

PRESIDIO SENTINEL

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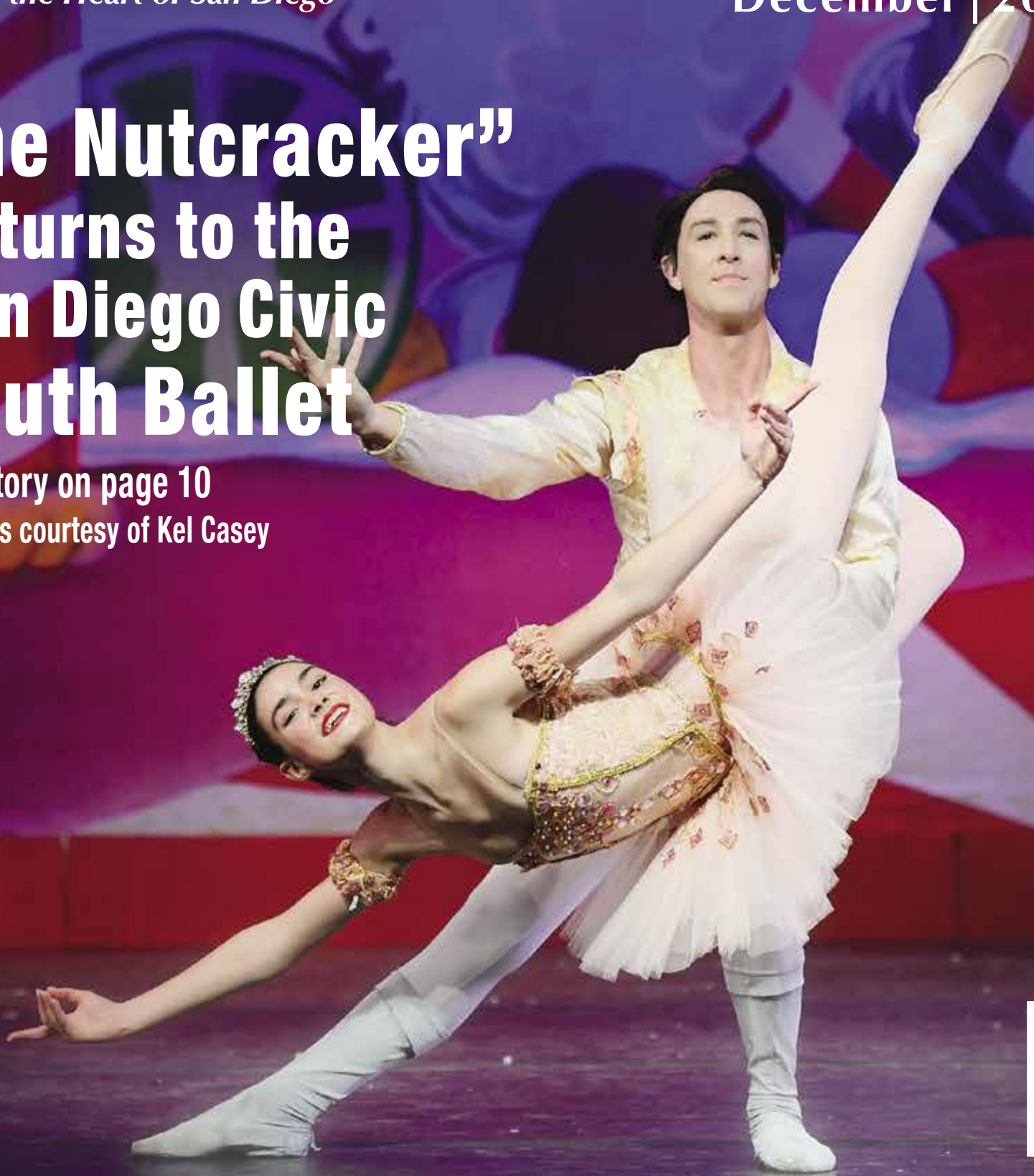
Serving the Heart of San Diego

December | 2022

“The Nutcracker” Returns to the San Diego Civic Youth Ballet

See story on page 10

Photo is courtesy of Kel Casey



Digital Copy



Christmas Carol Camp Offered at
Mission Hills United Church of Christ

2



Comic-Con Museum Celebrates
One-Year Anniversary

3



Jungle Bells Will Be Ringing This
Holiday Season at the San Diego Zoo

9



Celebrate the Season
in Wild Style

11



Franklin Elementary STEAM Magnet Program Continues to Progress 4



Birch Aquarium and Cincinnati Zoo Join Forces to Bolster Little Blue Penguins 5



Light: LITVAKdance and Yale Strom's Broken Consort 3



Annual 'Share the Love' Food Truck Event 6



Thank You Mission Hills for 2022 8



Chevron Station Drastically Slashed Gas Prices 12



The Dickens' Mash-Up and Music-Filled Comedy Hit Returns 10



64th Annual Las Posadas Takes Place at Heritage Park 14

Featured Stories

Featured Events

Building A House on a Stack of Marbles

By Patty Ducey-Brooks



Recently I was sharing a thought with a friend of mine. I asked, "Would you build a house on a stack of marbles?" She laughed and said, "Of course not; who would?"

Ironically, I said, that's what appears to be happening around us in the City and County of San Diego. Our elected officials seem to be going with the concept that we don't need a solid foundation to build on. And I am not just referring to construction or building houses.

This relates to the homeless situation, which is running rampant, as well as proposed developments all over the City of San Diego.

We have Seaport Village, which is going to require over \$500 million in infrastructure improvements for the developer to complete his project.

Then there's another \$500 million to a billion for the Midway and NAVWAR in Old Town developments to occur.

So, we're looking at close to \$2 billion in infrastructure upgrades for these future intended developments.

And guess where that money comes from? Taxpayers. You and me.

Yet, that never seems to be a part of the conversation, nor the marketing campaigns and slogans used by our elected officials to promote these developments.

Again, it's a foundation of marbles that is constantly moving and will never be totally secure.

They also rely on outdated and inflated data regarding the housing crisis, that's according to the state auditor's office. In other words, if we lie to the public enough times, they will begin to believe us.

Fortunately, some of us don't believe the lies and the deceit.

Which is why, despite a city of elected officials who are standing on marbles, we have intelligent and thoughtful members of the community constantly working behind the scenes to bring logic to this crazy scenario.

I applaud all of them for their dedication and hard work.

These are people who aren't receiving a dime for their efforts. These are devoted volunteers who are working to protect the citizens of San Diego from bad politics and bad business investments.

Some of the groups that deserve recognition include Neighbors for a Better San Diego, Uptown for All, Save San Diego's Access and Save San Diego's Character.

By the way, during the holiday season, a lot of these groups and individuals don't take time off. They continue to work tirelessly to make a difference and to protect our communities from those who seem to prefer

working on unsolid ground.

That's including three neighbors in Mission Hills who have been meeting with Councilman Whitburn's office on the homeless encampments in Presidio Park and surrounding communities. The most recent meeting included upward of 25 individuals representing the San Diego Fire Department, San Diego Parks & Recreation Department, Homeless Strategy Solutions Department, and other city staff. Fortunately, the three neighbors took a strong stance on the seriousness of the issue and are demanding change.

However, as you might expect, none of the city staff members, nor any of the other individuals, could offer an explanation for an encampment on City Park property that is now becoming an environmental health hazard. No one among the group was willing to take responsibility for the encampment, nor its removal.

As you might expect, another meeting with city officials is to take place to "discuss" a resolution.

As I stated, our city officials operate on a marble foundation that is totally without structure and merit.

That's why I am truly grateful for the volunteers in our community who aren't willing to give up or give in on some very important issues that deserve serious and solid information, not a moving platform.

We should all be thankful for them.



A homeless encampment on City Park property has been evolving for the past couple of months. Environmental health issues are a big concern.

Four small paintings of birds in winter settings. Top left: A purple and white bird perched on a snow-covered branch against a grey, snowy background. Top right: A red cardinal perched on a branch against a dark, grey background. Bottom left: A red cardinal perched on a branch against a light purple and grey background. Bottom right: A blue jay perched on a branch against a dark, green background.

St. Madeleine Sophie's Center (SMSC), a nonprofit organization, educates and empowers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to realize their full potential. Today, SMSC provides work training and social experiences that encourage students to become well-rounded, contributing members of the greater community. The Center also strives to educate the community about the realities of intellectual and developmental disabilities, such as Down syndrome, autism, and cerebral palsy. It employs over 120 staff members and is served by more than 150 dedicated volunteers. A fleet of some 45 paratransit vans and buses transports students between home, campus, and work sites, five days a week. For more information, visit www.stmsc.org.

Sophie's Gallery & Gift Shop, operated by St. Madeleine Sophie's Center, is hosting the Wings & Snow: Dreams Take Flight holiday art show from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, December 9 at the gallery in Downtown El Cajon (140 E. Main Street, El Cajon, CA 92020).

**Please register via (bit.ly/3FZo3ut) or email Artcel Ruiz,
director of Ministry with Children and Families,
at artcel.ruiz@missionhillsucc.org.**



Christmas carols continue to allow children of all ages to share in a special holiday tradition.



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Comic-Con Museum Celebrates One Year Anniversary as Year-Round Popular Arts Headquarters

San Diego Comic Convention’s Comic-Con Museum, showcasing comics and popular arts, celebrates its first anniversary as year-round extension of the premier celebration of its kind in the world, Comic-Con International. Since its opening on November 26, 2021, the San Diego-based Museum has welcomed tens of thousands of visitors to explore its immersive exhibits and expand their fandoms.

“The Comic-Con Museum is building its origin story. One year in, we’ve had great success with the premiere of ‘Marvel’s Spider-Man: Beyond Amazing – The Exhibition,’ the launch of our Makerspace workshops and more,” said Comic-Con Museum executive director Rita Vandergaw. “Soon, we’ll be announcing next year’s exhibits and attractions, as well as our education experiences.”

Aligning to the mission of San Diego Comic Convention, the museum’s plan to expand their reach includes access for everyone. The Museum’s Education Center and School Access Fund will assist in defraying costs for field trips for San Diego County’s Title 1 schools, expanding dedicated learning spaces in the Museum and increasing its capacity to deliver dynamic, immersive educational opportunities for learners of all ages. To support the fund, those interested can donate directly or become a member at comic-con.org/museum/support. The Museum’s new membership program has various levels that include unlimited general admission, exhibit preview events and other benefits.

In addition to its featured exhibits, members and visitors can attend special programming, free with Museum admission, including a



Museum members and visitors can attend special programming, free with admission.

panel and book signing with “Hemingway in Comics” author Robert K. Elder at the Museum on Saturday, Dec. 17 at 1 p.m. The title matches the exhibit of the same name that explores a collection of comic art from around the world featuring iconic author Ernest Hemingway or his stories alongside Mickey Mouse, Albert Einstein, Death and more – perfect for those with an appreciation for comics, pop culture and the absurd.

Next year, the Museum’s three floors will display all-new exhibits, to be announced in December 2022, and debut an Education Center that will serve as a learning hub for field trips, a classroom for comic creators to teach their

art, a comic book reading lounge offering free, donated comic books and more.

The Comic-Con Museum will be open through January 3, 2023 with its current exhibits, including “Marvel’s Spider-Man: Beyond Amazing – he Exhibition,” the PAC-MAN Arcade, “Hemingway in Comics,” Comic-Con Masquerade exhibit, and Feeding San Diego’s Hunger Action Heroes, along with hands-on Makerspace workshops. The Museum will be closed temporarily beginning January 4 to install new exhibits and will reopen February 4. Tickets to the museum can be purchased in advance at www.comic-con.org/museum.

Light: LITVAKdance and Yale Strom’s Broken Consort

At 7 p.m., Sunday, December 18, LITVAKdance, Yale Strom, and Elyssa Dru Rosenberg “Light,” present a new kind of winter production that honors the diverse histories and practices of our

communities. The event takes place at the David & Dorothea Garfield Theatre of the Lawrence Family JCC, located at 4126 Executive Drive in La Jolla.

Immediately following the performance

of Light, Yale Strom and his all-star ensemble of musicians will perform Shimmering Lights, a celebration of the holiday of lights from around the Jewish world.



Left to right are Jeff Pekarek, Sara Caswell, Alex Greenbaum, Fred Benedetti, David Wallace, Yale Strom, Elizabeth Schwartz, Amos Hoffman who will perform during Light. Photo is courtesy of Brian Blue.

Do You Use Venmo?

By Rick Brooks



Earlier this year, I took a trip with some friends. We did some sightseeing, went to some fantastic restaurants, and overall had a great time together. As we travelled, it was easier for one of us to pick up the bill for dinner or the hotel than to split it on four credit cards or try to wrangle that much cash, so the payment processing app Venmo became a really easy solution. We could use the app to tell each other that each of us owed \$50 for dinner and so on, and then we could each process the payment through Venmo with a couple of quick taps and the money transferred. Other systems do this, too, but Venmo was the one we used.

So an article on CNBC recently caught my attention. It was reminding Venmo users that starting this year, Venmo would be required by law to issue a 1099 to users who processed more than \$600 in transactions on the app. Say WHAT!?

Tucked into the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 was a provision requiring third-party payment processing services like PayPal, Venmo and others (oddly not including Zelle) to issue a 1099 to those who receive more than \$600 in payments for goods and services through the apps. In years past, the threshold for this was \$20,000, but this was lowered to try to find

unreported income.

According to an analysis by the IRS, under-reporting and underpayment of taxes amounts to approximately \$144 billion per year, so having the systems that collect some of this income report it to the government makes sense.

Most people who use services like PayPal and Venmo shouldn't be worried. For example, the transactions my friends and I made for things like dinner, hotels and baseball tickets are transfers between friends and family and shouldn't be subject to this reporting, according to Venmo's FAQ on the subject. On the other hand, if you have a business account on Venmo, you should expect to receive form 1099-K showing the amount that's been reported to the IRS as income.

Jessica Dorsett, a CPA with Magnus Blue in San Marcos, had the following recommendations for people who use these payment processing apps for their business:

- Confirm your business EIN with the provider so that your 1099-K gets reported correctly
- Review your transactions to make sure they are properly categorized as business or personal
- If possible, keep your personal and business activity in separate accounts to make it easier to distinguish between them.

So what kind of transactions could generate a 1099? You might be surprised. For example, if you sold some used furniture on Venmo for more than \$600, that could be

reported to the IRS as income, even if you sold the furniture for a loss. Selling personal items (especially for less than you paid for them) isn't usually taxable income, so what happens then? Or what if your transfers to friends are reported erroneously as income?

I posed this question to Dorsett, and she said it's probably not worth the hassle to get the 1099 corrected with Venmo (or PayPal or whomever), although that's the first suggestion in the IRS FAQ on the topic (Form 1099-K Frequently Asked Questions: Individuals | Internal Revenue Service (irs.gov)). Dorsett's advice was to report the full amount of the 1099 on your tax return as business income, then make adjustments to that number (with explanations if needed) to get to the real business income number.

Should you continue to use Venmo to transfer money between friends? I plan to, although in this first year of trying to comply with the new rules, a lot of people will probably be getting 1099s for non-business transactions. If you do, make sure you discuss it with your tax advisor.

This column is prepared by Rick Brooks, CFA®, CFP®. Brooks is director/investment management with Blankinship & Foster, LLC, a wealth advisory firm specializing in financial planning and investment management for people preparing for retirement. Brooks can be reached at (858) 755-5166, or by email at rbrooks@bfadvisors.com. Brooks and his family live in Mission Hills.

Franklin Elementary STEAM Magnet Program Continues to Progress

The hard hats were on, and markers were out at Franklin Elementary STEAM Magnet School this past November, as the campus modernization reached a major milestone. Franklin Elementary students joined incoming San Diego Unified School District Board of Education Trustee Shana Hazan, alumni, and staff in signing the final steel beam for the future two-story classroom facility. The group celebrated as construction crews hoisted the beam into place.

"As an incoming board trustee and

a parent of two students at Franklin Elementary, I couldn't be more excited to watch as the beam was hoisted into place on a project long awaited by this community," Hazan said. "What a great way to kick off my time as a board trustee for San Diego Unified."

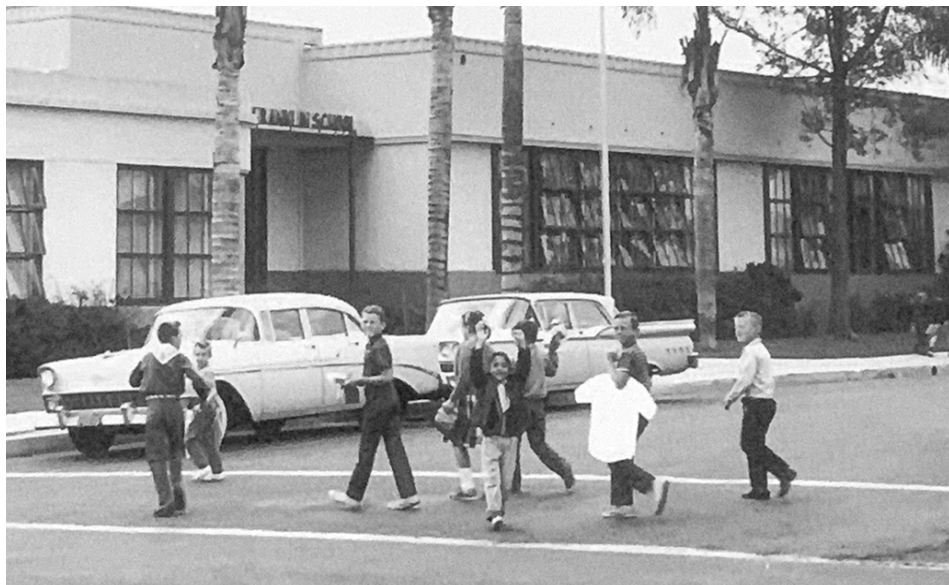
"It's monumental," said Franklin Elementary Principal Melissa Roy-Wood. "Our fourth-and fifth-grade students will be promoted to middle school by the time construction ends, so this was a great way for them to

leave their legacy."

When complete, the new classroom facility will include collaborative workspaces, a staff lounge, and a student food services kitchen. The kitchen is part of an expanded student dining area that will be complete with a shade canopy. Outdoor improvements include renovated kindergarten and upper-grade playgrounds with shaded play structures, a learning garden with a shade canopy, and a bioretention basin with landscaping.

Campus wide safety will be improved with a monitored single point of entry, modern public address/intercom system, security cameras, intrusion and fire alarm systems, and secure perimeter fencing.

"Our priority at San Diego Unified is to provide students with safe and innovative campuses that not only inspire them to succeed, but help cultivate a sense of belonging," Superintendent Dr. Lamont Jackson said. "We are thrilled to give the Franklin community a glimpse of what's to come – a beautiful, state-of-the-art classroom facility where all students can thrive." Construction is anticipated to complete in late 2024.



This photo captures Franklin Elementary in its early years of existence.

PRESIDIO SENTINEL

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Birch Aquarium and Cincinnati Zoo Join Forces to Bolster the Little Blue Penguins Population in the United States

Five Little Blue Penguins from Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego embarked on a 2,000-mile cross-country move to Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. The move is part of an international Species Survival Plan (SSP) that works to maintain the genetic diversity of certain species in zoos and aquariums.

This year, SSP coordinators for Little Blue Penguins recommended that our penguins — Sheldon, Squid, Craig, Odette and Bo — become part of new breeding colonies at Cincinnati Zoo. Over the years, Birch Aquarium has exchanged a variety of marine animals with other AZA-accredited institutions as part of SSPs, including Potbellied and Lined Seahorses.

“Collaboration with other institutions is essential to maintaining a healthy and thriving penguin population across the U.S.,” said Jenn Nero Moffatt, senior director of Animal Care, Science and Conservation at Birch Aquarium. “And now, for the first time, we will transfer five of our Little Blues to another institution. We have been fortunate to provide



The aquarium's veterinary team examined each seabird to ensure they were in tiptop health before getting on a flight to their final destination.

a temporary home to these seabirds throughout our exhibit opening and busy summer months.”

The Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins habitat opened in July 2022 bringing the world's smallest

penguins to the West Coast for the first time. The habitat is also the first seabird exhibit in the history of the aquarium. The 2,900-square-foot exhibit provides the highest standard in penguin care while

also offering a fun and educational guest experience. Birch Aquarium is committed to protecting Little Blue Penguins as they face habitat loss and a dropping population

► *Continued on page 9*

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Dana

This sweet lady is Dana, a seven-year-old American pit bull terrier and German shepherd mix. This staff and volunteer favorite has limitless energy and loves going for outdoor adventures like long walks and runs. She is housetrained and absolutely adores her people. Dana has some dog-xwith her playmates, so she'll need a patient adopter committed to using positive reinforcement to help her be successful. Are you looking for an energetic buddy to tire you out every day? Dana may be your forever friend.

Dana is currently staying in foster care while she waits to be adopted. Please contact us or visit the Oceanside Campus to arrange an introduction. The Oceanside Campus is located at 2905 San Luis Rey Road in Oceanside. For information, call 619-299-7012 or visit www.sdhumane.org.

Meet dude, a one-year-old, Labrador retriever mix. This handsome, chocolate-coated pup has a big heart and big puppy energy. Dude is incredibly intelligent and will do great in a home with humans who can continue to help him work on his big dog manners. Long walks, hikes, playtime, and adventures are all part of Dude's love language, and a great way you can bond with him. This 97-pound pup doesn't quite know his strength, so any kids in his new home should be at least 10 years old. He would do well with another dog of a similar size to play with but would prefer not to have cats around.

Dude is available for adoption at San Diego Humane Society's San Diego Campus, located at 5495 Gaines Street. For information, call 619-299-7012, or visit sdhumane.org/adopt.



Dude

SPCA

Annual 'Share the Love' Food Truck Event

Making its return from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday, December 7 is the popular "Share the Love" event, hosted by Kearny Mesa Subaru and Meals on Wheels San Diego County. This free event is open to the public and brings together some of San Diego's best food truck eats, all in support of local nonprofits, including Meals on Wheels San Diego County. The event takes place at Kearny Mesa Subaru, located at 4797 Convoy Street in San Diego, CA 9211. To bring in the holiday spirit, the event will include festive holiday decorations and a special appearance from the President and CEO of Meals on Wheels San Diego County, Brent Wakefield, dressed up as Santa Claus.

For 14 years, Subaru of America, Inc. has held its annual "Share the Love" event to donate critical funds to select charities around the nation. Since the campaign's inception, Subaru of America, Inc. and its participating retailers have given back more than \$227 million to over 1,700 hometown charities throughout the country.

Since 2010, Kearny Mesa Subaru selected Meals on Wheels San Diego County as one of its charities to support local homebound seniors in need of nutritious meals. This year, for every new car purchased or leased from Nov. 17, 2022 through Jan. 3, 2023, Kearny Mesa Subaru will donate \$250 to the owner's charity of choice from four nationally selected agencies. In 2021, Kearny Mesa Subaru donated \$30,000 to Meals on Wheels San Diego County through the funds raised by new car purchases and leases.

"We're honored to once again be selected by Kearny Mesa Subaru as one of its "Share the Love" beneficiaries," says Wakefield. "The funds that we receive from this community event not only support our meal delivery service, but also most importantly



From left to right are Share the Love participants, Debbie Case and Kearny Mesa Subaru staff member in front of a food truck.

helps ensure the health and safety of our homebound clients around San Diego County. We're thankful to Kearny Mesa Subaru for its longtime support of our seniors."

Community members are invited to attend the "Share the Love" celebration at Kearny Mesa Subaru. All food truck vendors will have their tasty bites available for purchase, including The Groovy Greek, Epic Eats and Born in Brooklyn. Attendees will also enjoy local celebrity judges and Santa Claus

choosing their favorite food truck.

Participating vendors will compete for the title of "Best Dish" where local celebrity judges will vote on the winning food truck. At 12:15 p.m. the winning food truck will be selected and given a trophy of recognition.

Visit sandiegomealsonwheels.org for more information on this year's "Share the Love" event and for ways to get involved with and give back to Meals on Wheels San Diego County.

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Winter Gardens with Chuck McClung

By Barb Strona



At our final meeting in 2022, Chuck McClung, a gardener his entire life with a master in botany, gave a truly enlightening talk. His focus was on what we can do in the winter with and for our gardens. McClung began by saying how lucky we are to live in San Diego, and in Mission Hills, especially. When you plant things hardly matters, he told us. You may have better success at an optimum time, but almost anything will grow. He's right. I planted peonies two years in a row because Costco sold the tubers. I

assumed they wouldn't sell them where they wouldn't grow. They do grow. They do not bloom. I tried throwing ice on them, refrigerating them before planting. The second year I got a tiny bud which fell off.

McClung says the two secrets to successful gardening are to know the plants growth habit and to know its native habitat. In other words, "know your plant." The best source of information is probably not your neighbor, and is possibly not the internet. Know your source. A local nursery should have answers, but ask more than one person. If the answers differ wildly, go to another source. Be discerning as there are many people who just want to make a sale. Attend the free classes given by many local nurseries. Read books by people who have the training, experience, and knowledge you seek. He recommends a book, "Botanica," for information on native habitats.

The growth habits of a plant vary with where it is located. Some plants may grow long vines in their native habitat but may grow a short bushier plant somewhere else. The plant adapts to its climate but thrives in a climate most like its original. Most plants have a dormant season. If you don't know this, you may end up as one of McClung's clients did. She explained that she had purchased a blooming plant with a bell-like yellow flower months before for her daughter's birthday which was in a week. The plant now was dead. It was called something with a "d." We laughed at this story. Daffodils bloom in early spring. Months later they are underground waiting for the following spring.

McClung also pointed out that dead leaves do not mean a plant is dead. Most plants' older leaves die. If the plant has new growth, take off the dead leaves. In our climate, he added, we can pretty much prune when we wish. . . AFTER it has bloomed. Roses are best pruned when the weather will be cold for a while. Here, January is the optimum time. However, they don't mind being pruned at any time.

You also must know your garden and microclimate. Check the amount of sunlight, the soil type, the slope of the ground, and from where the garden will be seen.

Now, as winter approaches, you should water less often, clean your garden of all dead leaves and blossoms. Cut back old perennials, but do plant winter annuals. These are violas, stock, snapdragons. Plant autumn and winter vegetables and herbs. McClung observed that most Mission Hills' winter gardens have very little color and that the farther north one goes, the more color one sees. "Add more color!" he says. "Ask 'Where am I lacking color?'"

This is not the time to prune deciduous fruit trees or warm season vegetables. Do not prune anything with buds. Winter blooming shrubs should not be pruned now.

McClung gave us a list of holiday plants and their special needs. Cyclamen like cool shade and prefer to be kept on the dry side. Poinsettias like bright light, little water, and fertilizer. When they have finished, cut them back and replant. I have some replanted and thriving poinsettias so I may not need to buy any this year. Amaryllis like bright light and cool conditions. Fertilize after flowering is over. Do NOT over water orchids. They like indirect light.

We also learned something interesting about fertilizer. If you buy from the big box nurseries, you will be purchasing fertilizer that is good for any part of our country. Grow Power is, in McClung's opinion, the BEST fertilizer for San Diego's soil. He says it makes him "look good!"

McClung repeated his maxim: If you want more flowers, deadhead. Deadheading is removing dead flowers. The flowers' seeds are these plants' method of reproduction. If all the flowers are dead, the plant figures it has done its job. As long as you remove "spent" flowers, you can prolong the blooming cycle.

McClung has written a book: "How Orchids Rebloom." It has a great deal of gardening information in it. He is also writing more books, so watch for them.

I am so happy I heard McClung speak. He did speak to us several years ago, and he is an even better speaker now. I am anxious to get out to my garden (once I get rid of my walker) to clean, prune, fertilize, dead head, and clean some more.



Cyclamen plants like cool shade and prefer to be kept on the dry side.



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Thank You Mission Hills for 2022

By Dixie Hall, President Mission Hills BID and Owner of DixiePops



It is amazing to me that another year has come and gone. Seems like it was just a few weeks ago that I was putting all the Christmas décor away – and yet I just spent the day taking it all out to again decorate for the holidays. As I am making final touches on this December column, Black

Friday and Shop Small Saturday have ended and Cyber Monday is just a few hours away. Unfortunately, not everyone is able to look forward to a gift filled holiday.

Thanks to a collaboration between US Bank Mission Hills, the BID, and businesses in Mission Hills, we are collecting new unwrapped toys in Toys for Tots collection boxes throughout Mission Hills. This year is the first time a communitywide Toys for Tots collection is taking place in Mission Hills. In a neighborhood with so much, the Mission Hills BID is hoping the 2022 Toys for Tots Mission Hills effort will provide an opportunity for businesses and patrons to abundantly donate and make Christmas a happy occasion for children who may otherwise not enjoy a visit from Santa.

If you are a Mission Hills business and wish to join the effort, please stop by US Bank and pick up a box. Sign-in on the list near the Toys for Tots boxes so we know where the box you take will be located. All toy donations must be new, not gift wrapped, and will be picked up by the Mission Hills BID on Monday December 12 and Tuesday December 13. If you wish to make a donation of a new toy, please look for a Toys for Tots collection box at Thorn Brewing Company, Lewis Fay Kitchen Collective, State Farm Insurance, Backbone Floral, L'Atelier on Reynard Way, Mission Hills Nursery, US Bank and DixiePops. If you have questions about this year's Toys for Tots effort, please contact us at MissionHillsBID@gmail.com. When you make a new toy donation at DixiePops you will receive a free kids cone.

Thank you to those who attended last month's Mission Hills BID Annual Meeting and Mixer at Kettle & Stone. It is at this meeting that the BID board members are elected. As the continuing president of the Mission Hills BID, I look forward to serving with fellow officers Daniel Geddis, One Mission Realty, vice president; Jesse Zmuda, Backbone Floral, secretary; Jamaal Jackson, US Bank Mission Hills, treasurer; and directors Sarah Mattia, Pizza e Birra; Mike Metcalf, Michael Metcalf Consulting; and the newest board member, Amra Mulic, All American Tailor. We are all looking forward to a busy and productive 2023.

The Mission Hills BID has been a Neighborhood Champion in the Shop Small Saturday effort for the last seven years. During Thanksgiving week volunteers gathered at US Bank to organize Shop Small Saturday swag for delivery to Mission Hill BID retailers in time for the 12th Annual Shop Small Saturday on November 26. From tote bags to balloons, posters, stickers and doormats, we delivered boxes loaded with give-aways. When you are holiday shopping in the neighborhood, be sure to ask for a Shop Small tote



Mission Hills Nursery staff are eager to see guests bring toys for tots for the annual Christmas gift drive. And don't forget to purchase your Christmas trees, poinsettias and other holiday items.

bag. With the holidays just around the corner, I ask that you look for a local shop to buy your gifts. And, one of the biggest gifts you can provide a small business is to post your experience on social media so that others will be reminded to shop at independent retailers and restaurants. As a small business owner, I can attest to how important the support of the community is to us.

As tough as it has been for our local businesses, their philanthropy has continued through gifts of funds and commitment of time and energy to our schools and community-based organizations – which is why I ask that before you go online or head to the mall, think of our local small business community and give them a chance to help you find the right gift for that special colleague, friend or family member. Your continuing support of local businesses helps our neighborhood thrive.

In Mission Hills shopping is an adventure. From the glow of West Lewis Street one will discover artfully curated gifts for children and those who care for them, a collaborative design space that embraces gracious living and entertainment, hard-to-find grown-up beverages and hot coffee and tea and delicious snacks, yoga and exercise classes, dry cleaning and laundry services, and relaxing beauty salon services.

Order delicious baked items or have a piece of art beautifully framed or buy an one-of-a-kind art piece, indulge in beauty and self-care services or stop by for a convenience store items in the neighborhood – all on

Reynard Way.

Move on to India Street, also recognized as International Restaurant Row, and stock up for a traditional British Christmas, enjoy an Afternoon Tea and welcome a visit from Father Christmas or partake in an evening of tradition, music, and fun, and sing along to your favorite Christmas carols accompanied by a British styled brass band. Also on India Street discover live theater, gourmet take-out, gelato, holiday tamales, pizzas, Thai food, seafood, deli sandwiches, gelatos and fast Italian Motorcycles --- all at the ready for you and your holiday guests.

On Goldfinch Street and on Fort Stockton Drive catch up with friends and family over a festive beverage or a meal. Browse the real estate listings. Perhaps enjoy a massage or a facial. Get a fresh hair style. Buy a holiday gift or three of Wagyu beef. On West University Avenue there could be a piece of jewelry waiting for you.

West Washington Street is our busiest and most diverse commercial area. It is filled with dining and desserts and grown-up drinking, gourmet ice cream and cheese, self-care and beauty, excellent groceries, and everything your pet may need. And for those year-end must-do's, remember our neighborhood banks, dentists, insurance agents, realtors, accountants and attorneys.

Please don't just take my word for it. Stop by and discover for yourself how much our neighborhood has to offer this holiday season. As this year comes to a close, I wish you a joyous and safe holiday season!

Jungle Bells Will Be Ringing This Holiday Season at San Diego Zoo

San Diego Zoo guests are invited to celebrate the season with the return of Jungle Bells Proudly Supported by California Coast Credit Union. The annual holiday event will treat guests to a joyous wonderland of twinkling lights, live entertainment, festive music and views of awe-inspiring wildlife. Jungle Bells is scheduled for Friday, December 9 through Sunday, January 1, 2023, with the exception of Dec. 24 (when no Jungle Bells activities are scheduled). The San Diego Zoo, located at 2920 Zoo Drive, is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. during this event; and the Zoo closes at 5 p.m. on December 24.

Join in Reindeer Games and trek through Northern Frontier’s Holiday Forest, or visit Santa or his friendly helpers, Zoo characters Dr. Harry Lion, Churchill Polar Bear, Sydney Koala and all their friends. Enjoy an abundance of culinary delights at the Zoo’s many restaurants and food stands,

or shop for one-of-a-kind gifts for everyone on your holiday list at the Zoo’s numerous retail locations. When you give a gift from San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, you are directly supporting wildlife conservation around the world.

Guests won’t want to miss the magic of Aurora, an immersive presentation weaving 3D projection mapping, music and lights into a spectacular performance. Ethereal sprites representing wind, water and ice share their story, and the power of nature contained in their mystical orbs. It’s an experience unlike any other!

Jungle Bells activities are free with Zoo admission or membership. Parking is free. For more information, visit sandiegozoo.org/junglebells.

A Takin enjoys treats of the season during Jungle Bells.



Festively dressed performers share fun, music and dance at Jungle Bells.

Birch Aquarium and Cincinnati Zoo Join Forces to Bolster the Little Blue Penguins Population in the United States

► Continued from page 5

due to climate change. Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins explores the interdisciplinary penguin research of Scripps Oceanography scientists Jerry Kooyman, Paul Ponganis and Tammy Russell. Their discoveries provided Scripps with a better understanding of the biology of these aquatic seabirds, and the impact of climate change on penguins. Cincinnati Zoo is home to the largest and most successful breeding colonies of Little Blue Penguins in North America. Their new habitat, Roo Valley, which houses Little Blues and two species of kangaroo, opened in 2020. The Zoo started with six Little Blues in 1999 and has hatched over 100 chicks since then. The current habitat is home to 34 Little Blue Penguins. “All of us in Team Bird are excited to add these new penguins to our Roo Valley colony,”

said Cody Sowers, team leader in the Bird Department at Cincinnati Zoo. “Anytime we can collaborate with other facilities to help out the North American population is a no-brainer, and personally I am excited to watch them acclimate to their new home here in Cincinnati. Thanks to the entire Birch Aquarium team for taking such great care of these penguins.” In preparation for the journey, the aquarium’s veterinary team examined each seabird to ensure they were in tiptop health before getting on a flight to their final destination. Veterinary staff members go through a full workup that includes physical exams, taking X-rays, blood samples and a variety of tests. Kayla Strate, assistant curator of Birds at Birch Aquarium, knows every penguin by name and personality. Some are shy while others are gregarious. She knows their temperament, how

they walk, and what each one likes to eat. “We will all miss these penguins very much,” Strate said. “You get quite attached to the animals in your care, but it is so important to the health of the population to participate in these transfers. We are proud to play a role in making this program successful. It will be fun to hear updates about their new colony and whether they pair with others and raise their own chicks one day.” With the exhibit opening, the aquarium has seen visitation numbers rebound to near pre-pandemic levels, having welcomed 146,000 guests in the first three months alone. Beyster Family Little Blue Penguins is included in the cost of general admission to Birch Aquarium. Advanced reservations are required for all guests, including members. Visit aquarium.ucsd.edu for more information or to make a reservation.

“The Nutcracker” Returns to the Historic San Diego Civic Youth Ballet



Celebrate the holiday season at the ballet in Balboa Park by taking an extraordinary journey to the magical Land of the Sweets with brave young Clara and her Nutcracker Prince in San Diego Civic Youth Ballet’s beloved annual production of “The Nutcracker.” Witness an epic battle between toy soldiers and mice before being whisked away to an enchanting land of falling snow, waltzing flowers, and the dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Performances take place from Thursday, December 8 through Sunday, December 18 at Casa del Prado Theater in Balboa Park, located at 1800 Village Place, San Diego. For times and costs, visit www.sdcyb.org.

Directed by Artistic Director Danika Pramik-Holdaway and set to Tchaikovsky’s timeless score, this classic holiday production is a cherished San Diego tradition at the historic Casa del Prado Theater.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.sdcyb.org, over the phone at 619-233-3060, or in person at the SDCYB office during regular business hours.

Face masks are recommended while inside the theater. ADA seating is available and may be purchased over the phone or in the office only.

Founded in 1945, San Diego Civic Youth Ballet has been the resident classical ballet school in Balboa Park for over 75 years - offering affordable, year-round, high-quality classes and productions for dancers ages 4 to adult in the beautiful Casa del Prado.

The San Diego Civic Youth Ballet brings “The Nutcracker” to life during its 2022 production. Photo is courtesy of Zachary Barron.

The Dickens’ Mash-Up and Music-Filled Comedy Hit Returns to The Old Globe

“Ebenezer Scrooge’s BIG San Diego Christmas Show” returns to the Sheryl and Harvey White Theatre, part of the Globe’s Conrad Prebys Theatre Center, for a six-week limited engagement through Saturday, December 24. Based on “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens, this Scrooge parody is set in San Diego and written by Gordon Greenberg (Globe’s “The Heart of Rock & Roll”) and directed by Greenberg. All the traditional elements of Dickens’s “A Christmas Carol” are intact—including the iconic ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future—in this reimagined holiday story with a very comic twist. Audiences of all ages will cheer as Ebenezer Scrooge rediscovers the true Christmas spirit in this riotous Dickens mash-up filled with music and laughter—and set in “wintery” San Diego. Tickets are available at www.TheOldGlobe.org.

The cast for “Ebenezer Scrooge’s BIG San Diego Christmas Show” includes Bill Buell as Actor 5 (Ebenezer Scrooge), Elizabeth Nestlerode as Actor 2 (Prudence Saint, Lavinia, Ghost of Christmas Present, Archibald, etc.), Christopher M. Ramirez as Actor 4 (Bob Cratchit, Jacob Marley, Charles, Mr. Fezzi, etc.), Dan Rosales as Actor 1 (Fred, Young Scrooge, Medium Scrooge, Tiny Tim, etc.), and Jacque Wilke as Actor 3 (Gertrude Saint, Ghost of Christmas Past, Mrs. Cratchit, Jennie, etc.).

In addition to Greenberg and Rosen, the creative team for the Globe’s production of “Ebenezer Scrooge’s BIG San Diego Christmas Show” includes scenic design by Adam Koch, costume design by David Israel Reynoso, lighting design by Amanda Zieve, sound design by Bart Fasbender, music direction by Elizabeth Nestlerode, casting by Tara Rubin Casting/Merri Sugarman, CSA and Kim Heil, CSA, and production stage management by Anjee Nero.

“Even though he’s grumpy, we’re happy to welcome Ebenezer Scrooge back to our stage in this hilarious and completely charming, San Diego-infused iteration of his famous story,” said Erna Finci Viterbi Artistic Director Barry Edelstein. “Gordon Greenberg



A multi-talented cast will perform in “Ebenezer Scrooge’s BIG San Diego Christmas Show.”

and Steve Rosen have imagined a kooky, wild, outsize take on Dickens, and they and the talents they’ve assembled deliver a jolt of pure joy, filled to the brim with theatrical exuberance and holiday cheer. I can’t wait to share it once again with our audiences.”

The theatre still strongly recommends mask-wearing while at the Globe, and patrons should feel comfortable wearing a mask anywhere on our campus if they choose.

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Celebrate the Season in Wild Style at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park

’Tis the season! Wild Holidays returns to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park on select dates: December 3 and 4, December 10 and 11, December 17 through 23, and December 26 through 31, 2022; and January 1, 2023. The San Diego Zoo Safari Park is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. during this event, except for January 1 when hours are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wild Holidays festivities begin at 4 p.m. The annual celebration invites guests to experience the wonders of the Safari Park, located at 15500 San Pasqual Valley Road in Escondido, with a special holiday twist.

Guests can go on a festive expedition of lights and adventure through glowing pathways twinkling with holiday cheer, enjoy



Musicians will be on site to entertain during Wild Holidays at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

a variety of live musical performances and encounter magnificent stilt walkers. There will be seasonally inspired culinary delights at the Safari Park’s restaurants and food stands, and guests can shop for the perfect holiday gifts at numerous retail locations. When you give a gift from San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, you are directly supporting wildlife conservation around the world.

Wild Holidays activities are free with Safari Park admission or membership.

For more information, visit sdzsafaripark.org/wild-holidays.



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Foundation for Women Warriors Seeks Community Support for Holiday Drive for Veteran Families



Foundation for Women Warriors is seeking community assistance to make the holidays special for military women.

As we near the holiday season, Foundation for Women Warriors (FFWW) is calling on the San Diego community to help them support local veteran families through their third annual holiday drive. From now till December 15, 2022, they will collect new and unused children's toys, clothes, and baby items for women veterans and their families. This year, Foundation for Women Warriors is aiming to provide holiday help to 100 veteran families.

The community can support the holiday drive through the following:

- Purchase items off of the FFWW website
- Host a corporate/employee drive and collect new children's toys, clothes, and baby items
- Make a monetary contribution at <https://foundationforwomenwarriors.org/event/holiday-drive-2022/>
- Volunteer to pack gifts and help with the gift distribution

Jodie Grenier, CEO of Foundation for Women Warriors, shares, "The past few years have had a disproportionate financial impact on women across the country and especially in our women veteran community here in California. As we continue to provide emergency financial and childcare assistance, our holiday drive ensures our veteran families facing financial challenges don't miss out on the joy of the holiday season."

Foundation for Women Warriors' mission is to serve women veterans and their children so that their next mission is clear and continues to impact the world. FFWW is the only organization in California solely focused on serving women veterans and their families. Their programs enhance the personal and economic wellbeing of women veterans and address the growing needs of the increasing population of military women transitioning to civilian life.

Chevron Station Drastically Slashed Gas Prices to Help Struggling San Diego Families

It is no secret that inflation has hit energy prices particularly hard, and thousands of San Diego families are struggling to put both gas in their cars and food on the table. In recognizing this issue and the need for action, Lake Murray Chevron Owner David Hallak announced that for a limited time only, he would slash gas prices for a three-day period to help San Diego families ease the burden of out-of-control fuel costs this holiday season.

"Lake Murray Chevron is proud to demonstrate its commitment to the community this holiday season with this

temporary reduction in prices. Our hope is that this will provide much-needed relief for families struggling with the high cost of fuel to help make their holiday season a bit more comfortable," offered David Hallak, owner, Lake Murray Chevron.

To serve and better the San Diego community, Lake Murray Chevron, located at 5600 Baltimore Drive in La Mesa, provided struggling families with much-needed price relief at the pump this holiday season. 87 Octane Gas was available for \$3.99/gallon (cash price) or \$4.19 (credit card price).



Lake Murray Chevron has provided gas cost relief during the holidays.

50 Neonate Babies Donated to Miracle Babies Santa’s Workshop Toy Drive

Distroller World, a retail entertainment brand that exists to overwhelm the world with joy by pushing the limits of imagination and creativity through unique experiences and storytelling, donates 50 Neonate Babies to the Miracle Babies Santa’s Workshop toy drive event on Wednesday, December 14 through Tuesday, December 20. The event will be held by appointment only at 8745 Aero Drive, Suite 308, San Diego, CA 92123.

Miracle Babies is a local nonprofit dedicated to helping perinatal mothers and their families during their time of need by providing transportation, mental health assistance and supportive services. Each holiday season, Miracle Babies transforms its office into Santa’s workshop. The annual Santa’s Workshop event gives Miracle Babies families the opportunity to pick up a case of diapers and bring brand new donated toys home to their children and NICU infants.

“Our annual Santa’s Workshop event allows Miracle Babies to support our NICU families a little extra during the holiday season,” said Miracle Babies Executive Director Marianela Camarillo. “We are grateful for brands like Distroller who supply great quality toys that also help educate young NICU family members.”

This year Distroller is donating 50 Neonate Babies to the event. Neonate Babies help demonstrate the delicate care process, similar to those of hospitalized newborns, to child siblings of babies in critical care. Each Neonate Baby is born small and fragile, and comes with special care instructions on feeding, bathing and more.

Miracle Babies is collecting toy donations for the Santa’s Workshop toy drive. Donations can be dropped off at the Miracle Babies office at 8745



Parents with hospitalized infants can shop donated toys for their baby and siblings.

Aero Drive, Suite 308, San Diego, CA 92123.

For more information on the Santa’s Workshop toy drive event, please contact Miracle Babies Executive Director Marianela Camarillo at mcamarillo@miraclebabies.org.

For more information about Distroller World, visit DistrollerUSA.com.

For more information about Miracle Babies, visit www.MiracleBabies.org.

Nearly \$50,000 at 15th Annual Hallo-Wine Fall Festival



Sponsors, community supporters, and attendees had a great time at the 15th Annual Hallo-Wine Fall Festival.

Home Start, Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to child abuse prevention and providing evidence-based family strengthening services, held its 15th Annual Hallo-Wine Festival on Saturday, October 22nd, 2022, at the Historic Burnham House in Balboa Park. The event raised nearly \$50,000 for the organization’s critical programs. With nearly 300 guests, this year’s fundraiser was one of the best-attended Hallo-Wine festivals to date.

Home Start’s Hallo-Wine Fall Festival is held every October in recognition of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The funds

raised by sponsors, community supporters, and attendees support Home Start’s programs that provide assistance to vulnerable children and families. Home Start services to San Diegans in crisis include housing, wraparound supportive services, parent education, therapy, job training, and food access.

“I am so thankful to the sponsors, attendees, vendors, and volunteers who came together to help make this year’s Hallo-Wine one of our best ever,” Laura Tancredi-Baese, Home Start CEO, said. “Everyone who was present shared Home Start’s dedication to helping children and families break free from the cycles of domestic violence, homelessness, abuse, and neglect. The feeling of concern and compassion was palpable all afternoon.”

This year’s festival was presented by TCW Global. Hallo-Wine attendees were able to enjoy a variety of gourmet hors d’oeuvres, boutique wines, hand-crafted beers, and local spirits, in addition to live entertainment, silent auction, and many other interactive games. Guests also heard from Sa’Rhea, a Home Start client who shared her personal story of how the organization helped her escape the cycle of abuse and find a safe and stable home for her and her daughter.

Home Start’s vision is for every child to have a safe, stable, and nurturing home. For over 50 years, Home Start has strengthened and developed San Diego’s vulnerable families and communities. For those interested in helping, Home Start coordinates volunteers, accepts donations, and operates a thrift boutique and Bright Futures Candles social enterprises to provide job training for formerly homeless young mothers and youth.

Last year, Home Start served more than 15,000 San Diegans in need of services. For more information, please visit www.home-start.org.



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Coastal Communities Concert Band Hosts 27th Annual Holiday Concert

At 2 p.m., Saturday, December 10 Coastal Communities Concert Band will herald in the holiday season with a special concert benefiting local seniors in need. The 27th Annual Holiday Concert at Carlsbad Community Church, located at 3175 Harding Street, will raise much-needed funds for local nonprofit Meals on Wheels San Diego County and its senior clients. Advance registration is recommended for this very popular concert event and tickets can be purchased online at sandiegomealsonwheels.org.

Attendees will enjoy the glorious sounds of brass, wind and percussion instruments. This year's concert will include a variety of festive old and new holiday arrangements and favorites. The award-winning Coastal Communities Concert Band, performing under the auspices of MiraCosta College, will donate all concert proceeds to Meals on Wheels San Diego County's mission to provide nutritious meals to seniors in need.

For more than two decades, Coastal Communities Concert Band has raised over \$500,000 for Meals on Wheels San Diego County through this annual holiday concert event. "We're excited to kick off the holidays again at this fun and festive afternoon fundraiser," says Brent Wakefield, president and CEO, Meals on Wheels San Diego County. "Our team is beyond thankful for our longtime partnership with Coastal Communities Concert Band and the holiday cheer they bring to our supporters, seniors and staff. We hope to see many of our community members there to help ring in the holiday season in musical style."

Tickets can be purchased through Meals on Wheels San Diego County by calling 800-5-SENIOR or 760-736-9900.



The Coastal Communities Concert Band was organized in 1983 with fourteen members and has grown into a complete symphonic band composed of nearly eighty musicians.



64th Annual Las Posadas Takes Place at Heritage Park in Old Town San Diego

Join us for the 64th Annual Las Posadas event in Heritage County Park in Old Town San Diego which takes place at 7 p.m., Friday, December 9 at 2454 Heritage Park Row. Presented by the Old Town San Diego Chamber of Commerce, Old Town Trolley Tours, and the Mormon Battalion Historic Site, Las Posadas ("the inns" or "the lodgings") is a centuries-old Mexican celebration. The event represents the several nights Mary and Joseph, accompanied by a flock of shepherds and angels, sought shelter at different inns in Bethlehem.

There will be six stations in Heritage County Park as we follow Joseph and Mary astride a donkey. Each station features a brief narration and call-and-response verses performed by volunteers from the Mormon Battalion Historic Site.

After the final station, guests are invited back to the Mormon Battalion Historic Site for refreshments. New this year, event organizers will be offering guests the opportunity to participate in a service project sorting and packaging donated items for the food bank at Old Town Community Church.

For more information, visit oldtownsandiego.org/lasposadas.



The event represents the several nights Mary and Joseph, accompanied by a flock of shepherds and angels, sought shelter at different inns in Bethlehem.

Civico 1845’s Music in the Park(let) Series

The authentic Calabrian offerings at Little Italy hotspot Civico 1845, located at 1845 India Street, now include live music. Starting this past Wednesday, November 23, the restaurant kicks off its Music in the Park(let) Series, featuring weekly live performances from Calabrian-born singer Antonella Calabrese, whose credentials include appearances on “X Factor” and “The Voice of Italy.”

Calabrese started her musical career in 1996 after participating in a national televised music contest in Italy, before going on to appear on “X Factor” and “The Voice of Italy.”

She has also performed throughout Ireland, participating in the Guinness Jazz Festival and opening for Irish rock band, The Script. Her musical stylings range from dance to soul, as well as classical Italian songs.

Civico 1845’s “Music in the Park(let) Series” will be held every Wednesday in December from 5:30-8:30 p.m. in the parklet located next to the restaurant. Reservations are strongly encouraged, but not required.

Antonella Calabrese began her musical career in 1996.



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