Goat kissing principal has the right gruff

Potential relocation site in De Anza Cove

By DAVE SCHWAB

The Pacific Beach Community Garden, which has existed for nearly 40 years at Roosevelt Avenue and Shasta Street, is no more.

As of Jan. 1, the new owners of the small urban agriculture plot, Pathfinder Partners LLC of La Jolla, a value investor managing opportunity funds, has taken possession of the parcel.

So the beach community, which has been preparing for this changeover for some time, is switching to Plan B — just as soon as a backup plan can be figured out.

“The drop-dead deadline (to vacate) was Dec. 31,” said Paula Ferraco, PB garden spokesperson and coordinator. “There are still some small plants in there, and some families are still harvesting the last of their crops, but we know the area will be bulldozed at some point.”

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Community Garden uprooted from Pacific Beach

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Mission Bay High students learn science by raising and releasing sea bass for Hubbs

By RONAN GRAY

Mission Bay High School seniors Alina Snyder and Pearl Moore break the glasslike surface of Mission Bay and pick their way into the cold water. Each holds a towel around her waist with one hand and the rope handle of a large laundry bucket suspended between them with the other hand. The girls reach knee-deep water and turn to face a group of 20 or so people watching from the shore.

Among the onlookers is Steve Walters, their biology teacher, who stands with Mike Shane of Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI). The two men watch as the students slowly tip over their bucket. Watching beneath the surface with a small camera connected to her phone, student Ciara Gray sees more than a dozen small fish swim free of the bucket and settle on the muddy bottom.

The fish are juvenile white sea bass, the largest of the California croakers and an important fish in the Southern California marine ecosystem. Although they are only a few inches long now, these fish could grow to be as much as 90 pounds and 5 feet in length over the next few years. In the mid-’70s, surveys showed that habitat and wetlands destruction had reduced the population to about 10 percent of what it once was.

In 1983, the California Department of Fish and Game began working with HSWRI to breed the fish from larvae to fingerling stage at the Carlsbad lagoon facility. From there, the fish are moved on to grow-out facilities located along the coast until they are ready to be released into the wild to restock the natural population.

Shane is the project leader for Sea Bass in the Classroom 2010, in which Walters’ biology classes at Mission Bay High have been participating since 2012. The program places some of the juvenile fish from the Hubs restocking program with classes in high schools for periods ranging from weeks to months.

Mission Bay High was one of the first schools to participate in the classroom program. Walters’ students care for the fish in a large tank in one of his classrooms and install microchips in their cheeks, using a syringe, before releasing them into the wild.

“‘This program gives the students a hands-on experience with chemistry, biology and core science technology engineering and math (STEM) subjects with real-world application of science that they are learning in the classroom,’” says Walters.

The Fish and Game Department has set up several locations in San Diego where fishermen can drop off the heads of any white sea bass they catch (hswri.org/media). The fish heads are stored in freezers until they can be collected and scanned for microchips embedded in their cheeks. This way, Hubbs and Fish and Game Department can determine if the fish was one from the program and tell where and when the fish was released.

Mission Bay High will receive its next batch of fish early in the new year, and Walters expects that they will release them in spring. More information about the program can be found at hswri.org/seabass-in-the-classroom/.

No one knows the local community like a local.

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climber Zapf looks to bring forth measures at her Smart Growth and Land Use Committee that would make housing more affordable for middle-class families and an update to the Mission Beach Master Plan.

"Finally, Councilwoman Zapf plans to support Mayor Faulconer with another fiscally responsible budget, including the repaving of over 1,000 miles of streets over the next several years and will remain a strong supporter of Proposition B-Pension Reform, which is allowing the City to reinvest millions of tax dollars back into our neighborhoods."

Sara Berns

Sara Berns, executive director of Discover PB, the community’s business improvement district, agreed that 2016 “holds a lot of promise for Pacific Beach.”

“We continue to see more businesses and developers interested in our area as Pacific Beach continues to grow and mature,” Berns said. “This upcoming year, we anticipate a year of collaboration and planning as the future of Pacific Beach is molded.”

With exciting opportunities such as the Mid-Coast Trolley and Climate Action Plan on the horizon, it is important that the community and the organizations that represent the neighborhood are at the forefront of planning and shaping the future of Pacific Beach.”

Berss added that Discover Pacific Beach “hopes to focus on the commercial corridor and advocating for a viable walking, biking and driving environment that will attract shoppers and customers for our businesses as they adjust to the future of transportation, parking and development.

Marcella Teran

Marcella Teran, a board member with Pacific Beach Town Council, talked about her community concerns for 2016.

“One of the biggest issues which negatively affects our single-family neighborhoods are the short-term vacation rentals,” Teran said. “They continue to grow, even though they are illegal in single-family neighborhoods. Also, the Deco Bike placements throughout our beaches: They take away business, parking and the beautiful view of our ocean in some areas.”

Heather Worms

On the school scene, Pacific Beach Elementary School parent Heather Worms said there are challenges to be — and overcome — this year.

“PB schools is continuing its big push to bring local kids back to the schools here in PB,” Worms said. “Over the last handful of years, the enrollment at the schools has continued to rise ... in part due to a higher percentage of families now living in the Pacific Beach area ... [We] are in the upswing of more families moving in and/or staying in the community.

“You can see it with the increased registrations of local sports leagues such as Pacific Youth Soccer League (from 700 to over 1,000 in three years) and youth youth baseball. We have many more participants from the 92109 zip code than we did five or six years ago.”

Karin Zirk

Karin Zirk, a volunteer with Friends of Rose Creek, an environmental watchdog group dedicated to preserving, restoring and interpreting the creek’s importance, expects 2016 to be a big year for her group and the coastal environment.

“Our vision is for lower Rose Creek to be an open-space park providing recreational and learning opportunities and a clean, healthy, aesthetically pleasing environment for residents, visitors, businesses and native plants and animals while serving as an accessible link for bicyclists and pedestrians to move between Rose Canyon Park, Markham Park and Mission Bay Park and surrounding communities,” Zirk said.

“The Friends of Rose Creek are excited to be part of all the amazing projects that are happening in and around Rose Creek in 2016 and beyond, including the De Anza Revitalization Plan, ReWild Mission Bay, the Rose Creek Bikeway, the Mid-Coast Trolley and the Balboa Avenue Station area-specific plans.”

Zirk noted that Friends is “thrilled about the support from Mayor Faulconer’s office as we work towards creating Lower Rose Creek Park and look forward to making substantial progress this year.

In 2016, we hope more of the Pacific Beach and Clairemont communities will spend time at the creek and enjoy bird watching, photography, nature painting, bike riding, walking and/or the Native Plant Garden behind the Rose Creek Cottage. We loved to see more police presence along the creek to encourage the public to enjoy this precious natural resource.”

Zirk is looking forward to what she’d like to see happen with the creek in 2016.

Tony Franco

PB commercial real estate broker Tony Franco, president of Franco Realty Group, said that in order to understand where we are going in 2016, we have to see what has been accomplished in 2015.

“For the apartment sector, there were only 15 apartment buildings that sold in 2015 compared to 25 apartments in 2014 and 25 in 2013,” Franco said. “For the retail/office sector, there were an outstanding 20 retail properties that sold in 2015 and only seven properties in 2014 and five properties in 2013.”

Franco noted interest rates were around 4 percent for commercial properties in 2015 and are expected to significantly rise in 2016. “Thus, prices are going to soften for commercial real estate,” Franco said, adding, “CAP rates (also known as return on investment) for apartment buildings were around 4 percent in 2015 and will likely reach 4.5 percent to 5 percent in 2016. CAP rates for retail and office buildings were around 6 percent in 2015 and will likely reach 6.5 percent in 2016.”

Brian Curry

Brian Curry, chair of Pacific Beach Planning Group, is enthused about the prospects for the beach community in 2016.

“There are some incredible things planned for PB,” Curry said, adding, “Most of all is on paper right now, but the next few years will witness dramatic positive changes for our community.

“We are currently in the public input stages for redevelopment of DeAnza Cove and the Balboa Transit Specific Plan between Interstate 5 and Rose Creek. We are also working with SANDAG on potential public transit options from the proposed Balboa Transit Station and the beach.”

Curry noted the YMCA is currently conducting a feasibility study for the proposed YMCA at the PB Middle School and that the planning group hopes to launch a fundraising campaign by yearend.

“A grant was funded to conduct a feasibility study for the PB Park west of Mission Boulevard between PB Drive and Grand Avenue,” Curry said. “We are continuing our efforts to have the Deco Bikes stations relocated off of our boardwalk.

“And a result of the initial recommendations of the Pacific Beach Planning Group, the San Diego City Council will be taking action to regulate and hopefully rein in the rapid expansion of short-term vacation rentals in our residential neighborhoods.

“Finally,” said Curry, “the EcoDistrict principals adopted by all of our community groups will continue to provide guidelines for implementing sustainable community design and lifestyle for Pacific Beach residents.”

"This upcoming year, we anticipate a year of collaboration and planning as the future of Pacific Beach is molded."

SARA BERNS DISCOVER PB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARCELLA TERAN PB TOWN COUNCIL MEMBER

HEATHER WORMS PB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT

KAREN ZIRK FRIENDS OF ROSE CREEK

Property tax relief is available for flood damage

Ernie Dronenburg, county assessor/recorder/clerk, advises all property owners whose property was damaged or destroyed during the recent flooding that property tax relief is available.

“I would like to strongly encourage all property owners who suffered flood damage to their property in excess of $10,000 to contact my office for the necessary claim form at (619) 531-4993 or by visiting www.sdarc.org.,” Dronenburg said. This program requires the reassessment of the property to reflect its damaged condition. The reduced value will remain in effect until such time as the property is rebuilt or repaired.

More important, after the property is rebuilt or repaired, the owners can retain their previous taxable value if the property is rebuilt in a similar manner.
Bike thefts are a major problem in the beach communities be proactive to prevent them

By NICOLE SOURS LARSON

If your bike's been stolen, you're not alone. More than 10,000 bikes were stolen in San Diego from January of 2012 through June of 2015. The beach communities led the pack, with an average 30 thefts a month, according to SDPD's Northern Division. Who are the thieves? A mix of professional bike thieves equipped with bolt-cutters, tools and keys, drug addicts funding their habits and opportunistic homeless grabbing a casually stowed bike, explained SDPD officer Dan Neifer, who runs the bike program for Northern Division's Beach Team. While bike thefts are common, most are preventable. More stolen bikes could be returned to owners with a few preventative measures, Neifer explained. While any lock, no matter how tough, can be defeated with the right tools, a stronger lock securing both frame and wheels to an immovable object slows thieves down.

If you have to leave your bike, leave it in a well-traffic-ed and lit area, such as at the new bike racks Discover PB installed near busy bars, where few bicycles have disappeared. Never leave a bike overnight, Neifer said, because thieves "go shopping" after the bars close, picking up stolen bikes they've "cooled down" in nearby neighborhoods, locking them temporarily to signposts.

Most people don't know their bike's serial number, officers report. Without a recorded serial number, they have no way of returning a recovered bike. Serial numbers are stamped into the bike's underside, where the pedestrian connect to the frame. Most responsible bike shops include serial numbers on receipts when they sell them, explained Michelangelo—who prefers a single name—of Bicycle Discovery, located at 742 Felspar St., Pacific Beach. They can look up serial numbers in case of theft.

A good local bike shop can help you select the best lock for your needs. While Cheap Rentals, located at 3689 Mission Blvd., mainly rents bikes equipped with cables and padlocks, it also sells a wide selection of bicycle locks. David Jackson of Cheap Rentals recommends a heavy U-lock for greater security. U-locks, Jackson explained, come in different sizes, weights and strength, with keys or combination locks. Some are harder to cut, but all can be smashed with a sledgehammer. Tougher still is an encased heavy-link steel chain lock. Wherever you leave your bike, even inside your garage, lock it up to prevent theft.

Jackson suggests investing in a Bluetooth tracker Tile, enabling owners to locate Tile-equipped objects via a smartphone app. The device, about 1.5 inches square and sold online, is concealable in a bike frame or seat. Avid cyclist Mike Waters of Mission Beach took a different route. While he owns locks, he painted his bike to make it look unappealing. He also disables his bike by inserting a small metal rod (a trimmed nail) into the brake lever, which once prevented its theft.

Keep a photo of your bike along with its serial number. If it's stolen, notify police and look on Craigslist. "If people find their bikes on Craigslist, we'll do an undercover buy for them," Neifer said.

The bait bike program is also proving a success, with a 10 percent reduction in bike thefts since its introduction.

27 Easy tips to get thousands more for your home

By NICOLE SOURS LARSON

SAN DIEGO. Because your home may well be your largest asset, selling it is probably one of the most important decisions you will make in your life. And once you have made that decision, you'll want to sell your home for the highest price in the shortest time possible without compromising your sanity. Before you place your home on the market, here is a way to help you to be prepared as possible.

To assist home sellers, a new industry report has just been released called "27 Tips to Get Your Home Sold Fast and For Top Dollar." It tackles the important issues you need to know to make your home competitive in today's tough, aggressive marketplace.

In this report you'll discover how to avoid financial disaster when selling your home. Using a common-sense approach you will get straight facts about what can make or break the sale of your home. You owe it to yourself to learn how these important tips will give you the competitive edge to get your home sold fast and for the most amount of money.

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Pacific Beach Town Council Open House

Meet the people and groups working to help Pacific Beach realize its full potential at the Pacific Beach Town Council Community Open House 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 20 at Crown Point Junior Music Academy Auditorium, 4033 Ingraham St.

These groups and more will be representing, Wally Audubon, Friends of Mission Bay Marshes, Kiwanis, PB Women's Club, PB Town Council, Discover PB, beautifulPB, PB Planning Group, and local schools.

Pacific Beach is a community blessed with natural wonders and a destination for visitors from all over San Diego and the world. Connect with the people who share your vision for Pacific Beach, and work together to make it happen.

The reason this Community Open House is so important is that it will give local residents a chance to know what the community has to offer. So many people live here and aren't aware of all these opportunities to make their lives better.

Sewage spill closes Mission Bay beaches

Beaches at East Mission Bay and Tecolote Creek have been closed after a landslide triggered an estimated 108,000-gallon sewage spill discovered the morning of Jan. 10.

The County Department of Environmental Health has posted signs warning the public of sewage contamination at various points along the beaches, which stretch from the Fiesta Island bridge north to the visitors center at Clairemont Drive.

The sewage spill was discovered at 9 a.m. Jan. 10 in Tecolote Canyon adjacent to Mt. Ashmun Drive in San Diego, where a landslide caused a main sewer line to break. The spill entered Tecolote Creek and flowed through Tecolote Golf Course before entering east Mission Bay just north of the Fiesta Island land bridge. The spill was stopped at 6 p.m. Jan. 10.

Warning signs will remain in place until water samples confirm that contamination levels decrease. For more information, visit the Beach Water Quality website or call the 24-hour hotline at (619) 338-2073.

Public workshop for De Anza Revitalization Plan on Jan. 28

The next public workshop in planning for the De Anza Revitalization Plan will be Thursday, Jan. 28 at 6:30 p.m. at Mission Bay High School, 2475 Grand Ave.

A mini-workshop on a "reimagining" for the 120-acre project area, which includes a special study area in the Mission Bay Master Plan surrounding the area to the north and east, including ball fields, the Mission Bay Golf Course and portions of De Anza Cove, was held Dec. 9. Consultants then broke ad hoc committees into two small groups to brainstorm ideas on recreation, the environment and land use and activity in the park.

Seven questions committee members came up with Dec. 9 included the need to balance park uses with available open space; consider creating an info/interpretive center; the need to do a hydrology (water) study; encourage ecologically oriented recreation; find ways to protect and enhance the natural environment; create more pedestrian and nonmotorized vehicle connectivity within the park; allow coastal marshes to grow back naturally; and re-establish a connection between the park area and Rose Creek.

The workshop will provide information about the project such as background on the boundary and purpose of the project, an overview of the project process and timeline and end products.

The workshop will be conducted in an "open house" format, with opportunities for public input at "topic stations." Each topic station will have short presentations on focused topics, such as natural resources, transportation, existing uses, recreation and graphics to gather initial input on key issues and priorities. The project website, deanza-revitalizationplan.com/, will be updated as the planning process progresses.

The effort to redevelop the regional park was delayed by a complicated "arm wrestling" battle between the city and residents of the 500-unit De Anza Cove Resort mobile home park, a 75-acre park on prime real estate jutting into the water in Mission Bay Park west of I-5.

Senior Lifestyle >>

Right Choice Senior Living

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Huge waves knock over iconic Windansea's Shack, but it will be rebuilt

By DAVE SCHWAB

The Shack will be back.

Only it likely won’t be until spring and the departure of the winter storms.

In the wake of a Christmas eve monster wave that quite literally took the legs out from under it, Windansea Beach’s iconic, thatch-covered landmark is on track to a comeback, thanks to the efforts of volunteers.

According to at least one account, “a mother of a wave” during an early-morning high tide Dec. 24, with 4- to 6-foot surf, crashed down on the historically designated beach icon, hobbling one of the four upright pillars supporting it.

Melinda Merryweather, spokesperson for Friends of Windansea, a local nonprofit group of volunteers who maintain the Shack, said the next big project ahead is “to get the shack back up at the beach. That looks to be the end of March or the beginning of April. We want to wait until after the (winter) storms.”

“Shack Project” volunteer group had to take the legs out from under it, Winansea Beach’s iconic, thatch-covered landmark is on track to a comeback, thanks to the efforts of volunteers.

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Start the new year right with Essentrics – an essential exercise for holistic health

By DAVE SCHWAB

Adherents of Essentrics, a full-body exercise program being taught in Pacific Beach, say it’s a healing process that works wonders.

Essentrics dynamically stretches and strengthens every muscle in the body, rebalancing the muscular structure in continuous rotational movements.

“People feel like you have to kill yourself to get in shape — and you don’t,” said Alesia Stanford, a certified instructor who teaches hour-long Essentrics classes three times weekly at Dancing Together Studio, 2180 Garnet Ave. “This is a program that not only helps you stay in shape, but it heals your body.”

Stanford noted Essentrics was started by Miranda Esmonde-White, a former ballerina who developed the physical training regimen after sustaining an injury that curtailed her career. After her injury, Esmonde-White began experimenting with different fitness practices, which she eventually blended into her new hybrid training style.

“She started incorporating ballet principles, tai chi and physical therapy into it, which is why it’s such a healing process,” said Stanford, who first became acquainted with the program watching it on “Aging Backwards,” a TV special shown on KPBS.

Stanford said Essentrics is cutting edge because it “uses all the muscles in your body. Not just a few.”

“When you’re stretching up like this (demonstrating), you use every muscle on that side of your body,” Stanford said, adding, “What this does is it opens up your whole body. You use muscles you didn’t even know existed. You work on whole muscle chains rather than isolating and working on particular muscles.”

Many who’ve tried Essentrics swear by it.

“People feel like you have to kill yourself to get in shape — and you don’t,” said Stanford. “That’s more important for an older body than anything.”

Gilbert added Essentrics is good because it stretches rather than shortens the muscles, enhancing flexibility.

Teri Newlee of La Jolla, a former runner, said Essentrics is just about the only physical workout she’s tried that she has enjoyed and can stick with.

“I wanted to lengthen and look taller, and honestly, I think it’s working,” said Newlee. “And I enjoy it so much.”

Newlee added she likes Essentrics workouts because “you don’t do anything too long so you never get bored.”

Stanford said Essentrics was found it very helpful after her initial physical therapy, and she continues to participate in Essentrics workouts for about a year.

“I’ve had two shoulder surgeries, three back surgeries and, a year ago, double-hip replacements,” said Scott Chipman. “This dynamic stretch helps me keep limber, regain flexibility and improve muscle tone. I’ve been exercising with carrots for more than 20 years, but I realized as I grew older that I needed stretching,” said Paulina Gilbert during a recent class with Stanford. “That’s more important than turning 20.”

Newlee noted Sarah Chipman, who along with husband Scott has been participating in Essentrics workouts for about a year.

“I can put my pants on without sitting down,” said Pacific Beach resident Sarah Chipman, who along
Mission Bay High
- College admissions workshops at Mission Bay High School: 6 to 7:30 p.m., Jan. 14 in the MBHS library. PSAT Return Night – a workshop for parents explaining PSAT results, SAT/ACT information, early college admission planning information materials and suggested activities.

Pacific Beach Middle
- Join friends and neighbors at the Pacific Beach Middle School auditorium to enjoy Pacific Beach students perform in a Missoula Children’s Theatre adaptation of “Pinocchio.” Showtimes are 3 and 5 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 16. Admission is free, and all ages are welcome.

Kate Sessions
- FOKS is seeking donations from the community and local businesses for its annual spring auction. This event is its largest fundraiser of the year; all proceeds directly support the art, music, library and Spanish programs. Contact Sessionsauction@gmail.com to donate or become a sponsor. Online auction to be held in March; live event is March 19.

Mission Bay Cluster
- The Schoolyard Dash 5K and Mission Bay Cluster Schools Fair is 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 31, at De Anza Cove. Register as an individual or sign up with a team to make sure you get the cool T-shirt, logo cinch sack filled with goodies and a light breakfast. Even if you don’t want to register for the race, no problem. You can make a straight tax-deductible donation at schoolyarddash.org.
- The Mission Bay Cluster Schools Fair immediately follows the race at 9:30 a.m. and will highlight all of the public schools in Pacific Beach. Visit school and community booths, including the YMCAs, with exciting games and giveaways, Chips Beach Eats Food Truck, and enjoy a morning of music entertainment.

FOPBSS
- Friends of Pacific Beach Secondary Schools meeting, 6 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 27, PBMS library. FOPBSS invites any parent, teacher, administrator and community member to attend the monthly meetings. Come join us in our efforts to enhance the educational experience of the students from PBMS and MBHS. Find out first-hand what’s happening and how you can get involved.

St. Paul’s Lutheran
- Two students from St. Paul’s Lutheran School in Pacific Beach are sponsoring a fundraiser 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 23, at the Mad Beet, 933 Garnet Ave., for Rovers Retreat, a dog adoption agency. Together with Mad Beet, they hope to raise money for this worthy cause.

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Blues singer Candye Kane returns to Tio Leo’s on Jan. 23.

**PHOTO CONTRIBUTED**

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**Annual Blessing of the Animals set at Old Town on Jan. 17**

Old Town San Diego State Historic Park will host the seventh annual Blessing of the Animals on Sunday, Jan. 17, from 1 to 3 p.m. Rev. Richard Perea of the Immaculate Conception Church will be blessing the pets. Admission is free.

The event has taken place in Old Town for more than 300 years. In San Diego’s past, the annual Benediction of the Beasts celebrated St. Anthony of the Desert, the Patron Saint of Animals.

The event will include adoption opportunities from various rescue groups and educational information on rescuing, rehabilitation and supporting the animals. A pet costume contest will take place at 2:30 p.m. featuring prizes for several categories, including best dressed and best pet-owner look-alike.

For more information, call (619) 297-3100.
San Diego winter boat show returns to Sunroad Marina Jan. 21-24

By NICOLE SOURS LARSON

Despite this year's El Niño rains, with the imminent debut of the San Diego Sunroad Boat Show on Harbor Island, it's time for boaters to start thinking and dreaming about the upcoming spring and summer boating season.

The 26-year-old winter boat show, with larger-than-ever in-the-water displays and now in its seventh year at Sunroad, kicks off on Thursday, Jan. 21 and runs through Sunday, Jan. 25 at Sunroad Resort Marina, located at 955 Harbor Island Drive, at Harbor Island's east end. Show hours are noon to 6 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The show offers guests the chance to experience more than 150 sail and powerboats in every price range, style and size, from trailerable boats and inflatables to yachts over 90 feet, explained show director Jim Behun, who doubles as the marina's general manager. The show is about equally split between sail and power models, with “first looks” available for many newly introduced boats. Self-propelled vessels, such as kayaks and SUPs, will also be exhibited.

“Because it’s the first boat show of the new year, dealers are eager to introduce their latest models at the show,” Behun explained.

Among the dealers showing new powerboat models are South Coast Yachts, showing the Bénéteau Grand Turismo 46; Sun Country Marine, introducing Searay’s high-speed L650 Fly and 480 Fly; and Art Brooks Sea Company, exhibiting the Johnson 65. West Coast Multihulls is introducing the Fontaine Pajot Helia 44 sailing catamaran. Another trend Behun has noticed is that financing is now readily available. Many people are buying new boats, he said, another indication that the Great Recession is mostly behind us.

Boating education will again play a significant role. On Saturday and Sunday, the pavilion will host seminars on subjects, including high-speed Internet for boats, green boating and nonskid surfaces. Representatives from 12 Mexican marinas and boatyards will be on hand explaining their available facilities and amenities and will present seminars on Mexican boating, as will Capt. Pat Raines, author of “Mexico Boating Guide.”

Along the docks, Seaforth Boat Rentals will provide sailboat and electric boat rides for the entire family.

Unlike many boat shows, the Sunroad show offers new and brokerage boats in the water. The show’s exhibits under a festive tent include more than 100 vendors offering wide-ranging marine services, electronics, products, supplies and accessories.

Show tickets are $12, with children 12 and under admitted free. Active-duty military, police, EMTs and fire personnel with ID are admitted free Thursday and Friday.

Because of crowded docks, show staff ask guests to leave pets and strollers at home, with service animals always welcome.

Paid parking is available next to the Sheraton Hotel, with shuttle service provided. Sunroad’s Island Deli and food trucks will offer varied menus, all to the accompaniment of steel drums. The adjacent Island Prime/C Level Lounge and Coastera Restaurant will provide alternate dining options.

For latest details on seminars and exhibitors, visit bigbayboatshow.com or call (619) 497-5254.

I just arrived in the nicest city in the U.S.

By HANNA LAUKKANEN

Last May, I decided that I want to see and experience something other than my home country of Finland and my home office at a local newspaper. I decided that I want to travel somewhere warm, and I was eager to improve my English, so I decided to travel to San Diego from my hometown of Nurmes, about 310 miles east of Helsinki – a Finnish friend said it is the nicest city in the U.S. so why not give it a try.

With help from the German-American Chamber of Commerce, I started to plan my trip and my internship – and after six months and an 11-hour flight on Jan. 6, here I am, at San Diego Community Newspaper Group, starting my four-month internship. I’m excited, and I hope I can learn a lot about journalism and the United States.

I graduated from the University of Tampere (second biggest university in Finland) last March and wanted to improve my knowledge of what journalism is like abroad. The U.S. is a great place for comparison, because freedom of speech here is quite equal to that in Finland.

I’ve been a working and student journalist for 10 years, and I truly think I have found a career that I really enjoy. The best part of the job is meeting people with different backgrounds and trying to understand why they see world as they do. I also love writing and want to develop my style so that in the future people would also like to read my novel(s).

Journalism in Finland is in the same kind of adolescent phase as in the U.S. and all over the world. If I knew how to get people under 30 to read news and pay for it, I would have millions of dollars. Somehow, we journalists have to burst the bubble of not-so-modern and inflexible journalism and make something so amazing and super-fun that people simply can’t live without it. I personally love news that includes video, because videos give so much more information about the subject. You, dear reader, can help us. Tell us: What do you want to read about in your community newspaper? What excites you and makes your blood flow faster? Whose interview would you like to read? Tweet, post an Instagram photo, email or send us a card or call. We want to know.

I will continue having a nice time in San Diego and hope to meet you all in my four-month adventure! Tavataan pian (“see you soon” in Finnish)!

(Editor’s note: Hanna Laukkainen is a winter-spring intern at San Diego Community Newspaper Group. Her email address is toimittajalaukka-nen@gmail.com.)
The City of San Diego’s Environmental Services Department is hosting its 42nd annual Christmas tree recycling program, which will run through Jan. 23. This year’s program offers 16 tree drop-off locations available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. all days through Jan. 1, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Jan. 2 and from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Jan. 3. Each location will accept up to 700 trees. Tree recycling helps reduce the amount of material sent to the landfill and give holiday trees a new purpose as compost, mulch or wood chips.

Residents can recycle their Christmas trees seven days a week at no charge. Only “clean” trees are accepted—residents must remove all non-recyclable materials, such as pine needles and non-recyclable materials and must not dump any other items at the locations. Trees from commercial tree lots or fundraising projects are not accepted at the drop-off locations. These trees can be dropped off anytime during regular business hours at the Miramar Greenery for a nominal fee.

In addition to clean trees, flocked trees (those with fake snow) are also accepted. If you are transporting your Christmas tree in a plastic bag for drop-off, please be sure to remove any decorations and flocked trees can be recycled as well. All trees will be recycled into high-quality mulch and compost. City residents can self-load mulch and up to two cubic yards of compost for free at the Miramar Greenery throughout the year.

Curbside yard waste recycling customers can also recycle trees through the curbside collection program by placing trees at the curb with their regular yard waste recycling bin. Customers maintaining automated greenery containers must cut up their trees into roughly three-foot pieces to fit easily inside their greenery container. Customers unable to cut their trees for manual collection or who cannot fit the trees into the green automated container should drop off their trees at any drop-off location. Curbside recycling program customers should remove all non-recyclable materials before placing trees inside the automated bin or at the curb next to yard waste collection containers.

The Miramar Greenery is located inside the Miramar Landfill, at 5180 Convoy St., just north of Highway 52. Hours of operation are Monday through Fridays, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, Sundays and most holidays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Additional information about the locations is available by calling Environmental Services Department at (858) 569-7000. For information on mulch and compost produced at the Miramar Greenery, call the Miramar Landfill at (858) 492-6100. The drop-off location list includes: Encanto: Cielo Drive at Woodman Street; Golden Hill: Golden Hill Recreation Center, 2600 Golf Course Drive; La Jolla: Kate Sessions Memorial Park, Soledad Road and Loring Street; Logan Heights: Memorial Recreation Center, 2902 Marcy Avenue; Miramar: Miramar Landfill at Greenery, Convoy Street north of Highway 52; Mission Bay: Seaworld Drive at Pacific Highway; Oak Park: Chollas Lake, 6350 College Grove Drive, in Gorton’s Mesa parking lot; Ocean Beach: Robb Field Recreation Center, 2525 Bacon St.; Otay Mesa/Residential/commercial: Chula Vista Community Park (Several parking lot on Palm Avenue); Rancho Bernardo: Rancho Bernardo Recreation Center, 184-48 W. Bernardo Dr.; Rancho Peñasquitos: Canyonside Park, 12350 Black Mountain Road; San Diego State University: Parking Lot 0 off Alvarado Road.
SeaWorld’s Dolphin Stadium to be renovated; will reopen in April

On Jan. 11, a three-month major rehabilitation project will begin at San Diego SeaWorld’s Dolphin Stadium in Mission Bay. In the interim, special dolphin presentations will be offered at the park’s interaction pools at Dolphin Point.

Dolphin Stadium, which seats more than 3,500 guests, was originally built in 1975. Over the last four decades, the stadium has been home to the park’s killer whales and eventually dolphins and pilot whales. It has been the venue for many shows, most recently Dolphin Days.

The rehabilitation project is a significant infrastructure maintenance investment and will include draining all the pools and re-coating them. The Dolphin Days show can be seen through Sunday (Jan. 10) and will resume when the stadium re-opens in April. The dolphins and pilot whales that currently call Dolphin Stadium home will live in other pools at the park during the project.

For park hours and more information, visit www.SeaWorldSanDiego.com or call (800) 257-4268.
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