explorer and navigator, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo. Another Spanish explorer and entrepreneur, Sebastian Viscaino, came along in 1602 and gave the area a new name, San Diego. Presidio Hill is often mistaken today for Mission San Diego, but that first mission church, bar- racks of early Spanish soldiers, and the houses of civilians have crumbled over time into shapeless mounds of clay. (Archaeological ex- cavation is ongoing.)

This original mission was relocated in 1774 to its present six miles inland in Mission Valley.

The striking structure that stands on Presidio Hill today was dedicated in 1829 as the Junipero Serra Museum. Constructed in the simplicity of early Franciscan churches, Serra Museum was gifted to the citizens of San Diego by George W. Marston, department store owner, politician, and philanthropist.

Serra Museum would become the keeping place of aged documents, maps, and photographs collected by pioneer historians, and a permanent home to San Diego Historical Society.

GAINING INDEPENDENCE

History notes that the Mexican War for independence began in 1810, and by 1821, Mexico had gained freedom from Spain.

“San Diego became part of Mexico in April 1822 when the Mexican flag was raised over the Presidio.” (The early fort, or head- quarters of the American Army, stayed put on the hill when the mission was moved.)

Inhabitants of the Presidio began to settle in what is known today as Old Town State Park. New arrivals were few, and in 1818, San Diego’s pueblo status was revoked with fewer than 150 residents.

“San Diego remained a small outpost in Mexican California, relying on ranching and the lu- cative hide and tallow trade.”

After a revolt against Mexican rule, a good bit of fusing and bloody fighting, and a bat- tle at San Pasqual, ultimate- ly the Americans defeated the Californians and the American flag was raised in the square at Old Town. The Mexican-American War ended in 1848, and two years later, California was admitted to the United States as the 31st state in the Union.

“MORE MONEY THAN BRAINS”

William Heath Davis arrived in San Diego in 1850 envisioning a prosperous and safe com- munity. Lumber for building up his peninsula’s tip. Davis-Horton House.) It was a hard sell for people to leave Old Town. Davis’ wealth had been the re- sult of his developing trade routes between Hawaii, China, and San Francisco. Sadly, a San Francisco fire in 1851 destroyed the bulk of his earnings and forced him to settle the Bay Area. Davis abandoned his New Town San Diego ef- forts, and residents dubbed it ‘Davis’ Folly.’

New Town with- ered until new life was given it by Alonzo E. Horton in 1867. Horton was a provisions purveyor during the gold rush, but when that boom died out, he came to San Diego.

Long story short, Horton pur- chased 960 acres at a land auction.

Judge Holliester outbid on a par- cel and sold Horton up the ante. A few cents later Holliester groaned, “You can have it, Horton. I wouldn’t give a mill an acre for what you have bought.” (A mill equals one-tenth of a penny.) And residents of Old Town were satisfied that Horton must have more money than brains.

“When San Diego attained a long-awaited rail connection to the East in 1885, excitement about the area’s future triggered the ‘Boom of the Eighties,’” say Miller and Straßmann. Population grew from about 2,600 in 1880 to nearly 35,000 by 1887. “Boosters and businessmen built vital infra- structure, including telephone, gas, and water systems.”

John D. Spreckels arrived at the boom’s height and invested in real estate and wharf facilities. Land values collapsed by the end of the decade and population dropped to some 16,000. In the boom’s wake was left the iconic Hotel del Coronado.

A MILITARY PRESENCE

San Diego’s first harbor defense was an adobe fortification known as La Puente de los Guájarros constructed in the lee of Point Loma peninsula, at Ballast Point. In 1852, U.S. President Millard Fillmore signed an executive order to create a military reservation at the peninsula’s tip. Gun emplacements began to dot the hills of Point Loma as early as 1870, and by 1904, the U.S. Army post of Fort Rosecrans was com- pleted. Fifteen gun batteries were constructed. Today their decaying remains are nearly hidden from view.

Chamber of Commerce forged a relationship with the U.S. Navy as far back as 1902 with the building of a coal station at La Playa. Steam ships of the era needed fu- el. However, dredging the bay was of critical issue before the Navy could be coaxed into staying.

“ Federally funded military in- frastructure would benefit growth and commercial shipping,” note Miller and Straßmann. Pressure of Congress brought the creation of a training station, shipyard, hosp- ital, and other facilities over 100 years earlier, including the U.S. Marine Recruit Depot. “William Ketten, San Diego’s ‘million dollar con- gressman’ helped establish San Diego as a Navy town in the years between two world wars.”

MEN AND THEIR FLYING MACHINES

Nurture and development of his first successful heavier-than-air flight at Otay Mesa in 1883, and the exploits of Glenn H. Curtiss truly established aviation development in San Diego. Curtiss began an aviation training school at North Island.

“Commercial aviation took off, too. T. Claude Ryan arrived in San Diego in 1922 to help launch a regu- larly scheduled passenger airline with flights to Los Angeles, and de- signed the monoplane that Charles Lindbergh would make famous in 1937,” say Miller and Straßmann.

San Diego would also become a major center of military aircraft production. In 1941, Roswell H. Fleet relocated his Consolidated Aircraft plant here, which produced the B-24 bomber and lon- ger-range PBVs. Chula Vista-based Rohr Aircraft, Ryan Aeronautical Company, and General Dynamics remained regional employers long past the Second World War.

EXTRACURRICULAR SAN DIEGO

Rail road connections and a reshap- ed train station were in place by 1915 for the opening of the Panama-California Exposition. The fair transformed the open spaces of “City Park,” which be- came Balboa Park highlighting Speckels’ gift to the city in the form of the world’s largest pipe organ.

Despite intention to build much of the venue as temporary struc- ture, many remain and Bertram Goodhue’s Spanish Colonial ar- chitecture forever defines Balboa Park.

A second monthlong event, the California Pacific International Exposition, was held at Balboa Park.
Saturday, June 29
The Filpside Burners Grossmont Center’s free summer concert series kicks off with the rockabilly music of The Flipside Burners. 5 p.m. at Grossmont Center, 5560 Grossmont Center Drive, La Mesa.

Sunday, June 30

Sunday, July 7

Sundays at Six: Wild Nights
The rock ‘n’ roll of Wild Nights will be featured at this event, part of La Mesa’s summer Sunday concert in the park series. 6 p.m. at Harry Griffen Park, 9550 Milden St. Free.

Saturday, July 13
heART of Mt. Helix Juried Art Show Kick Off Party
Jon Naissook Framing is Art for this kick-off party, a precursor to the annual fundraiser at the top of Mt. Helix (held on Aug. 10). This juried art show will feature the people, places and events of Mt. Helix. Wine and hors d’oeuvres will be served so bring friends and family to share in this fun event! If you are an artist or photographer and would like to enter, visit bit.ly2iSX19f for the prospectus. All art and photography must be turned in to Naissook on Wednesday, July 10. This free event begins at 6 p.m. at Naissook Framing • Art, 8130 La Mesa Blvd.

Sunday, July 14

Second Sunday Community Concerts: Danny Green and Tripp Sprague Duo
Second Sunday Community Concerts presents the music of Danny Green and Tripp Sprague. Danny plays piano and has recorded five CDs with this trio. Tripp is the brother of well-respected San Diego jazz guitarist, Peter Sprague. Tripp plays flute and saxophone. Second Sunday free concerts are held at Mission Trails Church, 4580 Zion Ave., San Diego, from 3-4 p.m. at The Salvation Army Kroc Center, 6845 University Ave., San Diego. Doors at 6:30 p.m., movie starts at 7 p.m. $5 for guests and free for members. $5 for Woodstock’s Pizza, proceeds go to Heroes! Visit bit.ly/ZWMB5u.

Friday, July 19

Sundays at Six: It’s Never 2L8
Come out and hear the classic rock stylings of It’s Never 2L8 as part of La Mesa’s summer Sunday concert in the park series. 6 p.m. at Harry Griffen Park, 9550 Milden St. Free.

Thursday, July 4

Lake Murray Fireworks and MusicFest
Family-friendly fun to celebrate the birthday of our nation. Featuring music by Republic of Music, Big Time Operator, Bam Bam and Frankie T & The Trojans. Wild Nights will be featured at this event, part of La Mesa’s summer Sunday concert in the park series. 6 p.m. at Harry Griffen Park, 9550 Milden St. Free.

Sundays at Six: ‘13 The Musical’
Through July 20
Geek. Poser. Jock. Beauty Queen. Wannabe. These are the labels that can last a lifetime. With an unforgettable rock score from Tony Award-winning composer, Jason Robert Brown (“Parade, The Last Five Years, Bridges of Madison County”), “13” is a musical about fitting in — and standing out! Thursdays and Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. at ENCORE Theatre, 9620 Campo Road, Spring Valley. $10 tickets available at bit.ly/2eOhy9.

Friday, July 12

Saturday, July 13
‘The Sunshine Boys’
Through Aug. 4
The story of this play written by Neil Simon follows the attempt by a young theatrical agent to reuni...
The attack on Proposition 13 will come in two parts. First, Sacramento will try to eliminate its property tax by announcing a ballot initiative in 2020. If successful, they will attack Proposition 13’s protections for homeowners in a subsequent election. The best way to protect Proposition 13 for homeowners is to defeat the attack on businesses in the upcoming 2020 election. Be educated on the issue and know who is trying to push it for its repeal.

As exciting and informative as our May meeting was, we feel sure that the upcoming meeting, starring Carl DeMaio will be equally stimulating and educational. As a former member of the San Diego City Council and currently host- ing an afternoon daily news and political show on News Radio 600 AM KOGO, DeMaio is up to the minute on all the hot political issues. He currently chairs the board of Reform California, which campaigns against tax increases and advocates for multiple government reforms. Join us June 11th to hear his discussion of the gas tax. This is a meeting you don’t want to miss!

We welcome fellow Republicans to join us June 11th to hear Carl DeMaio’s presentation at the Brigitine Restaurant in La Mesa. Check-in begins at 10:30 a.m. for the 11 a.m. meeting. Reservations are required 24 hours in advance. Cost is $25 and a full course lunch is served. Cash and checks are accepted, but no credit cards. The menu will sell out quickly, so be sure to RSVP early to RSPWRNC@gmail.com. If you don’t receive a confirmation, please call or text Marjie at 619-990-2791.

—Pat Borner writes on behalf of Republican Women of California-Navajo Canyon.

The city’s promotion of tourism is also evident in the development of Mission Bay. A 1958 master plan paved the way for boat launches, beaches, playgrounds, hotels, and the opening of SeaWorld in 1964,” Miller and Strathman said. Turns out, Alonzo Horton had brains and money, that he foresaw a city worth more than a lifetime of effort. In the News briefs, we learn about the ‘leftover’ animals from the 1915 San Diego Zoological Society and the U.S. Olympic Training Center joined Major League Baseball studs, and the open- ing of SeaWorld in 1964.” Miller and Strathman said.

“Alonzo Horton developed his New Town on 960 acres he purchased in 1867 at a land auction. Shoppers attend to business at Fifth and Broadway, 1903. (Photo courtesy of San Diego History Center)

250 Years
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Alonzo Horton developed his New Town on 960 acres he purchased in 1867 at a land auction. Shoppers attend to business at Fifth and Broadway, 1903. (Photo courtesy of San Diego History Center)

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SOLDS in 2019 So Far: