TOP 10 HIDDEN GEMS OF LIBERTY STATION
Plus one more suprising spot
SEE PAGE 11

Paige Fulfer poses in front of the U.S.S. Recruit naval ship at Liberty Station, which was nicknamed U.S.S. Neversail because it remained on land for training exercises.

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Residents want the recycling center on Voltaire St. moved
SEE PAGE 4

Iconic Nati’s restaurant to be sold and replaced by Pop Pies Co.
SEE PAGE 5

Residents want the recycling center on Voltaire St. moved
SEE PAGE 4

Former San Diego Gulls winger Willie O’Ree was recently honored
SEE PAGE 10

Paige Fulfer poses in front of the U.S.S. Recruit naval ship at Liberty Station, which was nicknamed U.S.S. Neversail because it remained on land for training exercises.
City plans repairs to sidewalk sinkhole south of OB Pier

Action has been initiated by the City to rectify a sinkhole that has developed along the public access sidewalk just south of the Ocean Beach Pier, and next to the historic Silver Spray Apartments. The sidewalk has been closed since late January.

A sinkhole located around the lower northwest corner of the three-story apartment building at 5116 Narragansett Ave. was reported Jan. 31 to the city’s Public Work Construction Management and Field Services Division. “Later this week, the City will be submitting applications for the permits necessary for repairs including filling the void and repairing the walkway,” said city spokesman Anthony Santacroce. “City staff continues to closely monitor this location and, to date, has seen no evidence that the void is expanding or causing any threat to the adjacent apartment complex.”

Santacroce reported that the city’s geologist, following two visits to the sinkhole site, reports “there was nothing to indicate the void or damaged walkway has caused additional damage to the complex.”

The city geologist, Santacroce said, “did recommend that the owners of the complex should consult with their own geologists or engineers if they are concerned about their structure.”

The spokesman said city teams “will continue to monitor the site in advance of the restoration work, which is, tentatively scheduled to commence in mid-March.”

“Until the work is complete, the walkway near the void will remain closed,” said Santacroce who added, “This issue is a high-priority concern for city leaders, and they continue to receive regular updates about conditions and plans for the restoration effort.”

Cliff collapse near Ladera Street stairs

It was reported on Feb. 13 that there was a partial cliff collapse at Sunset Cliffs near Ladera Street, and that the stairs leading down to Garbage Beach have been closed. Peninsula Beacon freelance photographer Jim Grant, who was allowed access to the site, said he was told, “Lifeguards are having a meeting today and will make a decision on how to move forward.”

“From the discussion I heard,” continued Grant, “Lifeguards were bringing in the big rig, and will repel over the [cliff] edge knocking off all the loose debris and doing a further assessment of the condition of the bluff.”

Grant added the cliff collapse occurred “overnight [Jan. 12] sometime. The cliff was intact last night. It did have a large crack.”
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Peninsulans band together to start new Neighborhood Watch

BY DAVE SCHWAB | THE BEACON

Obecians are stepping up to the plate following a call by one of their own to create a new Neighborhood Watch network encompassing OB and Point Loma.

Sunset Cliffs resident Nicole Ueno recently began lobbying local residents, seeking their support on a proposal to create as many as eight different neighborhood watch “zones” across Ocean Beach and Point Loma.

The movement is in part reacting to a recent major uptick in crime. Police responded to eight separate incidents of arson and vandalism — including people setting fire to alley debris, breaking car windows, even setting them ablaze — in OB in the month-long period between Dec. 7 and Jan. 7.

Spearheaded by Ueno, 40-plus locals gathered Jan. 31 at the Ocean Beach Town Hall to discuss what can be done proactively to help prevent crime. Topics vetted included aggressive homeless panhandling, vandalism, tagging, arson and illegal camps. What came out of that Jan. 31 meeting, was a proposal to form new Neighborhood Watch groups in both OB and Point Loma with several different zones.

A Facebook page has also been created to popularize and promote the Neighborhood Watch effort.

Asked why she’s creating new Neighborhood Watch groups, Ueno replied, “Just the overall increase in crimes. We also want to set up first aid and CPR certification classes to train people what to do in the event of medical emergencies. We also want to put together a self-defense class for women.”

Ueno described the initial reaction she’s received from Peninsula residents to her efforts as “a huge outpouring of support from all sides.”

Ueno said her plan for OB is to extend the concept of the Neighborhood Watches. “So that you have members spread throughout each of the zones. We’re working now on setting up the zones, and getting neighbors to participate on their block, or in their zone.”

 Asked about the progress of her efforts, Ueno answered, “It already seems to be happening seamlessly.” She added her goal is to have the new network up and running by the end of February.

“We want to have all our telephone trees and messenger groups intact by then,” Ueno said. “We need to set up zones, and captains for those zones. We’ll have a meeting where we can all get to know each other.”

Ueno said her reasons for spearheading Neighborhood Watch groups goes beyond the recent crime spurt.

“People don’t feel safe in their community,” she concluded. “We are trying to activate, and engage, people to take some action to change that.”

Ueno said her Neighborhood Watch initiative is seeking other improvements from the city for beach communities.

“We’re petitioning the city for more street lights to be installed in OB, which is very dark at night,” she said. “We also want to put together a self-defense class for women.”

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

Neighbors express safety concerns with Voltaire site

BY DAVE SCHWAB | THE BEACON

A neighborhood coup is underway to compel Prince Recycling Center to move from its present site at 3770 Voltaire St., adjoining Stump’s Family Marketplace, to a more suitable spot in Midway District behind Big Lots off Rosecrans Street.

Some residents, who feel the recycler is misplaced and want it moved, rallied in front of the recycler at Stumps on Feb. 10. Nearby residents, corridor businesses, the nonprofit Point Loma Association and market owner Dirk Stump weighed-in with the media on their cause.

The rally was to draw attention to alleged crime-related issues associated with homeless utilizing, and littering, in and around the allegedly problematic recycler.

Recycling center owner Jamie Prince said he was mystified, and a little taken aback, by public reaction to his operations.

“I was never contacted by anyone at all about any problems,” Prince told the Peninsula Beacon. “Then all of a sudden, it was all over social media and I said, ‘What’s going on?’”

Prince feels scapegoated.

“I’m not the reason for the homeless problem in the area,” he said, noting “there’s always been a homeless problem.” He added, “I have a clean site and the homeless are just a small part of our business.”

Prince pointed out, under state law, “We can’t refuse a person service.” He pointed out the number one rule at his center is “no shopping carts,” adding he always tries to be a good neighbor and respond to the community’s concerns.

Rally spokesman Margaret Virissimo, a member of the Peninsula Community Planning Board, said she and others tried unsuccessfully to reach Prince offline. She noted the purpose of the rally was being mischaracterized.

“It really wasn’t a protest so much,” Virissimo said. “We definitely don’t want to see [Prince] go [out of business].” We want to help him relocate, and even offered to fundraise to help with his moving costs to show him we care.”

Virissimo contended Prince Recycling “is in too small a space and that it is negatively affecting nearby businesses.” She added the center, and its lingering homeless population, is a threat given its proximity to three local schools.

“It’s a problem for the store ... the homeless presence scares off the elderly, kids and moms.”

DIRK STUMP
OWNER OF STUMP’S FAMILY MARKETPLACE

“Neighborhood recycling centers should be a positive asset, however, the Point Loma recycling center has caused several neighborhood problems,” said District 2 Councilmember Lorrie Zapf. “In fact, calls to SDPD for service to this block have increased by more than 50 percent.”

Zapf aide Conrad Wear noted recent police statistics show a direct causal connection between local crime and the recycling center’s location.

“We used the call rate from January 2017 to August 2017 to project calls through the end of that year,” said Wear. “They would have totaled 156. After comparing that to 2015, we have seen an approximately 59 percent increase in calls to service to this location between 2015 and 2017, from 93 to 156.”

Julie Borcher chairs the PLA’s Public Safety Committee. She said the civic group has researched the CalRecycle program, under which Prince’s center operates and, according to her, is receiving state subsidies.

“The state requires stores like Stump’s to provide CA CRV redemption for bottles and cans within a one-half mile radius,” Borcher said.

“Stump’s was required by the state to provide this type of facility or face $100 per day in penalties.”

Borcher contended having recyclers in the middle of neighborhoods, like Prince’s, “may have made some sense in the early 1980s when the program was introduced and curb side recycling was less common. But the PLA believes the program is leading to the degradation of neighborhoods in which these centers are located.”

Market owner Dirk Stump said no one wants Prince’s relocated more than him.

“It’s a problem for the store,” Stump said, adding the constant homeless presence “scares off the elderly, kids and moms.”

Stump said he’s personally been victimized by a homeless woman, now serving time in custody, who came in and destroyed merchandise in the market, and threatened him personally, before being subdued and arrested.

“I’ve been trying to get [recycling center] moved ever since,” Stump said. “Protests and photo-ops are great for gaining public awareness of an issue.”

PCPB chair Jon Linney, one of three protest organizers at the Feb. 10 rally, said Linney: “More important are the breakthroughs we are achieving on something that has frustrated the community for more than three years. I could not be prouder of the way everyone has conducted themselves.”

READ MORE ONLINE AT sdnews.com

Peninsula Community Planning Board chair Jon Linney (right) speaks at the Feb. 10 rally next to Stump’s.
Iconic Nati’s Mexican Restaurant in Ocean Beach to sell, Pop Pie Co. to take over site

BO wine wins big at national competition

Some say size matters. That bigger is better. But that doesn’t seem to be the case when it comes to producing super-premium wines.

Distinguished Gianni Buonorno Vintners, on Newport Avenue in Ocean Beach, was recently awarded a double gold medal at the prestigious San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. Gianni Buonorno competed against the biggest names in the U.S. wine industry at the largest competition of American wines in the world.

“Because we’re such a small producer, I never sent my wines out to competitions before this one,” said winemaker Keith Rolle, who owns the 1,500 case per year winery. “A couple of wine club members urged me to enter. They even offered to pay the entry fee, so I submitted two wines to the San Fran competition. I was stunned when I learned that my 2014 Charbono won double gold and my 2011 Blaufrankisch won bronze.”

Asked why he produces these obscure varietals, Rolle said: “Because we’re small, we don’t have to produce massive amounts of Cab or Chardonnay to fill the distribution pipeline. This allows me great license for creativity in the varietals and style of wine I bring to market.”

Charbono, once the darling of Napa Valley, is now made by only 17 wineries in the entire U.S. There are less than 70 acres planted to this rare varietal that has developed a cult-like following. Grapes for this award-winning wine were sourced from El Dorado County near Placerville.

Blaufrankisch, another varietal not readily found in the U.S., has an Austrian heritage and grows extremely well in Washington state. Rolle has tasted this and six other varietals in Washington and vinifies them in his 3,000-square-foot winery two blocks from the beach.

Gianni Buonorno Vintners is the only winery in the U.S., perhaps in the world, that produces both Charbono and Blaufrankisch.

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4. If the bank does not have the form, your attorney can draft one for you.

5. And finally, if your parents do not have a Trust, in the account is the greater than $150,000 or does the gross value of the decedent’s real and personal property in California exceed $100,000? If so, the bank will tell you that you must obtain “Letters” from the court in order to access the account. This means that you may need to go through Probate.

What action can you take today? Work with your parents and have them contact their attorney to draft a Power of Attorney and Living Trust for them.

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Seattle lays claim to the world’s largest private residential yacht, the 2014 NFL championship and approximately 154 percent of the nation’s total annual rainfall. It also boasts Pike Place Market, the world’s 39th most visited urban attraction and a critical marker for the city’s fishing trade. Ancient mongers rule the roost from 5 a.m. every day, gruffly hawking regional salmon and ahí favorites as though their lives weigh in the balance (because they often do).

The folks at Point Loma Fish Shop don’t keep such ungodly hours. Neither do they seem to be under a death watch while their managers push produce as though their lives weigh in the balance (because they often do). But this eatery has one critical feature that handsonely competes with that at Pike Place – the unmistakable aroma of fresh catches and the nearby sea that yields them.

One flurry at your nostrils and lungs, and you’ll know you’re in the right place. That translates to a clutch of delicious menu entrees, featuring no fewer than 11 types of fish and several marinades to choose from, ranging in size from a simple taco to a near-elephantine plate. Crab cakes, stews and sashimi rule the hours, with favorites featuring coconut shrimp (my choice, as I couldn’t reconcile the name at first) and the TKO Taco, a mahi mahi affair that goes ideally with shredded cabbage, cheese and the house cilantro.

As you might imagine, clam chowder is a staple here – and as you might not, you can get yours in an enormous bread bowl, which is exactly what it says it is. Jasmine rice, a long-grain variety that actually has an odor, comes with the coconut shrimp and is also available as a side, along with onion rings, coleslaw and seaweed salad.

If you can find a more generous side portion in this city, you win the franchise that serves it.

You can celebrate with one of the Fish Shop’s raft of tap beers. I chose a very light little blonde number from downtown’s Resident Brewing Co., owing to the hyperlocal angle that Fish Shop likes to project. That idea was advanced by exceptionally pleasant manager Genevieve, who obviously mistook me for some kind of royalty. She delightedly pitched the eatery’s $1 oysters on Thursday nights, the Tecate draft specials, the kids menu and the fact that dogs are welcome on the patio if they’re cool.

One guy came in with his family and a big poodle-terrier mix while I was there. The dog was an ideal guest, smiling and waving as I finished my meal; the little boy was delighted to make a new friend as I scratched him about the head.

Genevieve has a culinary school background she compiled in New York, and although she’s happy to trade stories about the city that truly never sleeps, she’s also nuts about San Diego’s skies, which are ice blue about 84 percent of the year. Seattle will have to make do amid its leaden yonder – but a splendid corner eatery like Point Loma Fish Shop would certainly help.
PLNU Writers Symposium features Pulitzer Prize and Peabody Award winning authors

By: SAVANAH DUFFY | The Beacon

It’s time for Point Loma Nazarene University’s 23rd annual Writers Symposium by the Sea, where some of the world’s most celebrated authors gather to be interviewed and share their insights and experiences with an audience.

In the words of Dr. Dean Nelson, PLNU’s journalism program founder and director, and founder of the Writers Symposium, the event is intended to “encourage people to think deeper and live bigger.” He hopes it will inspire people to “take up their own pen… and create something beautiful.”

Nelson also conducts the interviews with the symposium’s guests, who in the past have included Ray Bradbury, Donald Miller, Anne Lamott, Philip Yancey and others. This year’s symposium will run from Monday, Feb. 19 through Friday, Feb. 23, making it the biggest one yet.

The itinerary for the week includes interviews between Nelson and six guests. The week will begin with New York Times bestselling author Jane Smiley, co-sponsored with La Playa Books; and Peabody Award-winning author and host of the podcast “On Being,” Krista Tippett.

“The way that she…seeks to offer opportunities for us to learn from a wide range of voices and back-grounds and stories,” says Wolf, “I think that has a tremendous amount to offer really anyone who’s just alive in the world today.”

On Thursday, co-sponsored by both the Society of Professional Journalists and the Council on American-Islamic Relations, former NBA star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar will be interviewed. Though he is easily recognized for his work in print, not his work on the court, that he was invited to the Writers Symposium.

“I promise you,” said Nelson, “we are not interested in talking about basketball.”

Abdul-Jabbar is a highly-acclaimed author. His writing covers a wide range of topics, from race and equality to religion and sports. Additionally, he is a columnist for both The Washington Post and Time magazine.

The interview sessions for the week will close with Patrick Gray and PLNU alumnus Justin Skeetsuck, co-authors of the book “I’ll Push You: A Journey of 500 Miles, Two Best Friends, and One Wheelchair.”

The book is paired with its docu-mentary film, described by Nelson as being “maybe one of the most inspiring films you’ll ever see,” which will be screened at the event.

“It’s this range of body and spirit and culture and inspiration,” says Nelson, about the Writers Symposium as a whole, “that I think it covers a breadth of the human experi-ence bigger than any symposium we’ve done before.”

Each interview session will close with a book signing.

Additionally, he is a columnist for both The Washington Post and Time magazine.

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Local couple cleans up neighborhood laundromat in Ocean Beach

Most laundromats don’t have much of a story. People come in, they wash their clothes and, an hour or so later, fold their laundry and leave as quickly as possible. Tranquility and community are not typically included in the wash-cycle experience. But Laundrland in OB is not a typical laundromat.

Laura McNary and her husband Vale have always cared deeply for the communities they live in. Three years ago, the couple tackled an old, run-down café (Dos Palmas) with some elbow grease in Normal Heights, turning it into a thriving sandwich hub for community hang-outs and live music. Having moved to Pacific Beach last summer, the two became inspired to renovate a formerly forsaken laundromat after hearing the owner was selling the building.

“We use laundromats ourselves and when we saw this place... well, it was a dump,” said McNary. “All of the machines were full of water and dirty, they didn’t have hot water and nothing worked. We decided it’d be a good opportunity to get in there and give the neighborhood a safe and clean place to do laundry.”

With the renovation team consisting of McNary, her husband and a few friends, rehab of the facility took three months and Laundrland had its grand opening this past December.

“We ripped out pretty much everything,” said McNary. “All the washing machines are brand new. All the dryers are the same but needed quite a bit of maintenance. We retild the paint, the floor and the ceiling... It was definitely a process.”

The fresh interior is incredibly unique, with food and drink vending machines right at the door, chrome Speed Queen dryers placed up against a newly finished wooden wall along with ocean-blue pillars between folding stations which actually consist of butcher-block tables.

“They weren’t meant to be used as laundry folding tables, but since we work at the café, we knew they were durable and would last long,” said McNary. “They look pretty cool too.”

But the pride and joy of the laundromat is the back-wall ocean mural made up of orange seahorses, salmon-colored coral and, at the center of it all, a woman’s face with wavy blue hair that blends into the oceanic background. At the bottom right-hand corner is the creator’s signature: Gloria Muriel. The local artist also added a smaller-scale mural on a side corner wall of the laundromat.

“I had seen her art before,” said McNary. “She has murals all over the place, so I just contacted her and told her that we wanted a mural and she came up with the idea. It didn’t take her that long, maybe three full days of working on it. She’s pretty quick. I think the seahorses are my favorite.”

Laura and Vale are at the laundromat three times a day: in the morning to open and in the evening to clean and straighten up. They feel like the business has made them more acquainted with the people in the community and still have plans for improvements.

“We have a huge to-do list,” said McNary. “We talked to the community right when we started renovations and we’d like to add a soap machine and, eventually, a fluff-and-fold where people drop off their clothes and the person here would be doing the laundry for them. We’re just excited to be here for the community.”

Laura and Vale McNary renovated the laundromat and added new washing machines.

Local couple cleans up neighborhood laundromat in Ocean Beach

Most laundromats don’t have much of a story. People come in, they wash their clothes and, an hour or so later, fold their laundry and leave as quickly as possible. Tranquility and community are not typically included in the wash-cycle experience. But Laundrland in OB is not a typical laundromat.

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On Jan. 18, 1958, a young hockey player was called up from the minor leagues to join the Boston Bruins of the National Hockey League, who were in Montreal for a game at the Forum, home of the Canadiens. His name was Willie O’Ree, and his history was made that night. Why? O’Ree is black.

And, while he only played in two games that season, the color barrier in professional hockey had been broken, giving O’Ree the honorable designation as the “Jackie Robinson of Hockey.”

Born Oct. 15, 1935, in the coal-mining town of Fredericton, New Brunswick, O’Ree was the youngest of 13 children. Driven to succeed in both athletics and academics, he soon began to believe he could compete in sports at a pro level. As a youngster in 1949, he also received an invitation from the Atlanta Braves to their minor league baseball camp. When he deplaned in Atlanta, he recalls seeing “While Only” and “Colored Only.”

While in the United States, however, O’Ree had the opportunity to meet black baseball star Jackie Robinson in Brooklyn. “I knew he broke the color barrier,” O’Ree recalls, “and when I actually met him he said, ‘There’s no black kids that play hockey.’ And I said, ‘Yeah, there’s a few.’” Robinson told him “Whatever sport you choose, work hard and do your very best. Things will work out for you.”

O’Ree returned in 1961 to play 43 games for the Bruins, scoring four goals and adding 10 assists. And while those were the only games he played in the NHL, the door had opened for black players to compete at the highest level.

O’Ree’s greatest strengths were the speed with which he could skate and his checking ability on defense. While he was not imposing in stature at 5 feet 10 inches tall and 170 pounds, his toughness, determination and speed allowed him to make a considerable impact driving opposing players into the boards.

His Boston teammates stuck up for him, but in one game Eric Nesterenko of the Chicago Black Hawks hit him in the face with the butt end of his stick, knocking out two of O’Ree’s teeth and breaking his nose. O’Ree responded by hitting Nesterenko over the head with his stick, igniting a fight between the teams... with Nesterenko acquiring 15 new stitches in his head.

“I was prepared for it [verbal and physical abuse] because I knew it would happen. I wasn’t a great slugger, but I did my share of fighting. I was determined that I wasn’t going to be run out of the rink,” O’Ree recalled.

In 1967 general manager Max McNab of the nascent San Diego Gulls of the Western Hockey League acquired O’Ree from the rival Los Angeles Blades, and O’Ree immediately became a fan favorite as he accelerated to full skating speed in four or five strides and rushed the opponents’ net.

Record-star minor league crowds at the then San Diego Sports Arena roared as O’Ree won the WHL goal-scoring title with 38 in 1968-69. With his 41 assists, he totaled 79 points in 70 games.

After his retirement in 1979, O’Ree settled in San Diego and today lives in La Mesa.

O’Ree kept a secret during his playing career that spanned 28 years: One afternoon in the mid 1950s, a puck ricocheted off a stick and struck O’Ree in the right eye, shattering his retina. He lost 97 percent of the vision in the eye, which had to be removed years later. Doctors urged him to hang up his skates.

Eight weeks later he was back on the ice where he switched from left wing to right wing so he could see the puck better, yet fearing his career would end if his handicap were discovered.

Eventually, the NHL took note of O’Ree’s historic status and in 1998 invited him to be the director of youth development for its Diversity Task Force, a nonprofit program for minority youth that provides equipment and ice time so inner-city kids might learn and play hockey in its “Hockey is for Everyone” program.

On Jan. 19, 2008, the Boston Bruins and the NHL, along with TD Garden marking the 50th anniversary of his debut. Those in attendance included a busload of O’Ree’s friends from his native Fredericton.

The next month, ESPN aired a special program on O’Ree in honor of Black History Month. Last month marked the 60th anniversary of O’Ree’s first game, and O’Ree once again returned to Boston to be honored.

“It was wonderful and I was thrilled,” O’Ree recalled. “When I was in Boston [last month] it took me back to when I first came to the Bruins and the training camp in 1957. I kind of fell in love with the city and the entire Bruins organization.”

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman noted O’Ree has impacted more than 40,000 children in his 20-year NHL ambassador career.

“Willie has a resolve and an inner strength that allows him to do what he believes and not let anything get in his way,” Bettman said.

O’Ree has received many other awards including the Order of Canada, the highest civilian award for a Canadian citizen.

The love affair between San Diego hockey fans and Willie O’Ree has continued to grow over the decades. When not on the road as part of his NHL commitment, O’Ree, now 82 years old, can be found enjoying a San Diego Gulls game at the Valley View Casino Center. Always upbeat, he never denies a autograph request.

“Willie has a resolve and an inner strength that allows him to do what he believes and not let anything get in his way,” Bettman said.

O’Ree has over come much in his life and, through hard work and determination, earned his status as a local legend and hero.

Loma Portal Little League celebrates 60th anniversary

Sixty years ago, a dream became reality when a group of community members constructed Loma Portal Little League.

Now, some of the boys who were in uniform for the league’s first Opening Day are planning a reunion when the league, now known as Peninsula Little League, stages its 60th Opening Day ceremonies Feb. 24.

Ceremonies begin at 9 a.m. on the field, located in what is now Bill Cleator Park at 2314 Famosa Blvd.

The complex of youth baseball fields was founded in 1958 by the late A. E. (Red) Bernades and ranks as one of San Diego’s oldest and longest-operating Little Leagues.

Bernades’ son Jon is organizing the reunion while younger brother Scott will serve as emcee. So far, about 30 members of those first teams are expected to attend and renew friendships with former teammates, opponents and perhaps coaches.

Many former players went on to play at Point Loma High while two members of the 1963 Loma Portal Little League All-Star team, Jim Fuller and John Balaz, even went on to reach the majors in professional baseball.

All “alumni” of Loma Portal Little League are invited to attend the reunion and renew friendships with former teammates and coaches.

Thousands of area youngsters have begun their baseball experience at the Loma Portal Little League fields, pounding leather gloves, launching pitched balls, fielding fly balls and grounders, all while inhaling the memorable scent of fresh-cut grass.

Some of those original “Boys of Summer” are now entering their 70s, but the great memories of their baseball days make them seem like they took place yesterday.
Have you explored the hidden gems of Liberty Station?

Former Naval Training Center houses plenty of Instagram-worthy spots

Liberty Station is well-known for being a culinary and cultural hub, but did you know the neighborhood holds secrets that most locals don’t even know about? In addition to its well-known landmarks (Liberty Public Market, “Greetings from the U.S. Naval Training Station” postcard sign, The Lot) here are the top 11 hidden gems of the neighborhood, reflecting its history as the former Naval Training Center:

1.) Scout at Quarters D: Now a mercantile and garden show-room, Scout at Quarters D was once housing for naval officers in the 1900s. Arthur T. Emerson Jr. was the first to make himself at home in Quarters D — he reported as commanding officer. Scout Training Command and was known for being the youngest man in his Naval Academy class.

2.) Meaningful street names: All streets at Liberty Station are named after military heroes. For instance, Truxtun Road, one of the main roads of Liberty Station, is named after Thomas Truxtun, one of the first six commanders appointed to the new U.S. Navy by President George Washington.

3.) Holding cell: When it was a Naval Training Center, an old holding cell once stood where Liberty Station’s entrance gate is now.

4.) Luce Auditorium: What is now the entryway for The Lot, a modern luxury movie theatre, was once a stage for timeless icons. Opening in 1942, Luce Auditorium was the hot spot for sailors and their dates to listen to famous bands, per-formers and comedians. Some of the big names that took the stage were Nat King Cole, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and Tommy Dorsey.

5.) Movie set: When Liberty Station was a Naval Training Center, it was the set for several well-known movies including “Top Gun,” “Tars and Stripes” and “Hey Sailor.”

6.) U.S.S. Recruit: This naval ship, located in the South Point area of the neighborhood, earned its nickname of U.S.S. Neversail because it has never seen the open seas. An exact replica of what sailors could expect out on the ocean, the vessel remained on land for military training exercises.

7.) Library: The Naval Training Center’s old library is now the Corky McMillin Companies Event Center, managed by the Arts District.

8.) John and Alice Finn Plaza: John and Alice Finn Plaza was originally built in 1942 as a naval medical clinic. It was later dedicated and named after one of the first heroes of World War II and Medal of Honor recipient John W. Finn and his wife Alice.

9.) Enlisted Club: Now the location of signature restaurants like Soda & Swine and Slater’s 50/50, this area was once the Enlisted Club — built in 1941, it was the stomping grounds for sailors with a bowling alley, pool tables and a theater.

10.) Gymnasium: The Point Loma Sports Club location used to be a gymnasium utilized by the sailors. It included a basketball facility, gymnasium and fitness center.

11.) Hotel San Diego sign: The rooftop sign was taken down in 2005 before the downtown hotel was razed. The NTC Foundation bought the 47-by-14 foot sign and it now sits in the lawn behind Scout at Quarters D. The foundation is raising funds to restore the sign and use it as a centerpiece for their planned gardens.

More about Liberty Station

Liberty Station was built upon naval roots and was originally the Naval Training Center (NTC) that opened in 1923. NTC transitioned into Liberty Station and became a cultural hub of art, leisure and history — creating a timeless destination.

Today, Liberty Station is a San Diego signature neighborhood, inviting residents, the community and visitors to connect through events and experiences while discovering and exploring all of Liberty Station’s offerings. The neighborhood features an array of boutiques and shops, more than 70 local galleries in the Arts District, and dozens of delectable dining spots.

Built by design, Liberty Station creates an authentic experience — encompassing beautifully landscaped promenades, restored historic buildings that have been preserved for today’s commerce, storied corridors, historic landmarks, and spacious plazas. The historic San Diego destination is managed by the Liberty Station Community Association (LSCA), which works to maintain, beautify, promote, and develop the neighborhood.

More information about Liberty Station can be found at libertystation.com.
Point Loma Nazarene’s rugby club may be little, but they are fierce

Head coach Carlos Guerrero, who has been a part of the club since its founding in 2000, stated that about 75 percent of the players who join have no prior rugby experience. "They bring lots of energy," he said. "They make it to the national tournament for the third time in three years. To come this seems unusual, for the Point Loma Nazarene University club rugby team, this business is unusual. PLNU has 16 students, 10 of whom are members of the National Small College Rugby Organization. In the past, PLNU has been in Division III, but due to their repeat appearances at nationals, they were elevated to Division II and into the Cold Coast Conference.

This year will be a tough test for a team that consistently begins the season with little rugby knowledge or experience. Rugby is played with 15 players on a field, with a match spanning 80 minutes.

"[This season] we’ll have four or five men on the field who haven’t played," said Felipe Diaz, the PLNU club president. "I even knew that I was too good to try anything." Even in the qualified game, Chris Rich, who never played rugby before his freshman year, "I joined originally because when I heard about it I thought that it just be a fun thing to do," he said.

Friday, Feb. 16

Wine tasting in OB

Giannu Bonomo Vintners is hosting a wine tasting party in their tasting room (4836 Newport Ave.), at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 15th. The event will feature wines from Keith Rolle along with a bowl of Beef Bourguignon from To Beau French Kitchen. Guests will also receive a glass of each of the featured wines. Space is limited to only 50 guests and tickets cost $40.

Saturday, Feb. 17

Mardi Gras Gala

Featuring entertainment by ACME Rhythm & Blues Revue, guest artist Michael Holmes and student artist Francisco Rojas, the gala will go from 6 to 11 p.m. at Marina Village’s Seaside Room. The event will benefit St. Madeleine Sophie’s Center. Tickets are $55-$60.

Hunt for Dr. Bear

A scavenger hunt for Dr. Bear, the mascot for the American Academy of Pediatrics, will take place at various Station businesses. The first 10 children who spot each item at a different business, will receive a free book. Daily locations are posted on Facebook and Instagram. The Bear Hunt is free and open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Kid Ventures (2865 Sds Rd.). It also leads up to the annual Read & Romp on Feb. 24 at the McMillin Event Center (2875 Dewey Rd.) from 9 a.m. to noon.

Wednesday, Feb. 21

Republican women meeting

The monthly luncheon meeting will take place at the Famous Loma Cafe. 4865 Harbor Drive. Interim District Attorney Summer Stephens will be giving a presentation and a No Host lunch will follow the program.

Naval Base Point Loma advisory board meeting

The Complex Environmental Restoration Program’s RAB will host a regular meeting at 6 p.m. to discuss relevant issues at the Southwestern Yacht Club, 2702 Quietlawn. The meeting is open to the public.

Thursday, Feb. 15

Unique and funny stories

At 7 p.m., Ocean Beach historian Kittie McDaniel, Dedi Ridouan and Jonnie Wilson will share strange stories about the area. The stories at OB’s Wonderland Amusement Park as well as political happenings few residents knew about Water’s Edge Faith Community, 1984 Sun- set Cliffs Blvd.

American Cetacean Society hosts Dr. Jerry Kooyman

Kooyman will be giving a free presentation on the “Journey of Emperor Penguins: A resilience-based study in special conservation needs” at 7 p.m. at Summer Auditorium, Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

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