



CONSTRUCTION NOTICE
KERSTING COURT
REMODEL PROJECT

February 2021 through April 2021

Project partially funded by grant funds from Supervisor Kathryn Barger's office


Sidewalk around the project will be closed. Please observe the sidewalk closed signs and use alternate routes

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Public Works Department
 Chris Cimino (626) 355 - 7135
 ccimino@cityofsierramadre.com




City of Sierra Madre [@](#) [f](#) [#ILOVESIERRAMADRE](#)



Rotary *PEOPLE OF ACTION*

ROTARY is a global network of 1.2 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change - across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

We provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through our fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders.




THE 4-WAY TEST
of things we do and say:

The Rotary "4-Way Test" has become an important fixture in Rotary - guiding Rotarians in their personal and professional lives.

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. IS it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

To learn more about Rotary or to become a member, please email our club president, Karen Swisher
sierra.swish@gmail.com

Service above Self **Rotary** Club of Sierra Madre 



CONSTRUCTION NOTICE
WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT SEGMENT 1A

February 2021 through the end of May 2021

PROJECT AREA
 Michillinda Ave - Orange Grove Ave. to Highland Ave.
 Please use alternate routes during construction

CONSTRUCTION HOURS
 Weekdays 7AM to 5PM, excluding holidays
Construction outside of normal hours will be dependent on City requirements or may be scheduled to minimize disruption to City residents.

ADVISORY

- The presence and movement of laborers, construction equipment and heavy machinery.
- Temporary traffic control devices, lane closures, detours and restricted access to driveways.
- Temporary No Parking - Vehicles parked in restricted areas may be cited and/or towed at owner's expense.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS
 Big Ben Engineering
 Mr. Eric Camarillo (562) 362-1278
 ecamarillo@bigbenengineering.com



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State Contractor Lic. # 111308

FREE ESTIMATES




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Athens Services



Sierra Madre ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Walter Cailleateau, DVM

927 N. Michillinda Ave.
 Pasadena, CA 91107
(626) 351-8863

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SIERRA MADRE

SIERRA MADRE

ARCADIA

PASADENA

ALTADENA

MONROVIA

**SIERRA MADRE POLICE BLOTTER**

February 7, 2021 to February 13, 2021 During this period the Sierra Madre Police Department responded to 295 calls for service.

Possible Stolen Vehicle

Officers conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for a moving violation in the 500 block of W. Sierra Madre Bl. on 2-9-21 at 12:56AM. During the contact, the driver advised he did not have a driver's license and admitted to having narcotics and paraphernalia inside the vehicle that belonged to him and his passenger. The vehicle was not registered to the driver and apparently belonged to a friend. Officers believed the vehicle was possibly stolen and not reported at the time of the traffic stop, due to the driver's statements and a blank key that was in the ignition. The two occupants of the vehicle were taken to the Pasadena Jail for booking. This is an ongoing investigation.

Scooter On 2-10-21 at 2:58PM, a resident in the 600 block of W. Orange Grove Ave. filed an online report of a theft. During the in-person interview, the resident explained that a male subject jumped her three foot front gate and took a Razor Scooter from her driveway. The subject was last seen going west with the scooter on Orange Grove Avenue. Case to Detectives

WALKING SIERRA MADRE - The Social Side

by Deanne Davis

"The greatest treasures of your life are associated with the people you love, and who love you in return." Brian Tracy

"Treasure the people you love and let them know how much you love them, not only in words but also in deeds."

"Life is an adventure. I can only wonder what treasure awaits at the top of the path." Jonathan Lockwood Huie

Another of the Treasures of Sierra Madre has left us, and left an empty spot in our town and in many of our hearts. George Maurer has gone to his new address in heaven where so many of his good friends have welcomed him in. George almost lived to be 100 years old and his life was filled with accomplishments that benefitted Sierra Madre and so many others, including my family. I have told this story before, but it can't hurt to tell it one more time in George's honor.



In July of 1974, our youngest daughter, Crissy, ran across the street as the ice cream truck was singing its happy tune and she, being four, had no thought except ice cream. She was struck by a car that never saw her and dragged down Alegria Avenue, wearing little more than a bathing suit. Needless to say, her injuries were catastrophic and Sierra Madre did not yet have official EMTs. What we did have was George Maurer and a station wagon with a few medical supplies. It wasn't an ambulance but George and his partner scooped our little girl up off the street and flew to Arcadia Methodist with her, saving her life.

Our family consider George to be a treasure beyond gold and silver. Many others in our community feel the same way about him. He has been welcomed to his new home and, to quote Jonathan Lockwood Huie just above, is 'discovering what treasure waits at the top of the path.' The words of Matthew 25:21 come to mind: "His Master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your Master.'" Thank you, George.

Today is Ash Wednesday which signals the beginning of Lent. I don't know about you, but it seems like all we've done for the past year is give up things. I, personally, don't want to give up anything else. You probably don't, either. I just can't believe that giving up coffee, ice cream or other small indulgences are going to make that much difference to anybody, especially to God.

Around the world, all sorts of Lenten traditions persist. For example, in the Middle East, folks go without meat, dairy, fish, olive oil, eggs and alcohol for the entire period. Which leaves them with butterless bread and a dry salad. Here's a better Lenten suggestion: On the fourth Friday of Lent, Mexicans celebrate La Samaritana where people will give water, ice cream and fruit to passersby in homage to the Samaritan woman who gave Jesus water at the well. In the British Isles, they make Hot Cross Buns which should be made and eaten on Good Friday only.

Once again, it seems to be all about food, doesn't it!

I'm thinking maybe I could concentrate on doing something positive in my world, like not being critical of what other people look like. Am I the fashion police? Probably not.

Maybe instead of frowning at that poor woman at Target whose two-year-old is throwing a huge hissy fit I could smile at her and offer up a little prayer for her.

Maybe I could donate a little more generously to one of our local food banks to help those who are having a really tough time. Our Saviour Center in El Monte or Union Rescue Mission come to mind.

Maybe I could be more patient, forgiving, and just plain kind.

As Charles Swindoll says, "I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it."

Maybe instead of fasting from cookie dough ice cream or a pistachio latte, we could feast on the fact that God loves us and will never stop loving us. That no matter what we do, we can't make Him love us more or less. I think He would go ahead and have the ice cream with us! Just saying.

This Lenten season maybe we could:

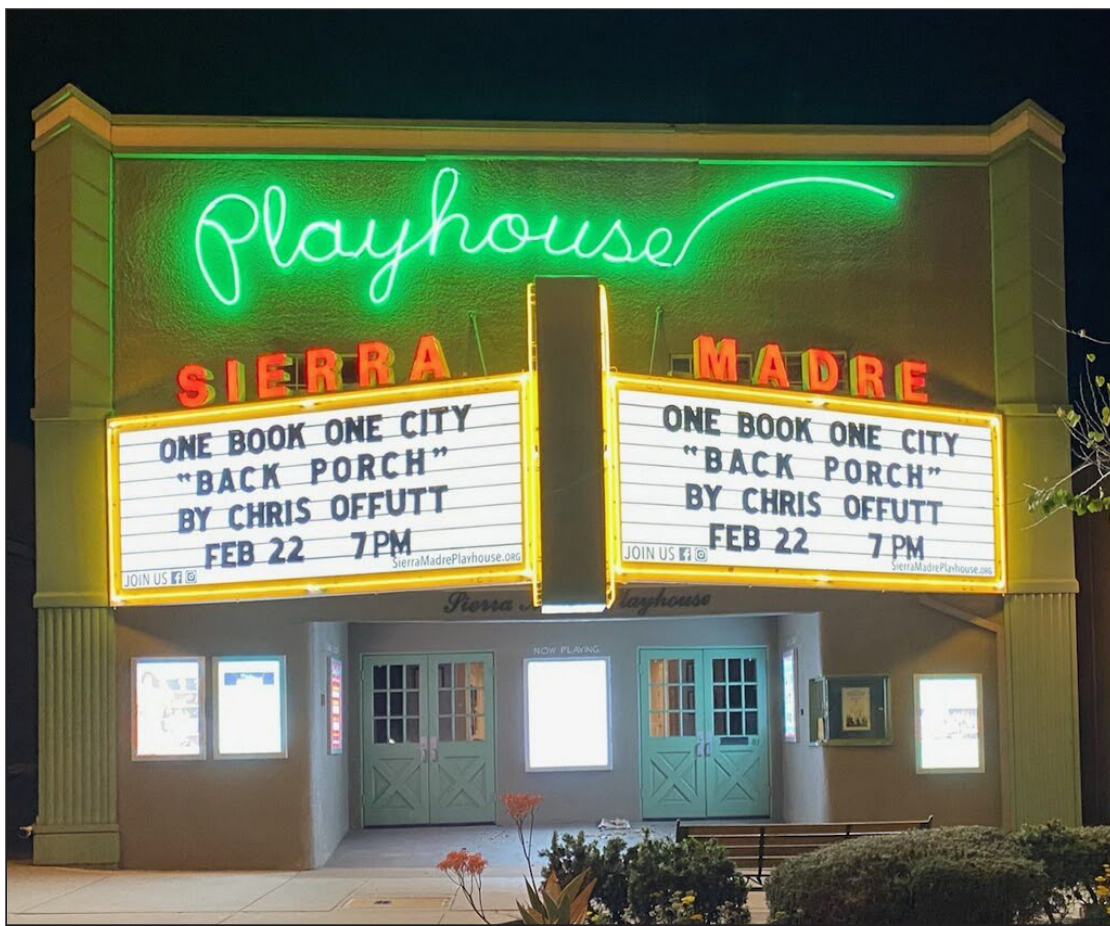
Give up complaining... focus on Gratitude
Give up pessimism... become an Optimist
Give up worry... trust Divine Providence
Give up bitterness... turn to Forgiveness
Give up hatred... return Good for evil
Give up negativism... be Positive
Give up anger... be more Patient
Give up pettiness... again, be more Patient
Give up gloom... enjoy the Beauty all around you
Give up jealousy... pray for Trust
Give up gossiping... think before you Speak
Give up giving up... Hang in There!

"Lent is about becoming, doing and changing, whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life in us right now." Sister Joan Chittister

The picture today is the beauty of Sierra Madre...deer on Canon Drive.

My book page: Amazon.com: Deanne Davis
Easter is on its way and "The Crown"

My story about what happened to that crown of thorns
Is now a real book in addition to a Kindle! Also available on Amazon.com
If you want to check it out, here's the link where you can see a short video:
https://youtu.be/Y_pCOX286T8



Join us this Monday, February 22 at 7 pm PST, for a virtual reading and talkback in collaboration with Sierra Madre Public Library.

Sierra Madre Playhouse and Sierra Madre Public Library collaborate once again to bring you this year's special virtual event for the Library's One Book One City (OBOC) program. Join us at 7 pm PST via YouTube Premiere for a virtual reading of the Appalachian-themed short story "Back Porch" by Chris Offutt, adapted and directed by SMP Producing Artistic Director Christian Lebano, produced by Catherine Adde and starring Anne Gee Byrd, Jackson Kendall, and Chris Offutt, followed by a live talkback via Zoom Webinar with the author, director, and cast at 7:30 pm PST.

This event is free (although donations to support production costs are much appreciated), but reservations are required and space is limited for the talkback. Upon reserving, you will receive the links for the event via an email confirming your reservation went through. Contact info@sierramadreplayhouse.org if you have any questions or need any assistance making a reservation.

BEWARE OF THE SCAMS.....EVEN YOU CAN BE A VICTIM!***Tax Season is Here, and So Are Scammers: Be Careful of These Top Tax Scams***

Tax season is here. Time to gather all your important documents and find the best way to file your income taxes. Whether you're doing your own taxes or hiring a tax preparer, consumers need to take steps to avoid tax scams and fraud.

Remember, you are legally responsible for what is on your tax return even if it is prepared by someone else.

If your income is less than \$57,000, you might be eligible for free, reliable tax preparation services through the VITA program. Before you pay for a possibly dishonest, costly, or fraudulent tax preparer, go to FreeTaxPrepLA.com to see if you can receive free tax preparation services near you, or file for free online. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VITA services have changed a bit this year. Virtual and drop off services are available, please contact your nearest VITA location to confirm. Contact Free Tax Prep LA to learn more.

Here are a few of the most common tax scams, according to the IRS.***Stimulus Payment & Unemployment Benefits Scams:***

With another round of stimulus payments possibly coming soon, taxpayers should be aware of scammers trying to take your payment away from you - never give out your personal information. Most taxpayers will receive their payment automatically as a direct deposit. With many Americans losing their main source of income this past year, unemployment benefits have been critical - but scammers are ready to take advantage of the situation too. Make sure to report the income you received from unemployment benefits and review these tips from the IRS to report fraud. Contact the IRS for more information.

Phishing: Watch out for fake emails or websites looking to steal your personal information. The IRS will never initiate contact with you by email about a bill or tax refund. Don't click on emails claiming to be from the IRS.

Phone Scams:

In recent years, consumers have received phone calls from criminals impersonating IRS agents and threatening people with arrest or deportation. These are scams. Never give out your personal information or send money if you receive these calls.

Identity Theft:

Watch out for scammers trying to steal your identity, not just during the tax filing season, but all year long. If you normally receive a tax refund, scammers might try to file a false refund and steal your hard-earned money. Protect your personal information, especially your Social Security number.

Return Preparer Fraud:

Make sure not to hire unscrupulous return preparers. While many tax professionals provide honest, high-quality service, some dishonest tax preparers and businesses try to scam clients, overcharge for services, push refund fraud, and other scams.

Inflated Refund Claims:

Beware of any person or business that promises inflated or "instant" tax refunds. Those preparers who ask clients to sign a blank return, promise a big refund before looking at taxpayer records or charge fees based on a percentage of the refund are probably up to no good.

If you believe you are a victim of income tax fraud, contact the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs at (800) 593-8222.

**Catch breaking news at:
mntviewsnews.com**

AROUND SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

CITY OF HOPE RENAMES WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH CENTER THE "ARTHUR RIGGS DIABETES & METABOLISM RESEARCH INSTITUTE"

At City of Hope, Arthur Riggs, Ph.D., and colleagues first developed the technology to create synthetic human insulin, used today by hundreds of millions of people worldwide for diabetes. Riggs also developed recombinant DNA technology capable of producing humanized monoclonal antibodies that are the foundation of modern treatments for diabetes, cancer, autoimmune diseases, blindness and a host of other diseases.



A scientific giant who has made it his life goal to create a world without diabetes and cancer, Dr. Riggs has quietly donated more than \$310 million to advance City of Hope biomedical research. Dr. Riggs has insisted that his gifts remain anonymous so that any attention would not detract from his work. He hopes that by making his gifts public, he can inspire others, both in California and across the world, to give at a time when new therapeutic discoveries are needed more than ever. The Riggs Institute is one of the world's foremost scientific organizations dedicated to investigating the biology of diabetes and its treatment. Including his most recent \$100 million gift, Riggs' philanthropy totals more than \$310 million to City of Hope over 30 years.

Above: Arthur Riggs, Ph.D., Director Emeritus of the Diabetes & Metabolism Research Institute at City of Hope. Photo Credit: City of Hope

THE NEW WORKFORCE REALITY: UPSKILLING AND RESKILLING POST-COVID-19

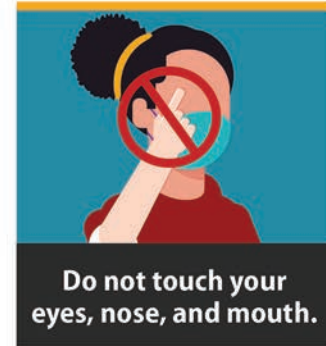
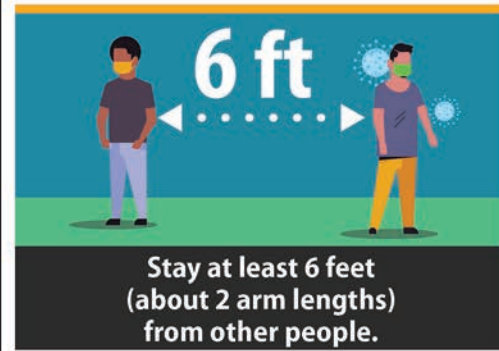
COVID-19 has changed our society and our world in many ways. The nature of the 21st Century workplace is a prime example. The pandemic has forced businesses in almost every sector to adopt new tools and techniques. New ways of doing things have permanently changed the nature and future of work. Pre-pandemic, telecommuting was on a slow but steady march toward greater acceptability. It has now been shown to be an effective business model for many businesses. Decreased employer costs and greater employee satisfaction are just two benefits that have made telecommuting the new norm for many businesses. Upskilling—refining current skills or acquiring new ones—help workers stay relevant in their current occupation. Reskilling—learning entirely new skills—prepares workers do a different job, often within the same company. This type of training is now seen by many experts as an absolute necessity for workers and businesses who wish to be successful and competitive. Amazon and MasterCard have already invested heavily in upskilling and reskilling for their current employees.

But what if you don't work for a corporate giant? How can workers across the employment spectrum adapt to the new workplace and at minimum personal cost? Noncredit courses offered at local community colleges, such as Citrus College, serving the greater San Gabriel Valley, offer training intended for students who want to gain general knowledge, learn a new skill or upgrade existing ones. And many are tuition free. Citrus College offers noncredit classes in Short Term Vocational Programs with High Employment Potential, Workforce Preparation, and English as a Second Language, to name just a few. While not applicable toward a degree, upon completion of required classes, students can earn a noncredit certificate of competency or completion. Courses include Microsoft Office Applications, Computer Keyboarding and Document Processing, Heating and Air Conditioning and a great many others. There's even an introductory course in online learning that prepares students to become successful online learners. Is it possible to future-proof your career? Maybe not entirely, but the key to staying competitive will certainly mean broadening your skills base, layering on new skills and keeping them fresh. The new workforce reality is already here—noncredit courses will give you the skills to thrive.



Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

Know the Facts



Californians have made extraordinary sacrifices to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Help is on the way as the state begins its rollout of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. Now the work begins to Vaccinate All 58. Together, we can end the pandemic – in all of California's 58 counties.

COVID-19 Vaccine is Here

- ▶ COVID-19 vaccine for California is here — It is safe and effective.
- ▶ California is committed to a fair and equitable allocation and distribution process. No one should bypass the established vaccine allocation and distribution process.
- ▶ California is receiving shipments of COVID-19 vaccines produced by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. Health care workers and residents in long-term care will be the first to be vaccinated.
- ▶ Individuals with the highest risk of becoming infected and spreading COVID-19 will receive vaccines first. Later in 2021, most Californians will have an opportunity to get vaccinated.
- ▶ California is working closely with community partners and stakeholders to help guide the planning process and ensure the vaccine is distributed and administered equitably.
- ▶ Vaccines are available at no cost.

COVID-19 Vaccine is Safe and Effective

- ▶ California has its own Scientific Safety Review Workgroup comprised of immunization, public health, academic and other experts who are vetting vaccine safety.
- ▶ The Moderna vaccine is approved for those 18 years and older, consists of two doses given 28 days apart, and is 94 percent effective against COVID-19.
- ▶ The Scientific Safety Review Workgroup has confirmed that the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have met high standards for safety and efficacy.
- ▶ Sometimes vaccination can cause a sore arm, aches, fatigue or fever for a few days after getting the vaccine, but these are not harmful.
- ▶ Vaccinated individuals should keep wearing masks, washing hands and watching their distance until the vaccine has been widely distributed.

About The Vaccines

- ▶ The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is approved for those 16 years and older, consists of two doses given 21 days apart, and is 95 percent effective against COVID-19.

Remember, your actions continue to save lives. Wear a mask, wash your hands, keep your distance, and when it's your turn, get vaccinated.

For the latest facts, please visit covid19.ca.gov/vaccines.

Protect From COVID-19.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine adds one more layer of protection.

A safe and effective vaccine to protect against COVID-19 is now available. Learn more: cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines

I GOT MY COVID-19 VACCINE!

PLEASE STAY SAFE! SOCIAALLY DISTANCE! WEAR A MASK!

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SIERRA MADRE CIVIC CLUB OFFERS EDUCATIONAL AWARDS TO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

The Sierra Madre Civic Club is offering Educational Awards to high school seniors who plan to attend a college or trade school. Last year, the five awardees represented Alverno Heights Academy, Harvard Westlake School – River Park, and Pasadena High School. Since 1944 Civic Club has actively been serving and enriching the Sierra Madre community through volunteering and philanthropic projects. All funds raised are distributed annually to local community organizations and to the recipients of the Educational Awards.

To be eligible, candidates must either reside in Sierra Madre, or work in Sierra Madre, or attend school in Sierra Madre. Along with the completed form provided by Sierra Madre Civic Club, which includes questions about interests and a personal statement, candidates are to provide two letters of reference.

Applications are available at the Sierra Madre Library, www.sierramadrecivicclub.org, on Facebook at Sierra Madre Civic Club, from college counselors at local high schools, or at lefler.sharon@gmail.com. Completed application packets must be received no later than April 2, 2021. Please encourage any eligible high school seniors to apply!

SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Alverno Heights Academy
200 N. Michillinda Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-3463 Head of School: Julia V. Fanara
E-mail address: jfanara@alvernoheights.org

Arcadia High School
180 Campus Drive Arcadia, CA 91007
Phone: (626) 821-8370, Principal: Brent Forsee
bforsee@ausd.net

Arroyo Pacific Academy
41 W. Santa Clara St. Arcadia, Ca,
(626) 294-0661 Principal: Phil Clarke
E-mail address: pclarke@arroyopacific.org

Barnhart School
240 W. Colorado Blvd Arcadia, Ca. 91007
(626) 446-5588
Head of School: Ethan Williamson
Kindergarten - 8th grade
website: www.barnhartschool.org

Bethany Christian School
93 N. Baldwin Ave. Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-3527
Preschool-TK-8th Grade
Principal: Dr. William Walner
website: www.bcslions.org

Clairbourn School
8400 Huntington Drive
San Gabriel, CA 91775
Phone: 626-286-3108 ext. 172
FAX: 626-286-1528
E-mail: jhawes@clairbourn.org

Foothill Oaks Academy
822 E. Bradbourne Ave., Duarte, CA 91010
(626) 301-9809
Principal: Nancy Lopez
www.foothilloaksacademy.org
office@foothilloaksacademy.org

Frostig School
971 N. Altadena Drive Pasadena, CA 91107
(626) 791-1255
Head of School: Jenny Janetzke
Email: jenny@frostig.org

The Gooden School
192 N. Baldwin Ave. Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-2410
Head of School, Jo-Anne Woolner
website: www.goodenschool.org

High Point Academy
1720 Kinneloa Canyon Road
Pasadena, Ca. 91107
Head of School: Gary Stern 626-798-8989
website: www.highpointacademy.org

La Salle College Preparatory
3880 E. Sierra Madre Blvd. Pasadena, Ca.
(626) 351-8951 website: www.lasallehs.org
Principal Mrs. Courtney Kassakhian

Monrovia High School
325 East Huntington Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016
(626) 471-2800 Principal Darvin Jackson

Email: schools@monrovia.k12.ca.us

Odyssey Charter School
725 W. Altadena Dr. Altadena, Ca. 91001
(626) 229-0993 Head of School: Lauren O'Neill
website: www.odysseycharterschool.org

Pasadena High School
2925 E. Sierra Madre Blvd. Pasadena, Ca.
(626) 396-5880 Principal: Roberto Hernandez
website: <http://pchs.pusd.us>

St. Rita Catholic School
322 N. Baldwin Ave. Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
Principal: Adela Solis (626) 355-6114
solis@st-ritaschool.org
Website: www.st-ritaschool.org

Sierra Madre Elementary School
141 W. Highland Ave, Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-1428 Principal: Lindsay LUIS
E-mail address: LUIS.lindsay@pusd.us

Sierra Madre Middle School
160 N. Canon Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 836-2947 Principal: Garrett Newsom
E-mail address: newsom.garrett@pusd.us

Walden School
74 S San Gabriel Blvd
Pasadena, CA 91107 (626) 792-6166
www.waldenschool.net

Weizmann Day School
1434 N. Altadena Dr. Pasadena, Ca. 91107
(626) 797-0204
Lisa Feldman: Head of School

Wilson Middle School
300 S. Madre St. Pasadena, Ca. 91107
(626) 449-7390 Principal: Ruth Esseln
E-mail address: resseln@pusd.us

Pasadena Unified School District
351 S. Hudson Ave., Pasadena, Ca. 91109
(626) 396-3600 Website: www.pusd@pusd.us

Arcadia Unified School District
234 Campus Dr., Arcadia, Ca. 91007
(626) 821-8300 Website: www.ausd.net

Monrovia Unified School District
325 E. Huntington Dr., Monrovia, Ca. 91016
(626) 471-2000
Website: www.monroviashools.net

Duarte Unified School District
1620 Huntington Dr., Duarte, Ca. 91010
(626) 599-5000
Website: www.duarte.k12.ca.us

Arcadia Christian School
1900 S. Santa Anita Avenue Arcadia, CA 91006
Preschool - and TK - 8th Grade
626-574-8229/626-574-0805
Email: inquiry@acslions.com
Principal: Cindy Harmon
website: www.acslions.com

SIERRA MADRE MIDDLE SCHOOL

PASADENA LEARNS PROGRAM

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WHAT WE OFFER

Our Program offers:

- School Work Assistance
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PROGRAM DAYS & HOURS

Monday- Friday
8:00 AM-2:00 PM

PROGRAM COST

\$250 fee/month

COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES

- All students will have a properly social distanced area to work safely in our in-person program.
- Students and staff must wear mask while on campus and during program hours.
- Temperature checks will be taken upon entering campus.

SITE COORDINATOR

Ashlyn Brown

CONTACT US

(626) 720 2588
brown.ashlyn@pusd.us

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Kids: color stuff in!

African and American Folktales

In America, we are lucky to have folktales from around the world. As people come here to live, they bring stories they have heard and shared before. These stories tell about life and nature. African Americans have a wealth of folklore from Africa to share with their families and others. Some also share stories from their history as slaves and free people in America. Most slaves were not taught to read or write, so they *told* tales of Africa as well as new stories of life as experienced here. Many of these stories have been collected and written down. The tales in children's story books are beautifully illustrated for all to enjoy. Ask a librarian for help in finding some of these folktales... you'll be glad you did!

Many parents and grandparents tell folktales to the children in their family. Storytellers spin them for listeners of all ages. **A folktale may have:**

1. _____ solved
2. _____ of things that are hard to understand
3. _____ for an unkind person
4. _____ learned
5. a _____ for a good person
6. _____ who can overcome anything
7. _____ spells
8. _____ animals

Folktales often use animals to make a point. The animals are used to show what people are like or how they behave.

A cat may be sneaky.

A dog may be too trusting and get tricked.

Which animals may be used to stand for these traits?

1. stubborn, fearful
2. misleading, gets others to do what he wants
3. timid, loyal
4. playful, clever
5. wise, brave
6. tricky, greedy, lazy
7. proud, cruel
8. sneaky, clever
9. honorable, swift
10. patient, plotting

magical heroes

reward explanations

punishment

What is your favorite folktale? Did you hear it from your parents or grandparents?

talking lessons

cheetah

lion

monkey

crocodile

tortoise

spider snake

jackal

chameleon

warthog

10

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BUSINESS HOURS MONDAY - SATURDAY 3PM - 9PM
HAPPY HOUR MONDAY - SATURDAY 3PM - 5PM

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HOW TO CHOOSE A MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM

Dear Savvy Senior: I am interested in getting my mom, who lives alone, a medical alert system with a wearable pendant button that will let her call for help if she falls or has a medical emergency. What can you tell me to help me choose one? Too Many Choices



Dear Too Many:
A good medical alert system is an effective and affordable tool that can help keep your mom safe and living in her own home longer. But with all the different products and features available today, choosing one can be challenging. Here are some tips that can help.

Three Key Questions
Medical alert systems, which have been around since the 1980s, provide a wearable help button – usually in the form of a neck pendant or wristband – that would put your mom in touch with a dispatcher who could summon emergency help or contact a friend or family member as needed.
To help you narrow down your options and choose a system that best fits your mom's needs, here are three key questions you'll need to ask, along with some top-rated companies that offer these products.

Does your mom want a home-based or mobile system?
Medical alert systems were originally designed to work inside the home with a landline telephone, which is still an option. But since fewer and fewer households have landlines these days, most companies today also offer home-based systems that work over a cellular network. With these systems, pressing the wearable help button allows you to speak to a dispatcher through a base unit located in your home.
In addition, many companies offer mobile medical alert options, too. You can use these systems at home, but they'll also allow you to call for help while you're out and about.
Mobile alerts operate over cellular networks and incorporate GPS technology. They allow you to talk and listen to the operator directly through the pendant button, and because of the GPS, your location would be known in order for help to be sent.
If your mom doesn't leave the house very often, she may not need a mobile system, but if she is still active, she may want added protection outside the home.

Should her system be monitored or not?
The best medical alert systems are monitored, meaning that the help button connects you with a trained operator at a 24/7 dispatching center.
But you also have the option to choose a system that isn't monitored. With these, when you press the help button, the device automatically dials a friend or family member on your programmed emergency call list.
These products can often be set up to call multiple people and to contact emergency services if you don't get an answer from someone on your list.

Should you add a fall-detection feature?
Most medical alert companies today now offer the option of an automatic fall detection pendant for an additional fee of \$10 to \$15 per month. These pendants sense falls when they occur and automatically contact the dispatch center, just as they would if you had pressed the call button.
But be aware that this technology isn't full proof. In some cases, this feature may register something as a fall that isn't. The alarm might go off if you drop it or momentarily lose your balance but don't actually land on the ground.

Top Rated Systems
Here are four top companies, rated by Consumer Reports, that offer home and mobile monitored medical alert systems:

Bay Alarm Medical: Fees range between \$20 and \$40 per month; BayAlarmMedical.com; 877-522-9633.
GreatCall's Lively Mobile Plus: The device costs \$50 plus a \$25 to \$40 monthly service fee; GreatCall.com; 800-650-5921.
MobileHelp: Monthly fees run \$20 to \$45; MobileHelp.com; 800-809-9664.
Phillips Lifeline: \$30 to \$50/month, plus a onetime device/activation fee of \$50 to \$100; Lifeline.Philips.com; 855-681-5351.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

FAMILY MATTERS By Marc Garlett



MANAGING YOUR DIGITAL AFTERLIFE: A GUIDE TO FACEBOOK'S LEGACY CONTACT

If you use Facebook to share, track, and report on important life events, it can provide an intimate snapshot of your life, and it can also serve as a key part of your legacy—one you'll likely want to protect following your death. With this in mind, as with any other digital asset you own, you should include your Facebook profile as part of your estate plan.

To that end, Facebook offers a special function, known as a "legacy contact," for managing your profile after death. Using a legacy contact, you can choose someone to look after your account and control the activities of your account once you've passed away.

Managing Your Digital Afterlife
At the time of your death, Facebook allows your account to be "memorialized," so friends and family can gather and share memories of you and your life. To have your account memorialized, Facebook requires proof of the account holder's death using a special request form and evidence of death, such as an obituary. Facebook accounts can be memorialized regardless of whether or not a legacy contact has been selected.

Once your account has been memorialized, only confirmed friends can see your profile or find it in a search. Your memorialized profile will no longer appear in friend suggestions, nor will anyone receive birthday updates or other account notifications.

When your account is memorialized, the word "Remembering" will be added next to your profile name. Depending on your privacy settings, friends and family members can post content and share memories on your timeline. A memorialized account is locked, so its original content cannot be altered or deleted, even if someone has your password information.

What Your Legacy Contact Can Do
If you've designated a legacy contact, once your account has been memorialized, that individual will be able to manage your Facebook account based on the permissions you've granted him or her. As with any other person you select to manage your assets after your death, you'll want to carefully consider who to name as your legacy contact, as this individual will have control over your memorialized Facebook account and therefore also control your legacy to some extent.

Your Facebook legacy contact can perform several functions, including:
Write a pinned post for your profile to share a final message on your behalf or provide information about your memorial service.
View posts, even if you had set your privacy to Only Me.
Decide who can see and who can post tributes on your memorialized profile.
Delete tribute posts.
Change who can see posts that you're tagged in.
Remove tags of you that someone else has posted.
Respond to new friend requests.
Update your profile picture and cover photo.
Request the removal of your account.
Download a copy of what you've shared on Facebook, if you have this feature turned on.

What Your Legacy Contact Cannot Do
However, it's important to point out that your legacy contact doesn't have unlimited control over your account. To this end, your legacy contact cannot take the following actions:
Log into your account as you.
Read your direct messages.
Remove any of your friends or make new friend requests.

Alternatively, if you're not interested in having your Facebook account continue after your death, you can choose to have your account permanently deleted upon your passing.

SENIOR HAPPENINGS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! ... February Birthdays*



Tracy Verhoeven, Beatrice DaRe, Cathrine Adde, Hilda Pittman, Anne-Marie Stockdale, Susan Henderson, Allie Attay, Ursula El-Tawansy, Gladys Moser, Sylvia Lorhan, Ana Ptanski, Winifred Swanson, Janet Gillespie, Marian DeMars, Vickie Vernon, Mary Beth Knox, Sharon Lefler. To add your name to this distinguished list, please call the paper at 626.355.2737. YEAR of birth not required

SENIOR ACTIVITIES IN SIERRA MADRE

CHAIR YOGA Every Monday and Wednesday, 10-10:45 am Chair yoga with Paul is coming back! Class will begin on Monday, August 10th and will be held in the Covered Pavilion in Memorial Park in front of the Senior Center. Please join us for some gentle stretching, yoga, balance exercise and overall relaxation. Class size is limited so please call 264-8923 to reserve your spot.

HAWAIIAN AND POLYNESIAN DANCE CLASS Every Friday, 10-10:45 am Class will also meet in the Covered Pavilion in Memorial Park in front of the Senior Center. Join the class with instructor Barbara as she leads you through the art of Hula. Please call 264-8923 with any questions.
Classes will maintain a distance of 6 ft between participants. ALL participants must be wearing masks for the duration of the class. All equipment used will be sanitized after each use before it is stored. Each participant is responsible for providing their own water, masks and needed equipment or supplies for each class. Please call the Community Services Department at 355-5278 with any questions or concerns.

OCTOBER CRAFT
Wednesday, October 21, 11:00 am. Please join me as we try our hands at making Wooden Owl Ornaments. This will be a new type of program as we create our masterpieces via Zoom to ensure all of our safety. I will have all the supplies individually packaged and ready for pickup on Monday, October 19th pickup will be between 10:00 am-2:00 pm. I will have enough supplies for 10 participants. Reservations are required so please call 355-5278 x 704 to secure your spot. Please note that this is an ONLINE class that will be held via Zoom. We will not be meeting in the Hart Park House Senior Center.

IDEAS
Do you have any ideas for programming? Is there a class or club you would like to see in our Senior Community? Please call or email Lawren Heinz with ideas or questions. 626-355-5278 x 704 lhein@cityofsierramadre.com
City staff are monitoring email communication daily, and although employees are minimizing direct engagement and interfacing less with the community, please note that voice messages, emails, and social media responses are being addressed in the most efficient and timely manner. If at any time additional information is needed, please contact City Hall Administrative Services at (626) 355-7135, Monday-Thursday from 7:30a – 5:30p, as they are taking messages and e-mailing the appropriate person. For messages that may trickle in otherwise, please note our team is remotely checking voicemail daily at the Community Services Department, (626) 355-5278 x702.

SIERRA MADRE SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
The City of Sierra Madre is following these procedures to provide current communication in light of COVID-19 and keep the Senior Community and families informed of essential information and resources. City staff are monitoring email communication daily, and although employees are minimizing direct engagement and practicing social distancing in the community, please note that voice messages, emails, and social media responses are being addressed in the most efficient and timely manner.
If at any moment additional information is needed, please contact City Hall Administrative Services at (626) 355-7135, Monday-Thursday from 7:30a – 5:30p, as they are taking messages and e-mailing the appropriate person.
For messages that may trickle in otherwise, please note our team is remotely checking voicemail daily at the Community Services Department, (626) 355-5278 x702.
Community Services Department will continue email communication with Senior residents and aging community members.
If you know of family members or neighbors who may benefit from accessing information electronically, and to receive the department's Seniors Newsletter via email but may not otherwise have been included on an email group list, please send your request with email address to the following team members: Lawren Heinz lhein@cityofsierramadre.com and Clarissa Lowe Clowe@cityofsierramadre.com.
City Social Media will continue via Facebook as well as Instagram, and information sharing will include updates as details becomes available.

Mater Dolorosa - Sierra Madre Meal Pick-Up Program provides seal-packaged frozen meals, 5-per person every Thursday, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. at Hart Park House Senior Center 222 W. Sierra Madre Blvd. Donations are accepted. Call (626) 355-5278; x702 or 704. **YWCA Intervale Meal Program** - Effective Wednesday, April 1, 2020

YWCA has transitioned their distribution of take home meals at the Sierra Madre Hart Park House Senior Center to a home-delivery meal program. Participants previously reserved for meal pick-up as of Wednesday, 3/25/20 were informed that they would begin to have their meals delivered to their homes, beginning Wednesday, April 1, 2020 until further notice.

OUT TO PASTOR

A Weekly Religion Column by Rev. James Snyder



WHAT'S PETE GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

If there's anybody that can be conned, it's Yours Truly. It's not so much that I'm stupid; I'm just naïve. I believe when somebody says something, they mean exactly what they say.

So, if you can't swindle me, you might as well hang it up and get a real job. I must confess I often know a certain person is trying to take advantage of me. But, that's another story. One problem I see is that people are always blaming someone else for their problems. I must confess I do that on occasion, probably more so than I will acknowledge. To blame someone else for my problem gets me off the hook, or so I think. I gladly will take credit, but I'm slow in accepting blame. I'm trying to change that a little bit, but it's a slow progress.

The other day the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were going downtown to do some shopping. I don't always go with her when she's shopping, but sometimes it's necessary. During these times, I always allow her to drive her vehicle. She has a wonderful red van, and enjoys driving it. I encourage her to drive it, and not because I don't like to drive, or because she's a better driver than me. If the truth were known, and I keep this a little under the table, I allow her to drive because I am not using the gas in my vehicle when she is driving. I'm not cheap, but I am rather stingy when it comes to money. She is an excellent driver, and why shouldn't she be? I'm the one who taught her how to drive. Enough said on that subject. As we were driving down the main street, several cars swayed in and out of the traffic, and my wife almost hit one. In complete frustration, she said, "For Pete's sake, what's wrong with people these days?" Because she was in the driver's seat, I needed to go along with her and keep my mouth closed. There are many times when I need to open my mouth, but I have yet to discover which times. While she's driving, this is one of the times when I keep my mouth closed and my thoughts to myself. She reiterated this phrase several times to the store and back home again. I helped take the store items into the house while I kept my mouth closed. We had supper, and then graduated into the living room to have our coffee and watch a little bit of TV news. I like to try to keep up with what's going on in the world. Several stories were just outrageous, and people were doing such crazy things.

It wasn't long before my wife said, "For Pete's sake, what's wrong with people today?" Okay, I think I've had enough of that, and I wanted to get to the bottom of it without sinking my ship. "Who," I said as calmly as possible, "is Pete, and what does he had to do with anything?" She looked at me, gave me one of her stares, and then went back to watching the news. It wasn't long before another story came across the screen, and she said, "For Pete's sake, doesn't anybody know any different?" I tried controlling myself. Honestly, I tried. But at this point, it had crossed over the line, and I said to her, "Who is Pete? And do I know him?" I tried my best to control any giggle. I looked at her, and she looked back at me with another one of her stares. "Well, who do you think he is?" At that point, I was tempted to answer, "Is Pete any relation to Jake?" I knew that I would be in more trouble than I could handle at the time. I sense she was getting a little frustrated, but most of her frustration was in my direction. To look at me and said, "What are you laughing at?" I couldn't contain myself at that point. I replied, "I just was thinking of a joke." No sense in showing my hand at this point. For several days she never used that phrase, at least in my hearing. And I was waiting for it. I can only hold myself for so long. One night there was a loud noise like gunshots outside, and we couldn't comprehend what it was. Looking at my wife, I said, "Call Pete and ask him what's going on." She gave me one of her looks and finally said, "Why don't you call Jake and ask him?" Finally, we laughed together most heartily. I love it when a joke comes together. I thought about this for a couple of days. How often we blame people for things I don't even make sense? We really don't want to take personal responsibility for a lot of things. Thinking about this, I remembered a biblical passage. "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12-13). Blaming others is not a new phenomenon. But, it only gets us into trouble and what started the mess we're in today. Accept the blame and get on with life. Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, 1471 Pine Road, Ocala, FL 34472.

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CHRISTOPHER Nyerges



BE HERE NOW

[Nyerges is the author of such books as "Extreme Simplicity," "Enter the Forest," "Foraging California," "Self-Sufficient Home," and others. He can be reached at www.SchoolofSelf-Reliance.com.]

"Be here now." Remember that mantra from one of the 60's gurus? Though the slogan was widely used and spouted by weekend philosophers, Ram Dass' simple quote was perhaps the most profound thing anyone could have said.

It can also be said as "Now is now," or "Now is the only reality." I recall waking up early one Saturday morning. I was still in my early teens, and though I woke up in the early morning, it was also a time of simply waking up to my own awareness, waking up to the larger reality all around me, still largely not understood.

In my earliest years of childhood, I was always living in the moment. There was no other option. I think, based on my own experiences, the perspective of reality of the child is probably very much like a dog, a cat, a wild animal, in the sense that the animal has no choice but to be very intensely in the moment. Survival requires that. The animal does not think about things like getting older, planning for the future, what will I wear tomorrow, how I look to my friends, how can I get more people to like me, what costume I will wear for Halloween, how can I make money during summer vacation, why does time go so slow, what will I be when I grow up, etc.

In other words, once I became aware of how the "adult world" operates, I lost my innocence of my own self as an autonomous and pure being in the universe.

Somehow, I was no longer like the dogs and cats and deer and wild animals, focusing solely and intently on the moment. I was no longer focusing on "being here now." I learned though my osmotic study of adults that it was important to think about the future, even the distant future, even the unlikely future.

And slowly but surely, like the grown-up adults of the "real world," I found that I was more and more thinking about, and worrying about, and planning for, the distant future. I was not in the moment.

This is not to imply that adults in the adult world should not plan and prepare for the future. That would be silly to suggest. However, somehow, we need to do both. We need to think about the future, while living and being in the moment. We need balance because we have become obsessively and dangerously imbalanced. Why else would so many people have found meaning in Ram Dass' quote?

Part of the process of "being here now," I have slowly discovered, is the idea that the journey is more important than the destination. How often have you driven on a long car ride, or been on a backpacking trek, and someone is constantly asking, "Are we there yet?" or "How much longer?" Since that mindset has not found a way to enjoy and learn from the journey, once it reaches the destination, it will begin to ask, "When are we going home?"

It took me a long time and concerted effort to enjoy the journey. I remember one mentor, Linda Sheer, who grew up in rural Appalachia, who used to tell me that I needed to quit focusing on getting somewhere in the woods. She slowly explained the process of being in the moment, little by little, and after awhile, it no longer mattered where I was, or where I thought I was going.

My childhood growing up in Pasadena was all about trying to do something "exciting" and "not boring." I believed that other people, elsewhere, lived exciting lives and somehow I should find them and try to be like them. Gradually, as I actually met and interacted with some of the most "exciting" people in my orbit, I found their lives empty, hollow, mostly window-dressing. Not only did I further my efforts to "be here now," but also to just "be myself" and learn to be OK to be alone, or to be comfortable with anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances.

In "The Education of Little Tree," this idea is described in a slightly different way. Little Tree's grandmother explains that there is the body-mind and the spirit-mind. The body-mind deals with all the things of the world and the body (money, security, jobs, that sort of thing). The spirit-mind deals with trust, honesty, treating others as you would like to be treated, concern for others, and all the things we tend to think of as spiritually and morally-focused. Grandmother said that both minds should be developed in life, but some people only develop the body-mind. Then, when they die, since they can only take the spirit-mind with them, they don't have much at all to carry them through in the hereafter.

A conversation with my friend Monica made me think back on these topics of childhood. We were discussing the concepts of "heaven" and "hell." Sometimes, we have everything possible that we need and yet we are not happy, and want more, and want what our neighbors have. Such a person should be in a state of heaven, but their desire for more physical things keeps them in a state of hell. I know that's not what religions mean when they speak of heaven or hell, but my point is that when we are always thinking about what happens after we die, we lose sight of the fact that our countless everyday decisions are actually forming our very destiny. We do better when we focus on each moment, what is right to do, what should be avoided, how we should treat people that minute.

That is how I understood "be here now." It may not be how Ram Dass meant it, but the idea that I should never lose sight of the fact that now is the only reality has stayed with me life-long.

**PLEASE STAY SAFE!
SOCIALLY
DISTANCE!
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Tournament Foundation Now Accepting Grant Applications

The Pasadena Tournament of Roses Foundation is now accepting applications for its 2021 grant program. The grants support new and ongoing programs benefiting children, teens, adults, and seniors. Since its inception in 1983, the Foundation has invested more than \$3 million into the community by supporting 200+ Pasadena-area organizations. The grant awards in 2020 exceeded \$140,000, which funded 16 organizations in the San Gabriel Valley.

The 2021 grant cycle will be structured as follows - Tier 1: a one-year grant for \$35,000, Tier 2: a one-year grant for \$15,000 and Tier 3: several one-year grants for up to \$10,000. The Foundation will also require applicants to include information on how their program will be delivered, despite the continued challenges of the pandemic.

Eligible applicants are organizations with 501(c)(3) status, as of the 2021 submission deadline, that serve one or more of the following communities: Alhambra, Altadena, Arcadia, La Cañada Flintridge, Monrovia, Pasadena, San Gabriel, San Marino, Sierra Madre, South Pasadena, and Temple City. As in previous years, grants will be given in the categories of Performing and Visual Arts, Sports and Recreation, and Education Programs (Early Childhood, Middle and High School), Literacy and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

To apply and for additional details on the 2021 grant cycle, eligible organizations should visit the Tournament of Roses Foundation page: tournamentofroses.com/foundation/.

New and returning applicants will utilize a new application system for the 2021 grant cycle. The application system instructions and Foundation Grant guidelines can be found on the foundation website. The website will direct users to a welcome page with instructions on how to begin the application process.

Applications will be accepted through March 1 at 5:00PM. The Foundation's Board of Directors will make the final grant selections at its annual spring meeting, and applicants will be notified of their funding status via email in April 2021.

Applicants can contact the Foundation directly at foundation@tournamentofroses.org for further questions.

Katnip News! A PLEA FROM LIFELINE FOR PETS



It's a difficult time for pet owners, AND heartbreaking that MANY HAVE BEEN forced to surrender their beloved pets. Pets in shelters will increase, while

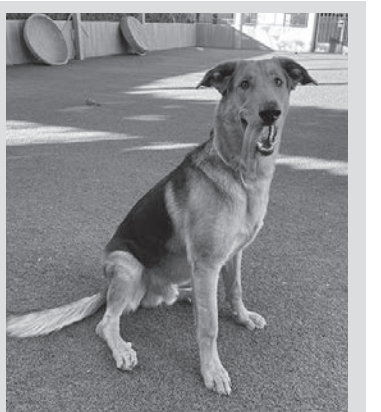


Lenny lifelineforpets.org

adoptions will decrease. Yet, pet care must go on. Lifeline for Pets would love to help, but we are GREATLY IN NEED OF Local FOSTER HOMES. EVERY TIME WE PLACE A KITTY IN A FOSTER HOME, WE MAKE ROOM FOR ANOTHER ONE IN NEED, such as young Lenny here. If you are looking for a way to make a difference, this is it. If you have room in your home and in your heart to foster until placed into a permanent home, please contact us. Call 626-676-9505 or email us for our foster application at info@lifelineforpets.org.

Pet of the Week

Looking for a big puppy? Meet Milo! Milo is ten months old and full of energy. He likes to jump when he's excited, just like a puppy, so his ideal adopter would be someone who wants to teach him his puppy manners and give him lots of playtime. Milo already knows basic commands, so we know he's very smart. If you're looking for a fun dog with boundless energy (and a super cute face), Milo is ready to spring into your life!



The adoption fee for dogs is \$150. All dog adoptions include spay or neuter, microchip, and age-appropriate vaccines.

New adopters will receive a complimentary health-and-wellness exam from VCA Animal Hospitals, as well as a goody bag filled with information about how to care for your pet.

View photos of adoptable pets and schedule a virtual adoption appointment at pasadenahumane.org. Adoptions are by appointment only, and new adoption appointments are available every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. for the following week.

Pets may not be available for adoption and cannot be held for potential adopters by phone calls or email.

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Mountain Views News Mission Statement

The traditions of community newspapers and the concerns of our readers are this newspaper's top priorities. We support a prosperous community of well-informed citizens. We hold in high regard the values of the exceptional quality of life in our community, including the magnificence of our natural resources. Integrity will be our guide.

STUART TOLCHIN



AGITATION AND CURIOSITY

The only question that people seem to be asking lately is 'Have you had your vaccine shot yet?' Yes, I had the first shot and am due for the next on Tuesday but for reasons I don't quite understand I am still very agitated. There are important questions such as how long after getting a shot will I still be a source of contagion? How long does the immunity, if it is immunity, last? What about the new variants of the virus; am I protected from those? What about the fact that the less wealthy areas of the world are not getting their fair share of the vaccine? In fact, as I understand it the less wealthy neighborhoods in the U.S. are not receiving their fair share?

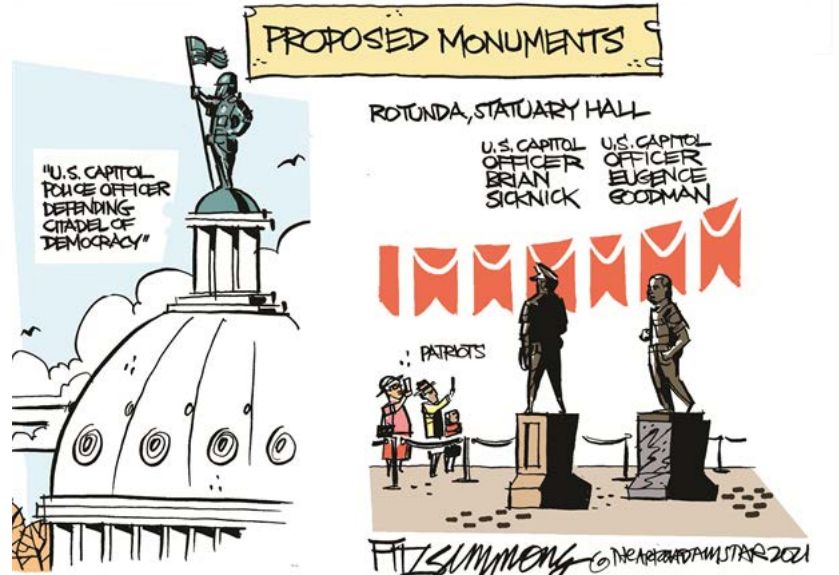
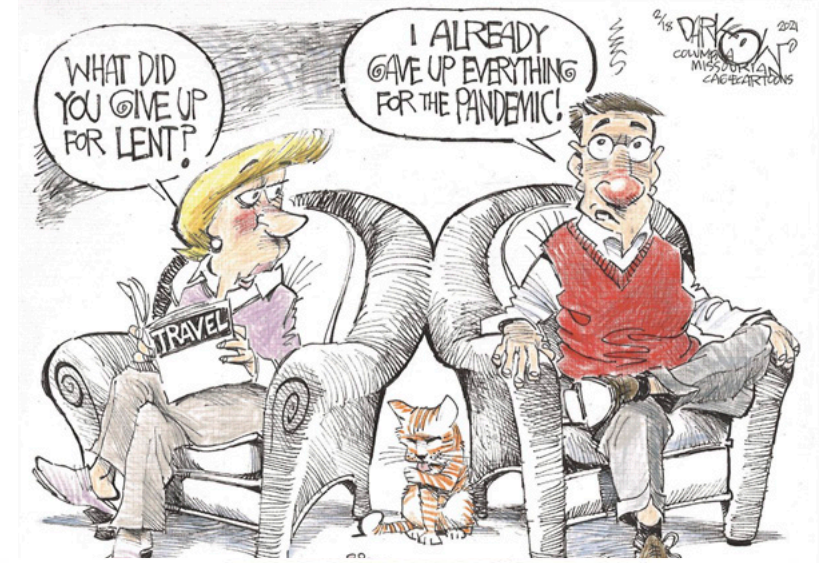
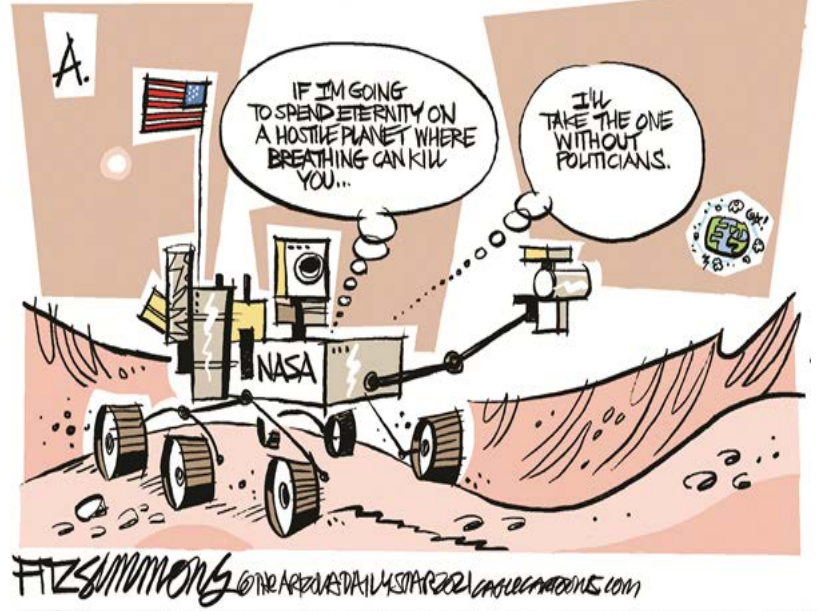
Really it seems that no one wants to consider these questions. All that is asked is where did I get the shot and did it hurt? For me the important questions relate to the continued patterns of discriminatory housing that continue to exist in Los Angeles County which result in many of the other problems in Los Angeles. When my parents and I moved from Chicago we finally found a place in an apartment complex in Venice. This was an all White complex very just to the East of Broadway Elementary School. At first this was an integrated School because to the West of Broadway School which was a predominant African-American neighborhood called Oakwood. I think I went to Broadway for one semester after which all the White Students were transferred to a newly built school. I did not think much about this at the time, as I was only ten or eleven, but I am a witness to the racial reordering.

Soon, thereafter, my family moved to North Hollywood, which at that time, together with nearby Studio City, was a completely segregated White neighborhood. It still remains that way today. The elementary school, the newly built Madison Junior High School, and the soon newly built Grant High School were similarly completely segregated. I don't know if this was a concern of my parents, it probably was, I wondered why we did not move to Burbank as that was where my father purchased a grocery store. I remember asking why we didn't move closer to the store in Burbank and I remember somebody telling me that Burbank was a very anti-Semitic area.

Fortunately for me almost all of the students I associated with in Junior and Senior High School were Jewish. There were many non-Jews in these Schools but there was a kind of tracking system which was used that placed most of the college-bound type kids into the same classes. Not surprisingly most of these kids were Jewish. I know there is a kind of racist element to what I am saying but I am just reporting on what I know to be true. The kids in what was called the starred classes (not six-pointed but starred nevertheless) generally had college educated parents and future plans which included college.

Unquestionably, a student's future is largely determined by the attitude of parents and friends. If Los Angeles residents truly want to make changes that move toward equality then the discriminatory residential housing patterns must be changed. Neighbors and friends, many of whom support Black Lives Matter and Democratic ideals, do not want to talk about sacrifices that must be made and wonder why I am so agitated. I like it here but I am agitated I guess because I feel like a hypocrite and am curious as to why no one else seems to have the same problem. By the way when will indoor dining be allowed? I am just curious. I'm going crazy stuck in the house.

Q. WILL PERSEVERANCE EVER GET HOMESICK?



LEFT, RIGHT OR CENTER!

DICK POLMAN



LIMBAUGH WAS TRUMP LONG BEFORE WE GOT TRUMP

A guy once wrote that, for sheer perverse entertainment, "nothing beats the current spectacle of Republican applicants quaking at the feet of their master. Nothing better illustrates the sorry state of the party than this abject ritual." Oh wait - I'm the guy who wrote that. In 2009. About the GOP's genuflections to Rush Limbaugh.

Lest we forget, the Republican party's descent into mindless demagoguery did not begin with Donald Trump. Trump is merely the cherry on top of the GOP's toxic sundae. The best way to mark Limbaugh's passing is to remind ourselves that the serial-lying hate merchant was working the turf - and terrorizing Republicans who dared challenge him - long before Trump conned a fatal minority of the 2016 electorate.

There's no point in sharing a laundry list of Rush's most detestable remarks - they're too numerous anyway. Suffice it to say that he marketed MAGA before there was MAGA, tapping into the rabid right's angry id so successfully that Republican leaders morphed into wimps, living in fear of his aggrieved manly white fans.

See if this sounds vaguely familiar: In 2009, when Rush was particularly uninged by the ascent of a black man to the presidency, some Republicans dared suggest that he tone himself down for the common good of all. Georgia congressman Phil Gingrey lamented that it was "easy" for Limbaugh "to stand back and throw bricks. You don't have to try to do what's best for your people and your party... You stir up a bit of controversy and gin the base and that sort of thing." The same week, GOP national chairman Michael Steele called Limbaugh's rhetoric as "ugly" and "incendiary."

But after Rush lashed back at both guys on the air, their spines magically turned to mush. Gingrey felt compelled to say: "I see eye-to-eye with Rush Limbaugh. I regret and apologize for the fact that my comments have offended... I realize it is my responsibility to clarify my own comments." And Steele entered a Rush reeducation camp and emerged fully cured: "I have enormous respect for Rush Limbaugh... There was no attempt on my part to diminish his voice or his leadership." And see if this sounds familiar:

In 2012 (you may remember this), a Georgetown Law student named Sandra Fluke spoke favorably about birth control at a congressional hearing. Rush didn't like that. On his show, he called her "a slut" and "a prostitute" and said she was apparently "having so much sex, it's amazing she can still walk." But when Republican leaders were asked whether they agreed with their de facto party chairman, they hunkered in their bunker while Rush treated Fluke the way a junkyard dog gnaws meat.

Days later, their responses were a mix of defiance and weak tea. Newt Gingrich (whose 1995 ascent to House Speaker was greased by Rush) naturally chose defiance. When asked for comment, he said: "I am astonished at the desperation of the elite media." But more often, the respondents tut-tutted as if tiptoeing on eggshells.

Presidential candidate Mitt Romney, when asked about Rush's attack on Fluke, did the furrowed-brow thing: "It's not the language I would have used." The House Speaker, John Boehner, said through a spokesman that Rush's words were "inappropriate." And another presidential candidate, Rick Santorum, gave us a word salad: "(Rush) is being absurd. But that's, you know, an entertainer can be absurd. And - and he's taking the absurd, you know, the absurd - absurd, you know, sort of, you know, point of view here as to how - how far do you go? And, look, he's in a very different business than I am."

So what we're seeing today - as quaking Republicans like Kevin McCarthy rush to Mar-a-Lago to kiss the loser's ring, as state and county Republicans censure the few senators who stood up to fascism - is merely the harvesting of the hate ethos that Limbaugh seeded so successfully. No wonder Trump debased the Presidential Medal of Freedom, honoring Rush for his pioneering contributions to cult-think. I know that when someone dies, it's best to say nice things. But to borrow the Shakespearean words of Marc Antony, I have come to bury Rush, not to praise him.

Dick Polman, a veteran national political columnist based in Philadelphia and a Writer in Residence at the University of Pennsylvania, writes at DickPolman.net. Email him at dickpolman7@gmail.com

TOM PURCELL



BIDEN, SOCIAL SECURITY, MY RETIREMENT AND THE WEALTHY

It's February. It's cold. To fend off the winter blahs, I dream of one day retiring to a warm beach, where I'll stand in the surf, sipping beverages from glasses with little umbrellas in them.

I spend hours using the Social Security Benefits Calculator to determine how much Social Security will pay me, after I've paid in many thousands of dollars throughout my working life.

And I wonder if my full Social Security benefits will be there when I retire, so I can afford to escape cold, gloomy winters.

It's a realistic question. In 1950, there were about 16 workers paying into Social Security for every person drawing benefits. Today, there are roughly two.

According to Kiplinger, "starting in 2021 the program's annual costs will exceed its income from employee and employer payroll taxes and interest earnings. Once the program turns that corner, Social Security will begin drawing down assets in its trust funds to continue providing full benefits."

If nothing is done, the trust fund will run dry by 2034 and will only be able to pay 76% of its promised benefits.

Worse, that would also take a heavy toll on elderly Americans who struggle to get by with Social Security as their primary income.

The Biden administration has a plan to prevent cuts and increase benefits for elderly Americans most in need - but wealthy Americans aren't going to like it much.

Currently, workers pay a 6.2% Social Security payroll contribution on wages up to \$142,800; their employers pay an additional 6.2%. If you're self-employed, like me, you pay the whole 12.4% - which we former English majors refer to as "a lot!"

Social Security was considered an insurance program when it was created in 1936. Under its original classification, payroll contributions weren't really "income taxes" at all, but "insurance payments" made throughout our working lives so we can get monthly retirement benefits until we die.

But some policymakers don't see the program that way. They see it as too heavily funded by the middle class and not funded enough by the well-to-do.

Consider: A self-employed person who earns \$142,800 a year pays the exact same amount of Social Security taxes - \$17,707.20 - as someone who earns, say, \$10 million a year.

The Biden administration hopes to change that, by keeping the cap at \$142,800, but having the 12.4% payroll tax kick back in on incomes of \$400,000 and up.

In that scenario, a self-employed person earning \$10 million would be taxed 12.4% on the first \$142,800, nothing on income beyond that up to \$400,000, then an additional 12.4% on the rest of his income.

If my calculations are correct, his Social Security contributions would jump from \$17,707.20 to more than \$1.2 million - what we former English majors call "a heckuva lot."

Forbes reports the change would affect about 800,000 buzzing-mad high earners.

I don't know how such a large tax change would affect markets, investing, the economy and ultimately me. Frankly, government math makes my head hurt.

I just hope to goodness our policymakers, as divided as the rest of the country, will find a way to collaborate to bring a meaningful solution to the Social Security challenge, so that I may one day enjoy my retirement on a warm beach, sipping beverages from glasses with little umbrellas in them.


Tom Purcell, author of "Misadventures of a 1970's Childhood," a humorous memoir available at amazon.com, is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review humor columnist

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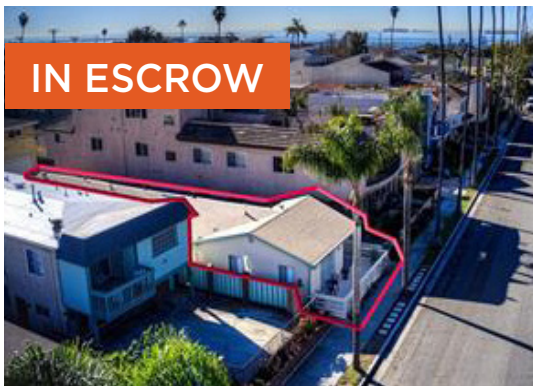


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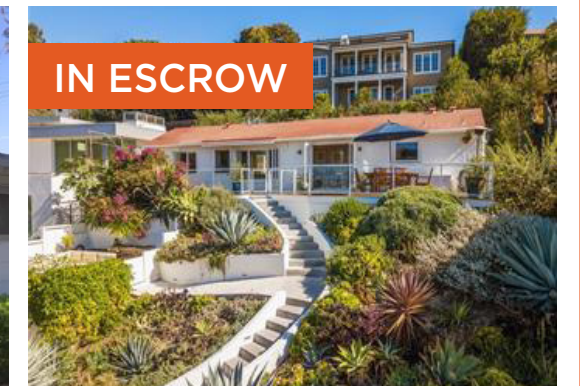
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