Addressing homeless issues on El Cajon Blvd

by LAURA REBAU

Union Bank has moved out of its building at 6010 El Cajon Blvd. and a struggle to keep the property from becoming a homeless encampment along with a vacant building across the street at 5987 is taking place.

Resident neighbors to the sites have been vigilant for several weeks now with the help of College Area Business District, the SDPD Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) and Terry Hoskins, El Cerrito Community Council (ECCC) Community Relations Officer. Unfortunately, each time the police visit, get people to vacate the lot and leave, the homeless return. It’s a loop-around problem.

According to a community member, one moves in, then others join, and then it becomes a community growth with transients living in vehicles like some that wanted to take over the 5987 El Cajon Blvd. property. The owners of that lot are also making calls to get those individuals removed. They do not want the homeless taking over their vacant property. They are hoping to rent it out soon.

In what has become a cycle for the past few weeks, SDPD clears the lot, but the homeless return later or the next day. Union Bank has been contacted about posting “no trespassing” signs and having a letter of agency with SDPD to allow them to take action on the property.
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COVID pandemic highlights needs of Filipino community

By ELAINE ALFARO

As chair of the Philippine Nurses Association of San Diego (PNASD) and leader in the PNASD's COVID-19 Vaccination Task Force, Vivian Sanderlin has seen firsthand the hardships and setbacks faced by her fellow nurses in this Asian American community.

“I see the nurses online via Zoom, on board meetings, general membership or education seminars. We are saddened and shocked,” she said. “There are about 1,700 healthcare workers, nurses that are gone due to COVID-19. There’s about 65 to 70 Filipino front-line workers that are being remembered because they passed away. We are always helping PNASD members whose family members who have gone.”

Sanderlin is one of a growing number of Filipino leaders speaking out about the needs of their community in the wake of the COVID pandemic, many of which are preexisting problems that have complicated access to community resources and representation for years.

JoAnn Fields, public relations director of the Asian/Pacific Islander Initiative, feels the Filipino community is being left behind.

“I hate that we have to prove we exist,” she said. Fields, along with the PNASD, notes that disaggregated data is one of the solutions to proving Filipinos deserve equal access to COVID-19 relief and assistance.

Merlie Ramira, San Diego Vaccination Advisory Board member and PNASD COVID-19 Vaccination Task Force member, recently spoke to the County of San Diego's COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Advisory Group about disaggregated data. She asked the board, “How will you be able to determine the resources you need for the Asian population if you don’t know which group needs more vaccinations?”

To combat disaggregated data, Fields is also advocating for increased community resources and representation. “We need an organization, not an individual. And if it’s me, this is a job,” she said.

Despite the 200,000 Filipinos living in San Diego, there is not a Filipino cultural center (other than the Balboa Park House of Philippines) or a Filipino resource center in the county.

A first step in the direction of creating a resource center happened Dec. 19 when Fields and the PNASD stepped into action. The Vaccination Task Force was formed by PNASD Board members Vivian Sanderlin, Merlie Ramira, Cece Echon, Perly Anguinaldo and president Crisabel Ramos. Sanderlin explained what the Filipino COVID-19 Vaccination Task Force has accomplished so far.

“Our task force presented to the PNASD members and students an educational series about COVID-19,” she said. “The webinars we had started in January 2021. Then, we started a vaccination program. So far, we have vaccinated 1,000 people across San Diego county.”

Ramos also noted, “The ultimate goal is to support San Diego county and the different organizations we are working with. We are the vaccinators. They need us to provide those vaccines. We are here to support.”

Recently, the PNASD was asked to join the county’s advisory committee for COVID-19. Anguinaldo said that this Filipino representation is bringing about change.

“For Merlie to be chosen to represent PNASD in the advisory group, it really is a big introduction of PNASD to the county,” she said. “It widened our network and resources. The value of our organization to the planning of this COVID-19 response showed that we matter, what we say matters.”

San Diego is not the only Filipino community that has faced problems in the past year. Despite welcomed changes in pursuit of equity and representation, hardships in the Filipino community remain according to a report from UCSD Bulosan Center for Filipinx Studies. Poverty and a lack of healthcare support were common among Filipino Americans during this past year. According to the report, “70% of Filipinos in California reported experiencing at least one of the following problems including...”
DCAC CONTINUED FROM Page 1

involvement, moving its once monthly town hall meetings to only meeting quarterly. In February, DCAC chair Mark Rawlins stepped down from the board because he was moving out of state.

DCAC also faced criticism recently from the Save Del Cerro group, whose members felt the council should have taken a harder position against the proposed All Peoples Church. Following the announcement of DCAC disbudding, members of Save Del Cerro are now in the process of organizing an official entity to replace DCAC.

Despite the sometimes contentious criticism of the DCAC board, Wilson said he wishes the new group nothing but luck.

“For over two decades, the Del Cerro Action Council successfully worked on a great variety of issues and projects for this community,” he said. “Now we have an opportunity to pass the baton to a new group of enthusiasts Del Cerro residents who are ready and willing to roll up their sleeves and volunteer their time and energy for the benefit of our community.”

In a statement to Mission Times Courier, Save Del Cerro spokesperson Michael Livingston described the new Courier, Save Del Cerro spokesperson Michael Livingston described the new group as “a new community group dedicated to keeping all Del Cerro residents in "a new community group dedicated to keeping all Del Cerro residents in-the benefit of our community.”

As a result, the Bulosan Center for Filipinx Studies projected “Given the high numbers of Filipinos in the state of California and the greater Sacramento region, we can anticipate that Filipinos who contract COVID-19 will not be able to get proper medical attention due to their lack of health care coverage” — a direct tie to this impoverished community.

These financial hardships can also be seen in San Diego, particularly in elderly Filipinos. At the Bay Terraces Community Park off of Tooma Street (a predominantly Filipino neighborhood), 85 to 100 elderly citizens show up for free groceries every Friday, according to Fields. This is just one neighborhood in San Diego that reflects a narrative common among thousands of people.

To solve problems like the one in Bay Terraces, Fields recognizes that the PNASD would provide long-term support, beyond the pandemic, to the Filipino community in San Diego. “There is a need for help. They need a trusted voice,” she added.

For now, Filipino activists and leaders like Fields and Sanderlin are working to make the Filipino community as well as it can be with what is available.

“We are trying to help each other. That’s how we cope,” Sanderlin said.

Filipino center CONTINUED FROM Page 3

having difficulty paying their rents or mortgages, having to cut back on food expenses to save money or not having enough money.”

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contenido de la página 1

If you are interested in joining Del Cerro’s fresh, inclusive, and transformative community group, please email voiceofdelcerro@gmail.com for more information.

FIRST MEETING (ZOOM)
Wednesday, April 28th @ 6:30pm

This group is open to ALL community members interested in shaping the future voice of Del Cerro. Email for details on how to get involved.

A flyer for the new Voice of Del Cerro group’s first meeting (Courtesy image)

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If 2020 has taught us anything, it’s that our most marginalized communities are not included in the American Dream. The public health and economic crisis brought on by COVID-19, combined with the social justice movement sparked by the George Floyd tragedy, have illuminated this truth. This past year, San Diego children whose families were already struggling have faced unprecedented challenges and have fallen further behind as the pandemic continues to impact their lives.

It is a known fact that, in order for children to succeed across the education continuum, their basic needs – such as food on the table and a roof over their heads – must be met. United Way of San Diego County (UWSD) brings together community partners so together we can identify barriers to learning and align the solutions to ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive – regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or zip code.

It’s not just the digital divide, or unequal access to distance learning technology, keeping kids behind either. In San Diego County, many entrenched systemic barriers have led to racial and economic inequities keeping many families in poverty. Family stability plays a critical role in early childhood development, while adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as long-term parental unemployment cripple their ability to learn and succeed emotionally, socially, and academically.

Some sobering statistics that illustrate the gaps created by these disparities:
- 80% of White and Asian third graders read at grade level, but only 50% of their Brown and Black classmates do.
- Nearly 24,000 students in grades K-12 live in households that are doubled up with family or friends because they are unable to maintain housing on their own. This can be uncomfortable, make it difficult to learn, and can impact education success. It’s not just about a child not reading at grade level. Students are facing challenges like this and with instability in the household it can impact a child’s ability to learn and thrive.
- Black and Hispanic students are twice as likely as white students to have received no live contact with teachers while learning remotely.
- Students on average could lose five to nine months of learning by the end of June 2021; students of color could be six to 12 months behind, compared with four to eight months for white students.
- 31% of San Diegans are food insecure. When families don’t have access to food, that becomes their first priority and daily stressor, making it difficult to focus on other important tasks like finding a job or getting their kids to school. If parents or guardians don’t know where their next meal is coming from, this can also significantly impact a student’s education success.

These data points are evidence that today’s pandemic has a vastly disproportionally impact on our Black and Brown kids. For the past 100 years, UWSD has been committed to ensuring every child, young adult, and family has the chance to succeed. But for this to happen, it’s clear we must harness every resource available to rebuild the systems that have kept so many kids behind.

That’s why we’ve adopted a new strategy for improving San Diego’s future: “Mind the Gap EDICT 2040.” EDICT stands for “Ending Disparities In Communities not Thriving.” At UWSD, our “superpower” is bringing together partners, leveraging their expertise, and using data to find the best ways to support early childhood success and family stability. However, we need our community’s help to make this vision a reality. Some ways you can help us eliminate systemic inequity include:
- Volunteer your time. From packing hygiene kits for families in need to reading virtually to kids, there are so many ways to get involved safely.
- Get your company involved. Become a corporate partner and harness the power of many employees giving time, talent, and treasure to improving their community.
- Donate. All donations of money are 100% tax-deductible and go toward efforts that help children from cradle to career.
- As our country works to recover from the pandemic, we must also reimagine our future, and partner to rebuild our communities in ways that ensure a more just and equitable society where all children have the chance to thrive and succeed. EDICT 2040 is a vision of what could be, and we are all going to have to work together to achieve it.

—Nancy L. Sasaké is the president and CEO of United Way of San Diego County. She is a change-maker focused on the immense and complex social challenges within the San Diego region and works to build a positive future for children, young adults, and families experiencing inequities. Learn more about United Way of San Diego County’s work at uwsd.org.

Help kids that COVID-19 pushed further behind

By NANCY L. SASAKÉ

No matter what side of the aisle you are on, this latest bill is appealing. Over 90% of nearly $2 trillion goes to coronavirus relief. The other 91% goes to arts, transportation, abortions, loan forgiveness for students and “socially disadvantaged farmers,” whatever that is. In reality, it is reparations. One example of egregious spending is for Pelosi’s San Francisco. It will erase her city’s $650 million dollar budget deficit over the next two years, saving the city from making fiscally responsible decisions going forward. $190 billion has been allocated for state and local government. California gets $4.2 billion of the total sum in the form of a bailout, essentially rewarding them for bad policies. Compare that to Florida, who re-opened their economy and has lower unemployment rates compared to the national average. Out of 10 states with the highest unemployment rates, eight are Democrat run. Essentially Floridians are paying for California’s misdeeds.

To call this bill coronavirus relief is disingenuous, it’s mostly pork. $270 million is dedicated to National Endowment of the Arts, $1.5 billion for Amtrak, $20 million to update the disaster that is for Pelosi’s San Francisco. It will erase her city’s $650 million dollar budget deficit over the next two years, saving the city from making fiscally responsible decisions going forward. $190 billion has been allocated for state and local government. California gets $4.2 billion of the total sum in the form of a bailout, essentially rewarding them for bad policies. Compare that to Florida, who re-opened their economy and has lower unemployment rates compared to the national average. Out of 10 states with the highest unemployment rates, eight are Democrat run. Essentially Floridians are paying for California’s misdeeds.

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Republicans no longer believe they can win in free elections

Republican office holders across the country are waging a coordinated attack on Americans’ right to participate freely in elections. In more than half the state legislatures, in excess of 100 bills have been proposed to impose restrictions and limits on this most essential American right. These legislators are feeding off the lie that Donald Trump started telling before the elections, and that he has continued to tell since. In a February 2021 survey conducted by Quinnipiac, 76% of Republicans polled nationwide said they believe there was “widespread fraud in the 2020 election.” Of course, there is not now nor has there ever been any evidence to support Trump’s and the Republicans’ lies about the election. November 2020 was the most litigated presidential election in our history. In more than 60 court cases, courts across the country — county, state, federal, even the U.S. Supreme Court — found no credible evidence of influencing voting fraud or irregularities to support these claims, none.

Yet Republicans across the country have unified behind this coordinated lie, and in states where the GOP controls the legislature, they are conniving to make it more difficult for Americans to cast their vote. And while many offer vague claims of “election security,” some Republicans have baldly admitted the real motive behind these voter suppression bills: because the GOP knows they cannot win without preventing many Americans from voting.

In Georgia, a GOP election board member, lamenting Biden’s and the two Senators’ victories in that state, told fellow Republicans that they needed to change election laws. “They don’t have to change all of them,” she declared, “but they’ve got to change the major parts, so that at least we have at least a shot at winning.” A conservative lawyer, representing the Republican National Committee in an Arizona voting rights case before the U.S. Supreme Court, was asked by Justice Barrett why the RNC had an interest in preventing the people from voting their votes counted if they were cast in the wrong precinct. The lawyer did not bother to equivocate in his response: “Because it puts us at a competitive disadvantage relative to Democrats.”

But some Republicans recognize how un-American these voter suppression efforts are. Benjamin Ginsberg, perhaps the GOP’s most prominent election attorney, has criticized this rush to make voting more difficult. By attacking the integrity of the voting process, Ginsberg acknowledges Republicans are telegraphing their own unpopular with vote. He elaborates, “Look at what it really means. A party that’s increasingly old and white, whose base is a diminishing share of the population, is conjuring up charges of fraud to erect barriers to voting for people it fears won’t support its candidates.”

Just as Delta Airlines, Coca-Cola, Merck, Microsoft, Apple, the owner of the Atlanta Falcons and others have voiced criticism and opposition to Georgia’s new law that imposes unnecessary and suppressive requirements on voters, so should all patriotic Americans raise their voices to condemn Republican efforts to oppose democracy. Instead of working to keep people from voting, perhaps the GOP instead might try what the Democrats have done: field better candidates who advocate for policies that most Americans support.

The La Mesa Foothills Democratic Club’s May 5 Zoom meeting will feature La Mesa City Council members, who will cover a raft of topics related to their city and the region, to include homelessness and police reform. All meetings commence at 7 p.m. and may be accessed through lmfclub.org. By attacking the integrity of the voting process, Ginsberg acknowledges Republicans are telegraphing their own unpopular with vote. He elaborates, “Look at what it really means. A party that’s increasingly old and white, whose base is a diminishing share of the population, is conjuring up charges of fraud to erect barriers to voting for people it fears won’t support its candidates.”

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—Laura Crivelo writes on behalf of the Republican Women of California – Navajo Canyon.

RWCNC
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Please join us for our May 11 luncheon at The Legacy in Mission Valley. Our speaker will be Mark Meuser of the Dhillon Law Group. They have filed numerous lawsuits in California against Newsom, Pelosi and Harris for various breeches against the law and our Constitution. Meuser will address “Getting Back to the Basics of Winning in California.”

—Laura Crivelo writes on behalf of the Republican Women of California – Navajo Canyon.

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Hello friends. As you may know, I was recently sworn in on Jan. 4 to represent you on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors after the retirement of former Supervisor Dianne Jacob who served our community well. I wanted to take a moment and let you know of the ways that my office can be of assistance to you.

Many of you may know me from my service as an Assemblymember and a member of the California State Legislature. I have been a long-time grassroots advocate for issues that I, and many East County San Diegans, care about. In every position I’ve held, I promised my constituents that I was not in office to become a potted plant and, regardless of the political environment I am in, my goal is to make government work for East County residents. With dozens of bills passed, landmark legislation authored, and thousands of constituent issues resolved, I am proud of the service my team provided and I will continue this same approach serving you now as Supervisor.

In the first three months since being sworn-in, I have built out a wonderful staff and they are ready to serve you. Many are not aware how our office may be of assistance, so I’d like to share an example.

Just days after coming into office, it was brought to my attention that residents of Alpine were being assessed and billed for fire services provided by both the County of San Diego Fire Authority and the Alpine Fire District. I immediately contacted the County Assessor’s office to investigate and act on the issue. I also sent letters to all the affected constituents, informing them of this situation. As a result, the problem was resolved, and Alpine residents are no longer being taxed twice for the same services.

Since January, my office has been able to assist constituents with several issues and no task is too small, we want to do what we can to help as quickly as possible. Not only do I represent your concerns at the Supervisors’ board meetings, but my job and priority is to serve as a resource to you. If you have any County issues with which you need assistance, please contact my office as we are here to help. You can contact me using the form on my website at supervisorjoelanderson.com, which I will also keep updated with important information and helpful community resources.

Again, it’s an honor to serve and I look forward to hearing from you.

—Joel Anderson represents District 2 on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

There is also a suggestion for Environmental Services to clean up the junk and trash from the location because so much is left behind after every eviction. During our January meeting, there were comments regarding homeless encampments in the area. If you are noticing problems, the list above could work. At the very least, have the property owner get a Letter of Agency with the SDPD, available at bit.ly/3IAMnB.

Also, download the Get It Done app to your mobile device; or report non-emergency issues with the SDPD, available at bit.ly/3IPAJ-vr or by calling 619-531-2000.

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

**COMMUNITY BRIEFS**

**ALIENED GARDENS/GRANTVILLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

City Council member Raul Campillo spoke at our March 23 town hall meeting. We had about 55 participants from the public. This was only one of the several meetings he held throughout District 7.

More has come of those meetings than just what we learned from him and what he learned from us. His contacts with our communities draw more of us to an interest in local government and draw in many of us to the business of local law making.

And drawn in we must be at this time — a time when the State Legislature reaches for more control over local zoning and residential development. They say it is all being done to provide more “affordable housing.”

The state has always had a hand in local real estate development, certainly in matters of environmental controls. But a few years ago, Sacramento took the first step directly into regulating what had always been reserved to the city. That state law requires the city to permit development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on parcels previously limited to single-family homes. The law left some ADU issues to local government, such as the requirement for an owner to reside on the property and the location of the ADU on the parcel, but our city enacted few of those protections.

The State Legislature is considering a proposal for a comprehensive override of the local zoning of our residential communities. Current law allows builders to provide for reduced parking in multiple-unit housing developments along “transit priority zones” (streets with 15-minute intervals of public transit). Under the proposed extension of that law, cities would be required to allow development of “fourplex” units, what the realtors call town houses, along those roadways.

To bring the issue closer to home, consider the development possibilities, townhouse after townhouse, if MTS puts in a 15-minute bus line along Waring Road to the Grantville Trolley Station. We really have to press the question: “Would this sacrifice of our single family residential neighborhood really solve the need for affordable housing or is this just another profit opportunity for land developers?”

Another issue of immediate concern is the development of the Grantville Trolley Station parking lot for affordable rentals now and in the future.

SEE COMMUNITY BRIEFS, Page 15

**ECCC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

the property. The homeless are leaving behind belongings and carts each time they clear out.

Neighbors’ suggestions to secure the site include:

• Fence off the property completely, to avoid invaders.

• Block the parking lot entrances with chains to avoid vehicles driving in.

• A letter of agency with the SDPD so these people can be evicted with just a phone call from nearby residents.

• The Union Bank needs to secure a security patrolling agency to monitor and patrol the lot until they decide what to do with it.

**GET READY TO MOVE**

If you’re planning to buy or sell a home or property, we would like to help you put your plan in motion. Here are some properties that are currently on the market, but they’ll be going fast. Give one of us a call! It’s your move....

**SUMMER ADVENTURE AWAITS!**

Fun, friends, and learning for ages 5-12.

rockacademy.org/camp
It has been a busy first few months at City Hall, and it is an honor to represent you on the San Diego City Council. We recently passed a significant milestone: 100 days in office. I put together a report (bit.ly/3dGuKlu) to highlight some of what my staff and I have been able to accomplish during our short time in office. I would like to begin with a quick COVID vaccine update. In addition to the employment sectors and those with qualifying pre-existing conditions who were already eligible, all San Diego County adults over the age of 50, the first group in Phase 2, are now eligible to be vaccinated. For detailed vaccine eligibility information and to schedule an appointment online, please visit sandiego county.gov/sdc/.

Governor Newsom recently visited a vaccination station here in the city and commended us for the way San Diego is “leading the way” on vaccine progress in our state. We will continue full speed ahead until everyone who wants a vaccination has had the opportunity to get one. For those who are still not in an eligible category, please rest assured that you will be able to get a shot soon: All San Diegans over the age of 16 will become eligible on April 15.

Next, I would like to invite all District 7 Residents to join me on the morning of April 17 at 11 a.m. for a virtual discussion about the issues facing our district and our city with Mayor Todd Gloria. Register for the free event: Sandiego.gov/mayored7townhall.

**STANDING UP AGAINST ANTI-ASIAN HATE AND EXTREMISM**

Earlier this year at the City Council, I took the common-sense step of voting to condemn all forms of hate and extremism in our city. I have been particularly disturbed by the recent increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans in our county. We have seen a threefold increase in the number of hate crimes against Asian Americans in our county. My office is prepared to do all we can to assist the DA in her attempts to hold the perpetrators of these heinous crimes accountable, and I call on all members of the Navajo community to be vigilant. If you witness a hate crime, please report it immediately by calling 911. Together, we will root out hate crime in our communities.

As a reminder, you can always reach my office any time by emailing RaulCampillo@sandiego.gov. For a Del Cerro-specific issue, please reach Jared Miller-Sclar at JMillerSclar@sandiego.gov. For an issue specific to Grantville, Allied Gardens, or San Carlos, please reach Sanna Loando at SLoando@sandiego.gov.

—Raul Campillo represents District 7 on the San Diego City Council.

**Which IRA is best for you? Let’s talk.**

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Beaming up at Crawford

On March 25, the final steel beam for Crawford High School’s new three-story classroom, student services, and performing arts building was hoisted into place. Before it was placed atop the frame of the building, staff, students, and alumni took turns in signing the beam, that was also adorned with an American flag.

The new building at Crawford High School College is part of the Career and Technical Education (CCTE) and Whole Site Modernization project, which began in three construction phases. Completed in July 2020, the first phase of construction upgraded the automotive CCTE program with a new building, three new service bays, and a dedicated alignment bay. The existing auto lab received a renovation, an engine lab, and a single bay demonstration lift.

The second phase, completed in August 2020, included renovations to classrooms, security upgrades to fire alarms and emergency communications systems, as well as installation of security lighting and security cameras. Existing restrooms and the food services area were also renovated. Now in the final phase, crews demolished the existing auditorium to create a three-story structure that will house 20 classrooms, a performing arts center, and a student services office suite. The building includes a drop-off and pickup area at the corner of Orange Avenue and Colts Way, which will be accompanied by a new parking lot as the final piece. Construction for the final phase is estimated to complete in Winter 2022 for the building and spring 2023 for the new parking lot.
Robots are rookies to ing as fourth graders at Dailard Elementary. They are now four year in their teammates competed each FIRST Cluster boundaries. On March 27 schools within the Patrick Henry comprised of students attending LEGO League teams which are success of several of the FIRST Robotics teams continue tournament success FIRST and 28, our teams did very well.

By JAY WILSON

The Wizalos (#14129), also competed in the 2021 "Ultimate Space rent is only $1,350. LBJ 8256 table, full kitchen TV, shuffleboard, restaurants. amenities include a heated swimming pool and Laundry room has convenient storage cabinets with glass doors. Lovely window treatments in every room, master cabinets, dishwasher, and refrigerator. There are Home features an open floor plan with vaulted ceilings, three ceiling fans, vinyl plank flooring and central air conditioning. The spacious kitchen has a double-door refrigerator, lots of warm tone cabinets, dishwasher, and sink. There are pass through windows and a walk-in pantry. Home backs up to a wooded area that you come out to walk? Is there anything that concerns you about walking on the street? What are some of the reasons that you come out to walk? Most senior people come out mostly for fresh air and exercise. Some people also said they would like to see more sidewalks. People said they also would like to see more animals. Some people in the neighborhood said that they would like the cars to be slower and roads to be safer. Some of the more active seniors said that they are not personally afraid of uneven sidewalks, but other people might have a harder time and trip. They would also like to see more nature and animals with more exercise stations for seniors.

Our idea started out as "smooth senior sidewalks" but as time passed, we decided to create an innovation idea to make exciting outdoor spaces for seniors. We just had our qualifying robotics tournament on March 6 and that idea won the innovation project award. We are advancing to the southern California championship on April 10. Wish us luck!

Jason Poliak is a resident of Alvarado Estates.
The City of San Diego is home to some of the most rare and special plants in the Southern California region. One of those rare plants is San Diego Thornmint (Acanthomintha Ilicifolia). The city started monitoring these plants more than 20 years ago as part of a groundbreaking Rare Plant Monitoring Program, which is part of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), enacted in 1997 to preserve habitat and help conserve the region’s spectacular biodiversity.

The Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation has been a critical partner in the MSCP, and they partnered with the city once again to help improve habitat and increase the park’s populations of San Diego Thornmint. The MTRP Foundation applied and was awarded a grant from the TransNet Program at SANDAG, and these funds allowed the Foundation to engage local rare plant expert Mark Dodero and RECON Environmental to expand the park’s San Diego Thornmint populations. After three years, the project reached the end of grant funding and it was a smashing success! The population of plants that once numbered under 100 individuals in 2017 blossomed to over 800 plants in spring of 2020. This is great news for this population at Mission Trails, but the work is far from over. Preserving each population and their genetic diversity is critical for a robust regional conservation effort.

The partnership that the MTRP Foundation has with the City of San Diego is a great example of the collaboration it will take to bring San Diego Thornmint and other rare and endemic plants back from the brink of extinction. Sharing the story of this success will hopefully lead to more opportunities to develop secure funding to expand and enhance conservation efforts across Mission Trails and, in doing so, boost the resiliency of the rare plants across the entire Southern California region.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT
San Diego Thornmint is found only in San Diego County in the United States and in northwestern Baja California. Populations of San Diego Thornmint are declining throughout San Diego County, and are threatened by pressures from urban development, habitat disturbance, and invasion of non-native species with as many as one-third of historical occurrences believed to have been lost. Thornmint typically grows in open areas with little competition from shrubs and other plant species.

The initial focus San Diego Thornmint Expansion Project in 2017 was to get the non-native weeds under control so that the Thornmint plants would have less competition for light and water. Also, during that first year, the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research’s Native Seed Bank began growing out additional Thornmint plants to produce as many seeds as possible. Prior to any seedling efforts, monitoring of the plant population in the spring of 2018 revealed the presence of 43 Thornmint plants in the natural population. In the second year of the project, the weed control efforts continued and the first lot of bulked Thornmint seed was provided for dispersal. Fenced cages were constructed at the site to protect the seedlings from rabbits and rodents. The seeds were dispersed a few days prior to heavy rainfall, grew well and flowered in the spring. A total of 374 Thornmint flowered and set seeds successfully. Of those 374 plants 319 plants were found in the natural population and 55 plants were found in the seedled plots. Each year of the project, weeding reduced the cover of non-native species and this led to an increase in flowering native species.

In the project’s final year, additional Thornmint seeds were produced by the San Diego Zoo, and seed collected by the project biologists from the seeded and natural population were dispersed throughout the area. Because of dry conditions, the project biologist and maintenance crew gave supplemental water to the seedlings. This supplemental water allowed the seedlings an opportunity to survive until natural rainfall began again, enabling the plants to grow and successfully flower in the spring of 2020. A total of 846 Thornmint plants grew at the site in 2020. This represented an increase of over 800 plants from the beginning of the project.

Through partnerships between public agencies such as the City of San Diego and SANDAG and private groups like the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation and San Diego Zoo, good conservation outcomes are possible.

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Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation

By MARK BERNINGER | MARK DODERO

The City of San Diego is home to some of the most rare and special plants in the Southern California region. One of those rare plants is San Diego Thornmint (Acanthomintha Ilicifolia).

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Through partnerships between public agencies such as the City of San Diego and SANDAG and private groups like the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation and San Diego Zoo, good conservation outcomes are possible.

For more Mission Trails news and features, visit missiontimescourier.com.

—Mark Berninger is Natural Resources Manager for the City of San Diego and Mark W. Dodero is Senior Restoration Specialist at RECON Environmental.

LEARN MORE about the San Diego Thornmint Restoration Project at Mission Trails by watching a presentation with Mark Berninger about the project on the YouTube channel of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, or through the Mission Trails website, or by visitingyoutu.be/0XJZz1097bg.
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Use the “Contact Us” page at aggccouncil.org to get on our email contact list, to receive notices of the activities of our community council and the Navajo Community Planning Group, Inc., and to let us know how we can help you support our neighborhood. Our next board meeting will be on Monday, May 3 at 6:30 p.m. by Zoom. The public is encouraged to attend.

—By Allied Gardens/Granville Community Council president Shain Haug

San Carlos Area Council
Welcome Spring! Some facts about the month of April: Its name is derived from the Latin word “aperit,” which means to open. It’s the month of the growing season when trees and flowers begin to “open.” Some believe that the month is named after the Greek goddess, Aphrodite (Aphros). Other themes include resurrection and redemption. So there’s a lot packed into this month. Those of us who have sheltered from COVID for over a year can see now see light at the end of this tunnel. April brings all of us hope for a brighter future. Keep your eyes open for the orange poppies along our highways, and if you have not visited the San Carlos Community Garden yet, do it. You’ll be glad you did.

At our latest meeting, the San Carlos Area Council received the following updates:

The police report for the month of February included zero violent crimes, 17 property crimes, nine thefts from vehicles, one residential burglary, two motor vehicle thefts and five thefts. There were 10 citations issues and 17 arrests in the San Carlos area.

The DEA National Prescription Take-Back Program will occur on Saturday April 24, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at 9225 Aero Drive, San Diego, 92115 where you can drop off your expired or unwanted prescription drugs. Please don’t flush your old drugs down the toilet or add them to the landfill.

Mike McBride, San Diego Fire & Rescue Fire Chief, advised us to make it a habit of changing out our home’s smoke detector battery when Daylight Savings Time occurs. Make sure the smoke detector and CO2 detector are operating correctly. Mike mentioned that coming this May, you may notice that Fire & Rescue teams will be practicing their skills at Mission Trails Regional Park with fire trucks, engines and a helicopter. Mike also spoke about brush management and how we all need 100 feet of defensible space around our properties. Toward that end, we’d like to direct you to the San Diego Fire & Rescue Brush Management Video which was produced by Crystal Pyramid Productions in 2012 and features beloved newsman Loren Nancarrow who volunteered his time as a spokesperson for this important educational video. View at youtu.be/T1DUk7OB_9E.

If you would like to become more involved in your community, use the “Contact Us” page at aggccouncil.org to get on our email contact list, to receive notices of the activities of our community council and the Navajo Community Planning Group, Inc., and to let us know how we can help you support our neighborhood. Our next board meeting will be on Monday, May 3 at 6:30 p.m. by Zoom. The public is encouraged to attend.

—By Allied Gardens/Granville Community Council president Shain Haug
‘Grub’ on fish with an Asian flair

By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON

When the Szechuan Mandarin Restaurant closed a while back, it was like losing a limb for San Diegans who grew up dining there. It was the cornerstone of Mission Gorge Road and Interstate 8 for 40 years. Mark San sold the restaurant 20 years ago and now he finds himself back in the kitchen with his new passion project, Fish Grub, which held its official grand opening on March 31.

The newly remodeled restaurant boasts a lovely patio with outdoor seating. Enjoy indoor, outdoor or bar dining. Inside dining is now available and they offer comfortable booths, tall tables and an inviting bar. For your entertainment, you can watch a vibrant video of colorful fish swimming among coral on many big screen televisions throughout the establishment.

Suni’s philosophy is to serve seafood that is responsibly sourced. He is health conscious and combines standard cooking methods with his own bolder flavors. For menu details and a map of the area go to fishgrub.net.

Fish Grub offers a variety of sandwiches including oyster shooters, peppery calamari, sesame crusted seared Ahi, or fish tacos. Craft beers pair nicely with fish and Fish Grub offers 13 different local or nearby brews. White and red wines also pair with fish and sauces. Try a chilled white wine paired with fish. If you enjoy red wines, they also pair nicely with the depth of some of the sauces. Both Pinot Noir and Zinfandel can also hold up to the bolder flavors.

This restaurant will become the new cornerstone on Mission Gorge Road. Try them now before the lines are out the door, which they will be once the secret is out. For menu details and a map of the area go to fishgrub.net.

—Robin Dohrn-Simpson is a San Diego-based food and travel writer. Reach her at dohrnsimpson@hotmail.com or visit robin-dohrn-simpson.com.
Family Health Centers of San Diego is the #1 enrollment entity for Covered California in San Diego County.

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For 50 years, Family Health Centers of San Diego (FHCSD) has provided caring, affordable, high-quality health care and supportive services to everyone, with a special commitment to uninsured, low-income and medically underserved persons.

With over 23 primary care clinics around San Diego County, FHCSD provides care to over 227,000 patients each year. With a wide-range of health care services throughout the region, the organization also includes 10 behavioral health facilities, eight dental clinics, two mobile counseling centers, three mobile medical units, three vision clinics, a physical rehabilitation department, a pharmacy and an outpatient substance use treatment program. As part of their ongoing dedication to ensuring everyone who needs health care receives it, FHCSD offers free Covered California enrollment assistance.

Covered California is a private health insurance exchange that was established through Affordable Care Act legislation for individuals and families not eligible for Medi-Cal. The program allows California residents to purchase quality health insurance plans to fit individual and family needs. The cost of each insurance plan is based on certain factors, including family size and income.

Covered California has extended its Special Enrollment Period from February 1 to May 15, 2021 without a qualifying life event.

Health Plan Benefits
All Covered California health insurance plans provide comprehensive services, including:

1. Preventive, wellness and chronic disease management services
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3. Pediatric services, including oral and vision care
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5. Rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices (services and devices to help people with injuries, disabilities, or chronic conditions gain or recover mental and physical skills)
6. Prescription drugs
7. Ambulatory and emergency services
8. Laboratory services and hospitalization (surgery and overnight stays)

For free enrollment help, call (619) 515-2363 or visit fhcsd.org/covered-california.
Understanding today’s real estate market

Simply put, current real estate prices are not in equilibrium. When we are at or near peak, the stock price may increase by 50% over just a couple of months and with gasoline prices we have all experienced a 25% increase in a matter of weeks. However, home prices do not quickly adjust to the equilibrium point! There are many reasons for this including appraisers who are slow to move the value up or down and banks who lend on conservative values. But currently demand is greatly outstripping supply, causing prices to push upward as fast as they are able.

Many sellers are holding off with placing their property on the market in anticipation of higher prices a year from now while with buyers, it’s exactly the opposite. The expectation of higher prices is causing a mad dash to buy a property as soon as possible. Some thought that after last year’s spike in home prices, this year would bring just moderate upward climb. However, home prices are finally acting on it. Other homeowners are moving out of smaller properties and up to larger properties. San Diego has very little land left on which to build so the supply of housing cannot quickly increase. Also, it is wildly expensive and difficult for contractors and developers to build homes these days, which slows down the process of increasing supply.

Another interesting factor is that homes are an excellent investment because you can put little money down to own a high value property and then rent it out to pay the mortgage. For example, buy a $700,000 home for $200,000 down and wait 10 years for prices to double to $1,400,000. You just made almost a million dollars and renters paying most or all of your mortgage the whole time! We put a property on the market last week in Mira Mesa and had nearly 30 offers in three days, many from investors! I just read in The Wall Street Journal that large Wall Street funds are buying up hundreds of thousands of homes across this nation and renting them out for the long-term. The article stated that in Houston, Texas nearly 25% of all home sales are sold to investors! The article had one example where a hedge fund purchased the entire zip code! We put a property on the market last week in Mira Mesa and had nearly 30 offers in three days, many from investors! I just read in The Wall Street Journal that large Wall Street funds are buying up hundreds of thousands of homes across this nation and renting them out for the long-term. The article stated that in Houston, Texas nearly 25% of all home sales are sold to investors! The article had one example where a hedge fund purchased the entire zip code!

If you still do not own a property, I strongly believe prices will continue their upward trajectory for some time. I recently saw that Washington D.C. is now trying to pass yet another $2 trillion in stimulus. Something has to give and as long as the nation’s debt continues to rise, and the dollar continues to get weaker, expect home prices to continue rising. Purchasing real estate in the world’s finest city with limited buildable land, is a low-risk proposition and has the potential to build substantial equity.

For the first time in 14 months, on Saturday and Sunday, March 27 and 28, the competitive teams of the Crusaders Soccer Club were allowed to play games against teams from other soccer clubs throughout San Diego County. Thus, began the first of up to 10 weeks of weekend games for this unusual spring season for competitive teams.

“It was a great weekend to see our teams playing real games against teams from throughout San Diego. Every week our teams are playing games on our fields throughout San Diego County,” said Rene Miramontes, director of coaching for Crusaders Soccer Club. “Our players and coaches have been diligently training two and three times a week since June and to see them actually playing a real game was just outstanding.”

A competitive spring season is unusual for the soccer clubs affiliated with the Presidio Soccer League. The competitive season is scheduled to run through May.

All you have to do is look at the faces of the players. You can see the excitement on their faces. After hours and hours of practice, they finally have an opportunity to play real games against teams from other clubs. For several of the Crusaders competitive teams, it was their first competitive game because last fall they were playing in the Crusaders recreational division and made the leap up to the competitive level.

In addition to all the competitive games, 46 recreational division teams continue with their very successful spring season which plays on Sundays through May.

For more information about the Crusaders Soccer Club, visit our website at crusaderssoccer.org or follow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

—Jay Wilson writes on behalf of Crusaders Soccer Club.
Collections Weigh in at 500 lb.!
Food Drive Runs through April 30

DONATIONS ACCEPTED AT IDEAL, 5161 WARING ROAD, MON-FRI 8AM-5PM

Our generous community has come together and collected 500 lb. of food for the San Diego Food Bank. We admire your giving spirit and thoughtfulness in helping others. We will continue to collect donations through the end of April.

Due to our region’s high cost of living, tens of thousands of low-income families rely on the Food Bank to put food on the table. Of the 350,000 people the Food Bank serves monthly, 39,000 are low-income military personnel and their dependents and 10,000 are fixed-income seniors. Join us in supporting the San Diego Food Bank!

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up to $400*

March 1 - June 30, 2021

*Rebate savings depends on equipment and program availability. See dealer for details. HVAC equipment must be purchased and installed by June 30, 2021.

$20 OFF Your Next Service Call!

* Present coupon at time of service. Not valid with any other offer. Valid for service calls of 1-hour or more. Technician to verify special upon arrival. Not valid towards Service Maintenance Agreement Contract. Expires 6-30-2021

(Offer Code MTC)