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450 Fairview Avenue | Sierra Madre

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CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

Jan and Katie made selling our home a flawless and stress-free process even with our family moving out of state and having a newborn. With little time on our hands and big life changes, they handled every detail for us. Following their advice and guidance, we decided to make home improvements and stage our house. They managed the home improvements and every other detail with meticulous execution all while we are out of state. I can't believe that through it all, we had a completely smooth transaction, and truthfully, it felt like partnering with trusted confidants you've been working with for years.

Jan and Katie know what they are doing and they understand, in a very deep way, the best approach for all parties involved. They made selling our home feel easy and enjoyable. My wife and I are still stunned by how lucky we are, truly so fortunate, to work with them. As somebody with a Real Estate license, I can appreciate that these two are truly masters of their domain.

The Steingarts



Jan Greteman 626.975.4033
lic #01943630

Judy Webb-Martin 626.688.2273
lic #00541631

Katie Orth 626.688.0418
lic #00942500



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source: CoreLogic, Freddie Mac, Bankrate

SNOW IN SIERRA MADRE?

Of Course, it's time for the Sierra Madre Winter Festival. Details on page 3,

SIERRA MADRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES GRANTS, RECORD YEAR OF GIVING

SIERRA MADRE, CA Nov. 22: The Sierra Madre Community Foundation is pleased to announce a record year of giving, capped off with two grants recently awarded to local organizations:

- The Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce was awarded a grant to purchase a reusable community holiday tree. The tree is currently displayed in Kersting Court for the Winter Holiday season and supports the Small Business Saturday program.
- The Sierra Madre Public Library received a grant to support its annual One Book One City series. The month-long community reading program invites everyone in Sierra Madre to read and discuss the same book during the month of February and participate in exciting programs and events.

For the year, the Sierra Madre Community Foundation awarded \$23,871 in grants, marking the largest annual amount awarded in the organization's 22-year history. This record amount supported 11 local civic and community organizations.

"Thanks to the generosity of our residents, we're pleased to provide record support to local community organizations, events and programs," said Frank Moore, chair of the Sierra Madre Community Foundation.

In addition to soliciting donations to support and enhance the community, the Sierra Madre Community Foundation assists other local community groups in the collection and distribution of their funds that enable ongoing program support and continued operations. Learn more at sierramadrefoundation.org.

SAVE THE DATE! Planting day at the Post Office



Saturday December 3rd at 10 am

Everyone in the city is invited to help transform the Sierra Madre Post Office

We are ready for plants! The final irrigation zones are finished, and the plants will all be here ready for you to help plant them.

FormLA landscape personnel will be here to supervise, show you how and where each plant will go, and also give you a little information about the drought tolerant native plants.

Everyone is invited (kids included). Please bring a small hand trowel and gloves, if you have them. We have hundreds of plants to put into the ground and the more people her to help, the faster we will get done.

We welcome groups, schools, and students that need service hours. This is a community event and we will be happy to give you a letter to show that you helped.

This project has been done solely by donations and volunteers giving their time and hard work to make this happen.

We will be able to complete this project. Thanks to all of the very generous donations from the community, and several corporate sponsors.



Planting Day at City Hall

FORMLA
LANDSCAPING

RAIN BIRD

SIERRA MADRE
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER GUSTAVO BARRIENTOS AS SIERRA MADRE'S NEXT POLICE CHIEF

After an extensive recruitment process to find the next Police Chief for the Sierra Madre Police Department, the City is considering an offer to current Sierra Madre Police Lieutenant Gustavo Barrientos to serve as the next Chief of Police. The City Council will consider the offer which is contingent on the satisfactory completion of a full-background assessment, at its December 13th meeting.

Since the departure of Former SMPD Chief Rodrick Armalin earlier this year, Captain Henry Amos has served as the Interim Chief. During that time Barrientos is serving as the Interim Captain.



Barrientos comes highly recommended by City Manager Jose Reynoso said, "I am thrilled to consider Lt. Barrientos as Sierra Madre's Chief of Police. If approved by the council he will bring a wealth of experience and leadership with a commitment to continuing to develop our officers and a community-based approach to policing."

Mr. Barrientos has worked in law enforcement for over 27 years, serving with the Los Angeles Police Department in various ranks since 1995 and part-time since 2016.

Current President of the Sierra Madre Police Association Kyle Bailey said "The men and women of the Sierra Madre Police Department were excited to learn of the submission of Lt. Gus Barrientos to the council for approval as our new Police Chief. Barrientos has already established himself as a caring and vested member of our organization and this community. The City of Sierra Madre and the Police Department would be in good hands."

Of the opportunity, Lt. Barrientos said, "It would be an honor and a privilege to serve the citizens and business owners in Sierra Madre." My priorities would be bridging the gap in community policing, professional development, focusing on community responsiveness, and providing a high-level of customer service."

Barrientos holds a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from the University of Cal-State Northridge. He is married to his junior high-school sweetheart, Yesenia. They have one son.

"IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK.....



..... a lot like Christmas" in downtown Sierra Madre. The Rotary Club of Sierra Madre along with our Interact club members and family & friends decorated the lamp posts on Saturday morning, November 19th.

The Creative Arts group generously made the red ribbon bows. Thanks to all who took the time to decorate. And thank you to Nick and Ali Everett who chaired the event.

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Sierra Madre Winter Festival 2022 Festivities

Shop Local Businesses in Downtown All Day

From Noon until 8 pm:

Visit Crafters - E. Montecito Parking Lot

Visit Exhibitors in Kersting Court

Visit Family Fun in Memorial Park

From Noon until 5 pm:

SLIDE DOWN THE SNOW HILL

near Sierra Madre Blvd. & Windsor Ln

Live Music in Kersting Court from 12-5

12 -1 Ms. Michelle's Cellos

1-3:00 Pasadena HS Jazz Band PHS Orchestra

Zen Chamber Group

3:45 Ms. Amie's Sierra Madre Dance Center

6:00 Choir 360

Live Music in Memorial Park from 12-5

12 -3 Lonnie Sotelo & Ocho

3-5 Surge Band

5:00

SANTA COMES TO TOWN

&

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING



This Event Brought to you courtesy Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce

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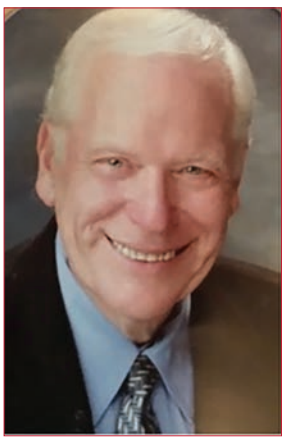
MONROVIA

REMEMBRANCE

DR. WILLIAM E. WHITE MEMORIAL

The Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society is holding a Celebration of Life for Dr. Bill White on Sunday, December 4, from 2pm to 4pm, in the park next to Richardson House Museum (corner of Mira Monte and Mount Wilson Trail). Light refreshments will be served.

This is a community event and is open to all. Please come and share memories about Doc White with friends. He was involved with many organizations in this town and he touched the lives of so many. Members of the White family will be joining us.



SIERRA MADRE POLICE BLOTTER

The following represents a summary report of some of the major incidents handled by the Sierra Madre Police Department during this period. This list is not intended to be considered exclusive or all-inclusive.

Sunday, November 13 Theft from Motor Vehicle
At approximately 1 PM, officers responded to the 100 block of E. Grandview Ave. for reports of a theft from motor vehicle. Upon arrival, the reporting party stated that the catalytic converter was stolen from his vehicle. There is no suspect information at this time. The Detectives' Bureau is following up on this incident.

Friday, November 18 Residential Burglary
At approximately 1 PM, officers responded to the 500 block of Alta Vista for reports of a residential burglary that had occurred. After further investigation, it was discovered that unknown suspects made entry into the residence, but no items were taken. Anyone with information is encouraged to call the Sierra Madre Police Department Detective Bureau at 626-355-1414. If you wish to remain anonymous, please visit lacrimestoppers.org and submit a tip.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you Glen Lambdin for your comments last week about More ... Bears. It seems Fish and Wildlife are about just that; not about human safety and concerns about wildlife. So what do we do ? We teach the bears that our environment is not friendly. I bought 20 tasers from PoiliceMart.com and gave them out to everyone in my canyon neighborhood so they could have some means of feeling in control on an intrusive bear. The bears run from the repetitive "zap" noise long before they are close. For some reason they are very susceptible to noise. Why do neighbors have to listen to loud blow horns !

I spoke at the City Council meeting last January about how a bear was five feet from my car when I got out at 9 p.m. then at my front door when I stepped out the next morning. My cousin lives in Haines Alaska and says they have a quote: "a fed bear is a dead bear". Once a bear succeeds at a behavior, they repeat it. They have 1000's of bears around them in Alaska; they killed 35 of them last year, alone. To me a bear is just a giant rodent. If we have exterminators then some sort of protocol should follow. I am not about to be locked up in my house. A bear ransacked my kitchen about 6 weeks ago and came back the next day. Of course I used my taser to scare him off and followed it down the road to make sure it learns some fear around here.

Maybe this is a lesson for all of us to learn self governance.
Anne Chesterman, Sierra Madre

WALKING SIERRA MADRE - The Social Side

by Deanne Davis

*"For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food,
For love and friends,
For everything Thy goodness sends."
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"Count your many blessings, see what God has done."



I guess where I am just a few days after Thanksgiving, is counting blessings, naming them one by one. Blessings are small things. They seldom arrive on a pink unicorn with glitter being tossed about. Blessings are a shared moment you didn't think would happen, like an unexpected hug or a nice phone call with someone you're missing. Even finding a penny in the parking lot at Target is pretty nice. Here are a few more blessing thoughts I thought I'd pass along...

"An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day." Henry David Thoreau
"Every day is a blessing." Olivia Culpo
"Just to BE is a blessing. Just to LIVE is holy." Abraham Joshua Heschel
"Nourish beginnings. Let us nourish beginnings. Not all things are blessed, but the seeds of all things are blessed. The blessing is in the seed." Muriel Rukeyser
"When you rise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive... to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love." Marcus Aurelius

That early morning walk thing is so true. If you're out early enough, you can catch the sunrise and be overwhelmed by how splendid, how magnificent, how different it is every day. This is my favorite early morning prayer: "Lord, as we behold the magic of a predawn sky, we are in awe of Your most miraculous beauty. Thank you for another new day." Just waking up is a blessing!

Speaking of outside walks, I came across these excellent deer a few days ago (today's picture) and was inspired to get going on my outside decorations. I've already been putting Christmas all over the house and now it's time to get my lighted, nodding deer out where the world can see them and enjoy them. John is shaking his head in heaven but I just love them. The star shower is out, too, and I can't wait to see red and green patterns all over the front of the house. I got my new deer at Walmart a few weeks ago and there will be pictures when I get them both out. An engineering degree would have been a handy thing to have putting this first one together.

Due to unrelenting pressure from a certain family member, we gave up our plan to have Panda Express for Thanksgiving and ordered a complete dinner, precooked and ready to heat and devour from our local Safeway. We got a cute little turkey, stuffing, potatoes, cranberry sauce, gravy and, friends and neighbors, it was all delicious. Nobody cooked, very little cleanup and we all sat down together and enjoyed a great Thanksgiving dinner and each other's company. A good decision and thank you, Emily, for making us go traditional. I did make cranberry bread and that is so incredibly good I'm going to share the recipe with you so you can make some for gifts and to enjoy at Christmas.

You know how there's always some cranberry sauce left over after Thanksgiving dinner and you can't think of anything to do with it so you leave it in the back of the fridge till it turns into a science experiment? And somebody opens the container and says, "I saw this in Invasion of the Body Snatchers? Well, good news, friends, this great bread uses all that left-over cranberry sauce. It's easy and just delicious.

CRANBERRY BREAD

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1 cup chopped apples
- 1 cup whole-berry cranberry sauce (the solid stuff works just as well)
- 1/3 cup nuts (if you want them)

Cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy in your mixer. Beat in the eggs and vanilla. Combine flour, baking soda and salt. Add dry ingredients alternately with orange juice to egg mixture. Beat just till blended. Fold in apples, cranberry sauce and nuts. Pour into greased 9 x 5 loaf pan. Bake about an hour or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.

You can double this. Make a bunch of small loaves instead of big ones. They freeze well and you'll never waste another speck of cranberry sauce.

We went to the movies and saw Spirited with Will Ferrell and Ryan Reynolds. This is the latest remake of Dickens' A Christmas Carol and we loved every minute. Will Ferrell is the Ghost of Christmas Present and Ryan Reynolds is a modern-day Scrooge. We laughed, we cried, we enjoyed the singing, dancing, and huge production numbers tremendously. It's on Apple TV+, too, and great holiday fun. Saw Elton John's Farewell Yellow Brick concert at Dodger Stadium on Disney+ Live Streaming and thought it was fantastic. If you've got Disney+, treat yourself to this amazing event.

The turkey is almost gone and now it's on to Christmas! Whatever it is, Amazon's got it...unless it's something really special you can buy right here in town. Savor the Flavor has amazing goodies. Rejoice in all you do, every day you get to do it!

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." Ps. 107:1

*My book page: Amazon.com: Deanne Davis
Christmas is just a few short weeks away and my book:
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"Star of Wonder" a delightful Christmas Kindle story is there, too.*

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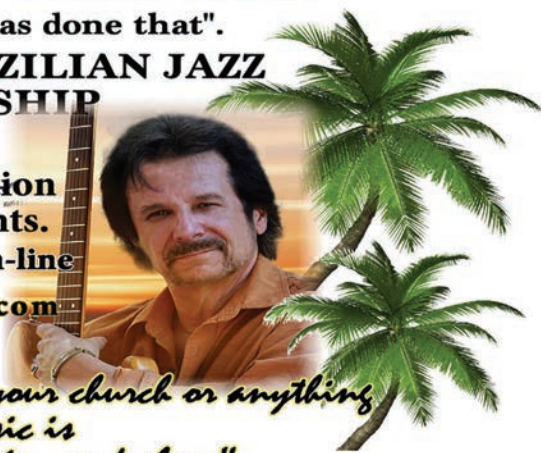
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<https://sierramadrekiwanis.com/>



Weather Wise

6-Day Forecast Sierra Madre, Ca.

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Mon	Sunny	Hi	70s	Lows 50s
Tues	Sunny	Hi	70s	Lows 50s
Wed	Sunny	Hi	70s	Lows 50s
Thur	Sunny	Hi	70s	Lows 50s
Fri	Sunny	Hi	80s	Lows 50s

Forecasts courtesy of the National Weather Service

SIERRA MADRE CITY MEETINGS SIERRA MADRE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 13, 2022 5:30pm

THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS!

As part of the City of Sierra Madre's COVID-19 transparency efforts and The Brown Act provides the public with an opportunity to make public comments at any public meeting. Public comment may also be made by e-mail to PublicComment@CityofSierraMadre.com by 3:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

Emails will be acknowledged at the Council meeting and filed into public record. The public may also comment in person at the meeting.

The meetings will be streamed live on Foothills Media website at foothillsmmedia.org/sierramadre and broadcast on Government Access Channel 3 (Spectrum)..

1630 AM EMERGENCY RADIO & Free on-air publicity for local events

Sierra Madre's EMERGENCY radio station is now accepting scripts for Public Service Announcements (PSAs) about community events. PSAs will be broadcast on the air at no charge. The station operates 24/7 and can be heard at 1630 on the AM dial.

Any local non-profit or non-commercial organization can have their event information broadcast to the public on Sierra Madre Community Information Radio. The station covers the city of Sierra Madre, plus surrounding areas of Pasadena, Arcadia, and Monrovia.

Your event must:

- Benefit a non-commercial or non-profit entity
- Be open to the public
- Be of general interest to local citizens

Just write a Public Service Announcement that describes your event and e-mail it to radio@cityofsierramadre.com.

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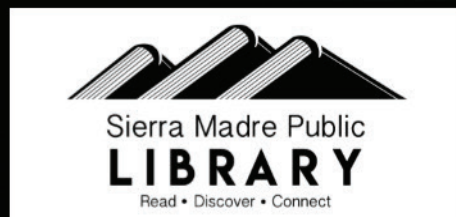
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This week at the
Sierra Madre
Public Library

November 28—December 3

Monday

Preschool Storytime at Memorial Park—
Outdoors at 10:00am. Call to register

Pixelated Art for Kids—In-person at
3:30pm

Thursday

Baby Rhyme Time at Memorial Park—
Outdoors at 9:00am. Call to register

Saturday

Cricut Workshop—In-person at 11:00am

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The City is expected to have vacancies on our commissions soon so you can get a head start by applying now.

Applications and more information can be found here: cityofsierramadre.com/cityhall/commissions

Planning Commission has one (1) expected vacancy.

Community Services Commission has one (1) expected vacancy.

Library Board of Trustees has two (2) anticipated vacancies.

Natural Resources Commission has one current vacancy and one anticipated vacancy for a total of two (2) vacancies.

Interested? Go To: <https://www.cityofsierramadre.com/cityhall/commissions>

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Pasadena Altadena

News From Your Community For Your Community

New Video Shows Suspect in Boy's Murder



Pasadena police have renewed their request for the public's help after releasing a new video of a shooting that killed a 13-year-old Pasadena boy playing video games in his bedroom last year.

Iran Moreno was shot and killed by a stray bullet at around 6:12 p.m. on Nov. 20, 2021 in the 900 block of Raymond Avenue.

According to police the new security video shows a male suspect wearing gray colored clothing getting out of a gray 2017 to 2020 Ford Fusion across from Moreno's home. The suspect is seen firing a gun and then driving away.

According to the family, Moreno collapsed in their living room. He was taken to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead.

There is an \$85,000 reward being offered for information leading to the suspect's arrest and conviction.

Anyone with information is asked to call Pasadena Police Violent Crimes Section at 626-744-4517 or anonymously at "Crime Stoppers" 800-222-8477.

Upcoming Pasadena Holiday Tree Events

La Pintoresca Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Gather with neighbors, family and friends to celebrate the holiday season Saturday Dec. 10 at 4 p.m. Enjoy holiday music, arts and crafts, storytime, face painting and a ride around the beautiful La Pintoresca Park on a trackless train while awaiting the arrival of Santa Claus! For more information call (626) 744-7268.

La Pintoresca Branch Library and Park is located 1355 N Raymond Ave. **Lamanda Park Tree Decorating**

Help Lamanda Park Branch Library staff Tuesday, Dec. 13 and Saturday, Dec. 17 decorate their Christmas tree with an ornament you create and hang. For ages 2 - 12.

Both events take place at 10 a.m. Lamanda Park Branch Library is located 140 S Altadena Dr.

Hastings Branch 10th Annual Holiday Celebration & Tree Lighting

Join the city of Pasadena Dec. 13 at 4 p.m. for Hastings' annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Enjoy festive songs, carolers, stories, refreshments and crafts! Presented in partnership with the Hastings Branch Associates and Pasadena Public Works Department.

Hastings Branch Library 3325 E Orange Grove Blvd. For more information call (626) 744-4066.



City Taps Eugene Harris as Police Chief

Pasadena City Manager Miguel Márquez (pictured left) made the announcement Monday that he has appointed Eugene Harris (pictured center) as the city's next chief of police — Harris is currently the Police Chief for the City of San Gabriel. He is set to start January 3.

"Chief Harris is a well-known leader in law enforcement," Márquez said. "His interpersonal and communication skills and his proven approach to proactive and community policing will bring about the effective implementation of ever-evolving best practices to keep our community safe. I am confident he will lead our peace officers with distinction and will become an invaluable member of the greater Pasadena community."

Márquez himself is just three months into his tenure as Pasadena's city manager. He said his appointment of Harris came after a robust and inclusive selection process that started long before he became

city manager. Former Pasadena Police Chief John Perez had retired January 5 of this year.

According to Márquez, Harris has served as the police chief for the City of San Gabriel since 2016. He also serves as president of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association, actively engaging in advancing the science and art of police administration and crime prevention. In this role, he is also involved in developing, teaching and disseminating best practices across numerous agencies.

Chief Harris brings nearly 30 years of law enforcement and leadership experience to Pasadena, with a proven track record of community engagement and personnel development, strategic budget management, and the use of new law enforcement technology he said.

After receiving an honorable discharge from the United States Marine Corps, Chief Harris began his career in law

enforcement as a Los Angeles County deputy sheriff. He also served for 23 years in the Monterey Park Police Department, where he was promoted through the ranks to captain.

"I am honored to be entrusted with this amazing opportunity and am humbled by the responsibility to our residents, visitors, and the men and women of our department," Harris said. "Together, we will continue to enhance the culture of proactive community policing and exceptional service to our stakeholders. I look forward to joining the Pasadena community and serving alongside the professionals of the Pasadena Police Department."

After Perez' retirement both Commander Jason Clawson and Deputy Chief Cheryl Moody rotated into the position as Interim Chief. Moody later retired May 23.

South Pas Library Holiday Book Sale

The Friends of the Library Annual Holiday Book Sale will take place in the South Pasadena Library Community Room Friday, December 9 through Sunday, December 11. The sale features high quality gently used books collected throughout the year, a special silent auction on Friday night, five local artisans selling their wares on Sunday, and complimentary gift wrapping while supplies last. Proceeds benefit the non-profit Friends of the South Pasadena Public Library whose mission is to raise money and public awareness in the community to support the services and programs of the library.

SALE HOURS
Friday, December 9
5:00-6:00 p.m. – early access for Friends of the Library members. Memberships can be purchased online or at the door.
6:00-8:00 p.m. – open to the general public
Saturday, December 10
10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 11
1:00-4:00 p.m.
SUNDAY ARTISANS
Cyndi Bemel - Art Cards
Leslie Rosario - Wrapped Pendants
Jeannie Joe - Upcycled Accessories
David Silverman - Ceramics
Vanora Savig - Recycled Fabric Arts
Community Garden - Indigo Tie Dye
The Library Community Room is located 1115 El Centro St. For more information visit: southpasadenaca.gov.

Pasadena Announces New GM of Water and Power

City Manager Miguel Márquez announced Monday the appointment of Sidney Jackson (pictured) as general manager of Pasadena Water and Power (PWP). Jackson will join the City's executive team in early January. Until then, Jeffrey Kightlinger will continue to serve as PWP's interim general manager.

Jackson has a long tenure in both the water and power industries. He currently serves as the chief operations officer and deputy general manager at Austin Energy, which serves more than 500,000 electric customers. He previously served as the chief operations officer at Rochester Public Utility, where he led operations of both the electric and water utilities.

"After an extensive nationwide search, I am excited to appoint Sidney Jackson as the next general manager of Pasadena Water and Power," said Márquez. "Sidney has a proven track record of leadership, technical and organizational skills in the water and power industries that will strategically position Pasadena to meet the challenges ahead. We are thrilled to have Sidney join our team."

Jackson's experience includes leadership roles in building and operating regional independent system operator (ISO) markets and transmission organizations across large geographic multistate regions, functioning with similar authority and scope as that of the California ISO (CAISO). He has served as an elected member of the board of directors for the Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO), a regional entity of North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC); and on NERC committees in support of the nation's bulk electric system,



with a focus upon power system reliability.

"I am honored to join the City of Pasadena and lead one of its most important departments whose work directly impacts our residents each and every day," said Jackson. "We will be committed to excellent customer service, to making sound financial and technical decisions, and to contributing to the greater good of our city and its residents."

Jackson earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Kansas State University and a master's in business administration from the University of Missouri. He prioritizes continuous learning and professional growth and development as core organizational values. Jackson and his family enjoy traveling and outdoor activities.

Pasadena Water and Power (PWP) provides electricity to more than 65,000 customers within Pasadena. PWP delivers water to almost 38,000 households and businesses in Pasadena and adjacent communities in the San Gabriel Valley. As a community-owned utility, PWP is a not-for-profit public service owned and operated by the City of Pasadena for the benefit of its customers and the community.

Free Mental Health Resources

The Pasadena Hastings Branch Library will be holding free mental health resources from Pacific Clinics Thursday, December 8 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Pacific Clinics has a Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI) program for older adults (60+) that provides behavioral health and case management to those in need. The following are 2 requirements for individuals to be eligible for this service:

1. Medi-Cal Insurance
2. Ages 60 & older.

If you know anyone that may benefit from these services, please visit: cityofpasadena.net/library/ to get further information.

The Hastings Branch Library is located 3325 E Orange Grove Blvd. The event will be held outside.

For accessibility information and requests, contact the library site hosting the program. Providing at least 72 hours advance notice will help ensure availability.

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Sierra Madre based non-profit





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Caltech Welcomes PMA Division Operations Officer

The Caltech Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy (PMA) recently welcomed Shawna Silesky as its new division operations officer (DOO), charged with overseeing operations, finances, human resources, and other crucial administrative functions.

Fiona Harrison, the Harold A. Rosen Professor of Physics and the Kent and Joyce Kresa Leadership Chair of the Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy, said Silesky “brings extensive experience from years of administration in academic research environments” that are especially well suited to advancing PMA division priorities.

Silesky, who has more than 20 years of professional expertise at the intersections of finance, research, and operations, comes to Caltech from Children's Hospital Los Angeles. There, she most recently served as administrative director of the Division of Research on Children, Youth and Families, overseeing all financial and operational activity within the division as well as the teams that manage grant funding for research faculty and staff. She previously served as director of financial operations at the UC Riverside School of Medicine and as the chief financial officer in the Department of Medicine at UC Irvine, where she spent most of her career.

She said the broad scope of the job requires flexibility: “I never know which hats I’ll be wearing on a given day. I might be in a basement addressing construction considerations, reviewing bids, working with student affairs on an educational program, or working with the finance team on complex financial matters.”

She adds that the key aim of the position is to make the most of the staffing and resources



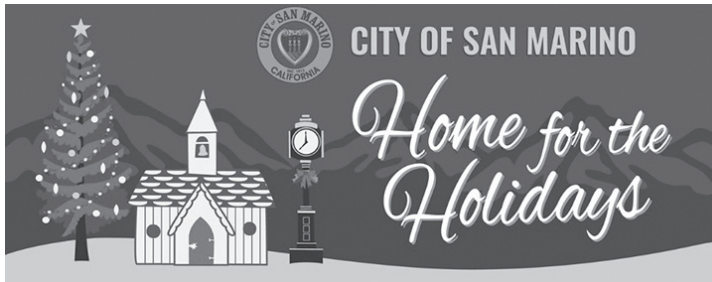
available in a constrained fiscal environment to best serve the division as a whole and ensure that its faculty can focus on their research and teaching instead of on the administrative burden associated with those missions.

She also aims to foster an environment that provides employees “a sense of inclusivity and the knowledge that they have a voice. It’s an important part of leadership to create and maintain a unified workplace. Equity and inclusivity are not buzzwords—they’re something you have to engage in for faculty, staff, and students.”

Silesky oversees on-campus staff, who support 75 faculty researchers, as well as additional staff members working at affiliated sites such as LIGO’s Washington and Louisiana operations, the Palomar Observatory, and the Owens Valley Radio Observatory. She joins the ranks of the Institute’s other DOOs, including David Warren (BBE), Grace Liang-Franco (CCE), Marionne Epalle (EAS), Aleen Boladian (GPS), and Candace Younger (HSS).

Silesky said the position presents a set of complex yet critical responsibilities, which is part of its appeal: “I’ve always taken on positions that are extreme challenges—to me, that’s exciting. It keeps me on my toes and ensures that I always keep learning.”

San Marino Upcoming Events & Programming



Tree Lighting Ceremony & Mayor’s Reception

December 9, 2022, Friday

Time: 4:30 – 7:00 PM

Location: Huntington Drive & San Marino Avenue

The city will light up the big trees, the Holiday House Bus Stop, City Hall, and the Rotary Clock Tower. Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive at 5 PM by fire truck. Enjoy hot dogs, hot chocolate, cider, holiday cookies, roaming Carolers, festive selfie stations, and kid’s crafts. Event is FREE. Everyone is welcome.

Light Up San Marino

Do you have the most festive home or business in town? Enter our Second Annual Holiday Decorating Contest! This contest is open to San Marino residents and businesses. Register your home or business online between November 20 and December 11. Entries will be placed on the Holiday Decorating Contest map, active on December 12. Drive around town to see the entries, or view a photo of each on Facebook. Then, vote for your favorite entries by “liking” them on Facebook. The top three photos with the most Facebook likes will receive a yard sign and gift card to a local business, and the Mayor’s Award winner will receive a yard sign and a gift card to The Huntington Store. The Mayor of San Marino will award the grand prize for creativity and holiday spirit to a home or

business.

Need help registering? We’re here to help! Contact us at (626) 403-2200.

Apply for the Traffic Task Force

The City of San Marino is pleased to announce the creation of a Traffic Task Force to support the City’s continued efforts to keep San Marino safe.

The City Council directed the Public Safety Commission to create the Task Force of civic-minded community members to address traffic issues and concerns of inclusion in San Marino in an action-oriented, results-driven way. The Task Force will be comprised of a City Council Member, as a liaison, members of each of the Public Safety Departments (Police, Fire, and Parks & Public Works), a member of the Public Safety Commission, a representative of the San Marino Unified School District, and at least two members of the community.

Interested individuals are invited to submit an application no later than 5 PM December 14.

For the application and more information on the task force visit: cityofsanmarino.org.

Upcoming Meetings

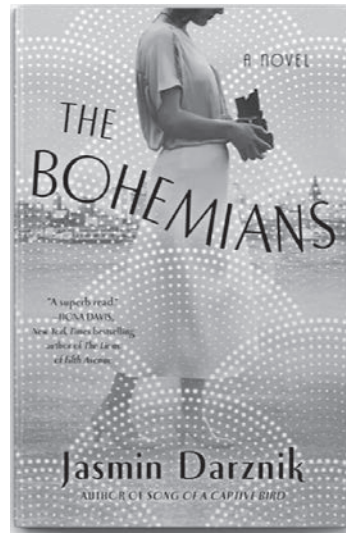
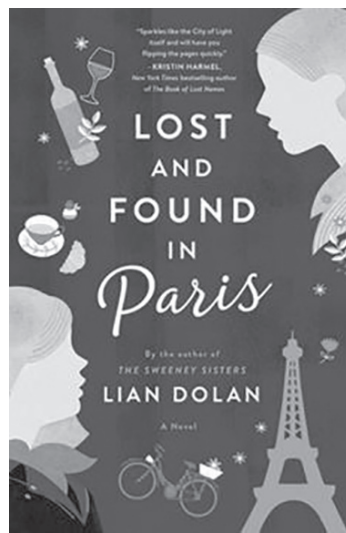
Library Board of Trustees

Monday, November 28 at 8:00 AM; Teleconference and Barth Room at Crowell Public Library

Design Review Committee

Wednesday, December 7 at 6:00 PM; Teleconference and Barth Room at Crowell Public Library

Pasadena One City, One Story 2023 Nominee List



Join the Pasadena Public Library as they reveal the 2023 One City, One Story book selections on the library’s YouTube channel at: youtube.com/user/pasadenalibrary.

The announcement will take place Wednesday Dec. 21, 4 p.m.

Now in its 21th year, One City, One Story is designed to broaden and deepen an appreciation of reading and literature and to promote tolerance and understanding of differing points of view by recommending a compelling book that engages the community in conversation.

In March or April, the One City, One Story programs begin, with all sorts of cooperative sessions being offered. There are often book discussions throughout the community, in churches, stores, and libraries. Colleges and schools sponsor related events like panel discussions, art shows, concerts, or lectures. Everyone gets involved. In support, the Pasadena Public Library buys 200-300 copies of the book; usually the schools get another hundred or so, and Pasadena City College has many copies available for their students as well.

This year’s Nominees are:

The Bohemians by Jasmin Darznik (pictured)

A novel of one of America’s most celebrated photographers, Dorothea Lange, exploring the wild years in San Francisco that awakened her career-defining grit, compassion and daring.

Lost and Found in Paris by Lian Dolan (pictured)

The ultimate escapist adventure in Paris, told with wit, style and touch of intrigue in the mysterious world of art.

The Measure by Nikki Erlick

Enchanting and deeply

uplifting, a sweeping, ambitious and invigorating story about family, friendship, hope and destiny that encourages us to live life to the fullest.

L. A. Weather by María Amparo Escandón

Storm clouds are on the horizon in L.A. Weather, a fun, fast-paced novel of a Mexican-American family.

Love & Saffron: A Novel of Friendship, Food, and Love by Kim Fay

An elixir for our times as it speaks to the power of food to communicate friendship and create a curiosity about worlds unlike our own.

Sparks Like Stars by Nadia Hashimi

An Afghan American woman returns to Kabul to learn the truth about her family and the tragedy that destroyed their lives in this brilliant and compelling novel.

Search by Michelle Huneven

A sharp and funny novel of a congregational search committee, told as a memoir with recipes. Wish You Were Here by Jodi Picoult

A story of resilience and the triumph of the human spirit.

The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles

A stylish and propulsive novel set in 1950s America. Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view.

The Nickel Boys by Colson Whitehead

Colson Whitehead brilliantly dramatizes another strand of American history through the story of two boys unjustly sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida. Based on the real story of a reform school that operated for 111 years and warped the lives of thousands of children.

For more information about each title visit: cityofpasadena.net/library

Caltech Stargazing Lecture

Cahill Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics

The Invisible Atmospheres of Galaxies

Iryna Butsky, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Astrophysics, Caltech

Friday, December 2, 2022

7:00pm to 9:00pm

Stargazing is dependent on clear weather, but lecture and Q&A happen regardless. Event will occur in-person, with lecture and Q&A additionally live-streamed on YouTube.

Galaxies are dynamic, evolving objects consisting of stars, gas, and dark matter, and are as diverse as the people on this planet. In order to understand why galaxies look the way they do and why some die (stop forming new stars) while others thrive, it is important to understand the environment in which they live. In this lecture, I will discuss how galactic atmospheres (referred to as the circumgalactic medium) are key to understanding galaxy evolution, and perhaps, our own existence in the Milky Way. I will highlight recent observations, taken with the Hubble Space Telescope, that challenge existing theoretical models and discuss possible solutions from recent research.

For remote viewers, the event will be live-streamed on Youtube

7:00–7:30 p.m. - Public Lecture

7:30–9:00 p.m. - Panel Q&A and Guided Stargazing

For more information visit: outreach.astro.caltech.edu.

Pasadena Small Business Holiday Season Campaign

The City of Pasadena and Visit Pasadena have announced this year’s holiday season campaign, “Authentically Yours, Pasadena,” to celebrate small and independent local businesses. The campaign kicks off on Small Business Saturday today, with welcome stations at small businesses across the city to inspire visitors and community members to shop small and dine local. Welcome stations will be stocked with canvas shopping totes, gifted on a first-come, first-served basis.

“Pasadena is lucky to have so many wonderful locally-owned shops and eateries that make this city a beloved gathering place for celebrations, special events, and seasonal festivities,” said Kristin McGrath, executive director of Visit Pasadena. “During this joyful season, we encourage visitors and our Pasadena community to support local talented makers and curators. Come experience

Pasadena’s authentic, local flavor while shopping for gifts and dining out.”

“The ‘Authentically Yours, Pasadena’ campaign amplifies the people, places and great finds that give Pasadena its vibrancy and personal flavor,” said David Klug, City of Pasadena’s economic development director.

Welcome Station Locations

Civic Center Area

FrenchiFornia, 247 E. Colorado Blvd.

College Commercial Area

Daisy Mint, 1218 E. Colorado Blvd.

Bubble Puff & Tea, 1543 E. Colorado Blvd.

East Washington

Lavender & Honey, 1383 E. Washington Blvd.

Southern Roots Gifts, 1387 E. Washington Blvd.

Sidecca, 1389 E. Washington Blvd.

Hastings Commercial Area

Good Luck Wine Shop, 3225 E. Foothill Blvd.

Han’s Beauty Shoppe, 3644 Foothill Blvd.

HeArt (South Fair Oaks Health & Arts Commercial Area)

Jones Coffee Roasters, 693 S. Raymond Ave.

April Blooms, 14 E. Bellevue Dr.

Cerveceria Del Pueblo, 141 W. Bellevue Dr., Suite 100

Lamanda Commercial Area

Colores de Mexico, 2493 E. Colorado Blvd.

My Pet Garden, 2245 E. Colorado Blvd.

Lincoln Commercial Area

Highlight Coffee, 2071 Lincoln Ave.

Semolina Artisanal Pasta, 1976 Lincoln Ave.

North Lake Commercial Area

Roma Market, 918 N. Lake Ave.

Pasadena Roots, 867 E. Washington Blvd.

Old Pasadena

Lather, 40 W. Colorado Blvd.

MAUM General Store, 13 Douglas Alley

Neon Retro Arcade, 28 S. Raymond Ave.

Homage, 100 N. Fair Oaks Ave.

Playhouse District

Banter & Bliss Candle Co., 450 E. Colorado Blvd.

Mercadito Monarca, 696 E. Colorado Blvd., Suite 19

Vroman’s Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd.

South Lake Avenue

The Bee Cottage, 496 S. Lake Ave.

Float Pasadena, 380 S. Lake Ave.

Walnut Commercial Area

Pasadena Cyclery, 1670 E. Walnut St.

For more information visit: visitpasadena.com/shoplocal.

MAYOR’S ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Friday, December 2 | 5-7 p.m.

Pasadena City Hall
100 N. Garfield Ave.

Join Mayor Victor M. Gordo in kicking off the holiday season at Pasadena’s free family holiday celebration. Enjoy festive musical performances by local youth and a holiday craft contest. Pasadena Fire Department will also be collecting new, unwrapped toys for the Spark of Love Toy Drive.

For more information, please call (626) 744-7331.

For accessibility information or to request an accommodation, please contact (626) 744-7331 or CSO@cityofpasadena.net. Providing at least 72 hours advance notice will help ensure availability.

Catch breaking news at:
mtnewsnews.com

ETCH & CATCH FREE CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT PREVENTION EVENT FOR ARCADIA RESIDENTS ONLY

Purrfect Auto Service, in partnership with the Arcadia Police Department, will be hosting a Catalytic Converter Etching Event. A Purrfect Auto Service tech-nician will etch your vehicle's license plate number onto the catalytic converter for future identification in the event of a theft. This event is for Arcadia residents only and a reservation is required to participate.

Location: Purrfect Auto Service, located in The Shops at Santa Anita, 400 South Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, CA 91007

Date: Saturday, December 03, 2022

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Time slots can be selected by clicking the Eventbrite

Registration: To register and reserve your time slot visit Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/etch-catch-tickets-473569056797>

This is a no cost service to registered Arcadia residents. Please sign up early as space is limited. More Etch & Catch events will be scheduled soon, so if you miss this opportunity, make sure you follow us for future date announcements.

ARCADIA POLICE BLOTTER

For the period of Sunday, November 13th through Saturday, November 19th, the Police Department responded to 838 calls for service, of which 96 required formal investigations. The following is a summary report of some of the major incidents handled by the Department during this period.

Sunday, November 13:

1. At 9:21 a.m., an officer responded to a residence in the 2000 block of South Seventh Avenue regarding a burglary investigation. Sometime during the previous night, unknown suspect(s) entered the victim's garage through an unlocked door and fled with her vehicle, as it was left unlocked with the keys inside. The victim's purse was also stolen.

2. At 10:46 a.m., an officer responded to a residence in the 2400 block of South Eighth Avenue regarding a theft report. The victim discovered a male suspect, between the ages of 30 and 50-years-old, stole a mounted security camera from the victim's back yard on November 11th.

Monday, November 14:

3. At 9:55 a.m., an officer responded to the front counter of the Arcadia Police Department regarding a fraud report. The officer determined someone had stolen the victim's check while it was in transit to be mailed and fraudulently increased the amount.

4. At 5:05 p.m., an officer responded to Macy's, located at 400 South Baldwin Avenue, regarding a shoplifting report. Surveillance footage captured two suspects steal more than \$800.00 worth of merchandise before fleeing. Loss prevention staff identified the suspects from previous thefts and arrests.

Tuesday, November 15:

5. At 4:21 p.m., an officer responded to the Arcadia Police Department front counter regarding a theft that occurred at Baldwin Stocker Elementary School. Surveillance footage captured the incident and revealed the suspect stole the victim's purse from her vehicle while the victim went to pick up her child. The suspect is described as a Hispanic female in her 30s, with a medium build and wearing glasses.

6. At 4:59 p.m., an officer responded to a residence in the 300 block of Warren Way regarding a burglary report. Sometime between October 26th and November 15th, unidentified suspect(s) shattered a rear sliding glass door, ransacked the home, and fled with an unknown amount of property.

Wednesday, November 16:

7. At 11:51 a.m., an officer responded to Outcha, located at 400 South Baldwin Avenue, regarding a grand theft report. A review of the surveillance footage revealed the suspect distracted the store employee while he fled with hats and a belt. The

suspect is described as a Black male, approximately 25-years-old, 5'5" tall, with short black hair and a thin build.

8. At 3:21 p.m., an officer responded to the front counter of the Arcadia Police Department regarding a fraud report. The victim stated two unidentified suspects forged her deceased husband's checks and issued them to themselves.

Thursday, November 17:

9. At 9:44 a.m., an officer responded to Wah Fung, located at 641 West Duarte Road, regarding a commercial burglary. An investigation revealed unknown suspect entered the business by cutting a hole in the roof, and once inside, he fled with cash. The crime was captured on surveillance cameras and the suspect is described as a male with a medium build, wearing a ski mask, sweatshirt, and gloves.

10. At 6:22 p.m., an officer responded to Burlington Coat Factory, located at 1201 South Baldwin Avenue, regarding a battery investigation. The officer concluded an argument between a customer and a family resulted in four of the family members repeatedly punching and kicking the victim. The victim was transported by Arcadia Fire to Arcadia USC Hospital for treatment. The suspects are described as four Hispanic males, all between the ages of 20 and 30-years-old.

Friday, November 18:

11. At 12:02 a.m., an officer responded to The Shops at Santa Anita, located at 400 South Baldwin Avenue, regarding a stolen vehicle report. The victim discovered his 2018 Kia Optima was stolen from a parking lot near Cheesecake Factory sometime between 11:50 p.m. on November 17th and 12:02 a.m. on November 18th.

12. At 2:46 p.m., an officer responded to the 1400 block of South Baldwin Avenue regarding a vehicle burglary report. The victim stated someone smashed the front passenger window and stole her purse.

Saturday, November 19:

13. At 2:10 a.m., an officer responded to the 1000 block of South Baldwin Avenue regarding a publicly intoxicated subject. Upon locating the 25-year-old male from Oakland, the officer determined he was unable to care for himself. He was arrested and transported to the Arcadia City Jail for booking.

14. At 3:56 p.m., an officer responded to The Shops at Santa Anita, located at 400 South Baldwin Avenue, regarding a stolen vehicle. The victim discovered his 2005 GMC Yukon had been stolen. The crime happened sometime between 3:00 p.m. and 3:55 p.m.



**Ice Skating
AT THE FOUNTAIN**

**LIBRARY PARK • 321 S. MYRTLE AVE.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25 - SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27
OPEN FROM 9:00AM - 9:00PM**

Join us for your chance to "ice skate" in Library Park! Admission will be first come first serve and open to all ages! Skates will be provided.

\$8.00 per person for 20 minute session

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND EVENT UPDATES
CALL THE COMMUNITY CENTER (626) 256 - 8246**

ICE SKATING AT THE FOUNTAIN!

We are excited to announce Monrovia's first ice skating event! Join us Friday, November 25, through Sunday, November 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. for an opportunity to "ice skate" near the fountain at Library Park. Admission is first come, first serve and \$8.00 per person for a 20-minute session. Open to all ages. Skates will be provided. For more information, please contact the Monrovia Community Center at (626) 256-8246.



MONROVIA HOME DECORATING 2022 Holiday Home Decorating Contest

Celebrate the spirit of the holidays by decorating your home! Monrovia residents are invited to enter the Holiday Home Decorating Contest. The contest is free and open to Monrovia residents only. Residents must register for the contest by 5 p.m. on Monday, December 5. The contest judging will take place from December 12, through December 14, and the winners will be announced on December 16, and be recognized at the December 20, City Council Meeting.

A map will be published with the addresses of all the participating homes on December 16, for the community to take a driving tour and see the festive displays.

The City will recognize and provide awards in the following categories:

- Best Still Display – Best decorations with no movement
- Best Outdoor Display – Overall best outdoor decorating
- Most Effective Use of Lighting – Best outdoor lighting display
- Best Neighborhood Effort – Street (s) with many homes decorated in a similar theme
- Santa's Workshop Award – Best use of homemade holiday decorations
- Holiday Spirit Award – Most festive display
- Judges Award – Judges' choice
- Children's Choice Award – Best display that depicts a youthful theme

For any questions, contact Recreation Supervisor Tiffany Peterson at (626) 256-8246.



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626.359.3414**

www.cabrerass.com

AROUND SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

Bring Holiday Joy to our Five Acres Kids



Individuals, organizations, and companies wishing to make a difference this holiday season can support Five Acres Holiday Drive to bring joy to more than 7,000 children, youth, and families served across five counties by the agency headquartered in Altadena. Image source: Canva

FIVE ACRES' HOLIDAY DRIVE TO BENEFIT CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

ALTADENA, Calif., Nov. 22, 2022 — Five Acres' annual holiday drive creates joyful holiday memories for vulnerable children and foster youth who have already overcome many challenges in their young lives. Through the years, many generous supporters in the community have made these children's holiday wishes come true. Five Acres is requesting help from the community to donate gift cards and unwrapped toys by December 9.

"With the inflation, many families are finding it challenging to buy the basic needs for their households. We have always relied on community support to help brighten the holidays for our children and families, and this year is no exception," said Jennifer Berger, Five Acres chief advancement officer. "The holidays are filled with family traditions, and we want to ensure our children and families have what they need to make their holidays extra special despite the spike in our economy."

Five Acres' most requested gifts from kids this year are the following: Amazon Fire Tablets, sports equipment, scooters, skateboards, safety helmets, bath and body products, and cologne or perfume for teens.

Gift cards also make great holiday gifts for Five Acres youth and families in need. The most requested gift cards are Target, Walmart, Visa, Mastercard®, Amazon, and Domino's® Pizza.

Based on the children's requests, Five Acres has also built an Amazon Wish List full of toys and other items. Individuals, organizations, and companies that would like to sponsor festive activities during the holiday break may do so by donating directly at <https://5acres.org/holiday/>.

The designated days to drop off unwrapped gifts to Five Acres are Tuesday, November 29 to Friday, December 9, weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The address for curbside drop-off is at Five Acres Zeilstra parking lot at 747 W. Mountain View St., Altadena, CA 91001, across from the agency's main campus.

For any questions about the holiday drive or if the above schedule does not work, please contact Angeli Blancas at 626-487-3748 or email her at ablancas@5acres.org to arrange a time and date. Should an individual have questions about how to sponsor holiday activities, Brandon Ito can be reached at 626-390-8453 or bito@5acres.org. To learn more about Five Acres, visit 5acres.org.

About Five Acres

Since 1888, Five Acres has protected the most vulnerable members of our community: children. Serving more than 7,000 children and family members annually across five counties, Five Acres strives for permanency—a permanent, loving home—for all children in their care. The three pillars of safety, well-being and permanency provide the framework for its programs and guide their steps as the agency develops even more effective means of caring for children and families in crisis. Visit 5acres.org.

Peter Dills Knows

HOLIDAY WINE BUYING TIPS

When is a wine sale not really a sale at all? One of our Southern California grocery stores is getting ready for a 30% off sale. I only wanted one bottle, so as I looked at the so-called "regular" price before discount, I found myself shaking my head. There is no way these wines are regularly priced so high. Wines I have never seen in the \$20 range (like Domaine Chandon, Roeder Estate, Kendall Jackson, and even Korbel) were all priced like I was at Spago. A non-grocery beverage center did a 5-cent sale (buy one and get one for 5 cents) which seems like a good deal. Even at the regular price of \$140 a bottle I'll take a bottle of Dom Perignon if the next one is for 5 cents. But no, the small print specified "selected wines". Now, my favorite retailer has come up with a buy one get one for 10 cents (why not 8 cents?) sale. Every student of wine or expert sommelier says "no matter the price, if you like it buy it". My word to the wise is that if you can handle buying six bottles at a time, these "grocery store sales" can yield you a bit of savings, so don't buy into the "regular" price - I sure don't!

I had to jump on the bandwagon, so I bought the Clos du Bois Chardonnay at the buy-one-get-one-for-10-cents special. I scanned the bar code with my smart phone for the "true" discount price and here is what I found: the lowest price was \$11.00, but since you have to buy through the internet, once you add the shipping cost it doesn't make sense. The wine retails for \$14.99, plus ten cents for the second bottle, which makes it \$9.55 for each bottle. Now, if you get six bottles there is another 10% savings. My accounting got me in trouble a few months ago, so let's call that a guesstimate, but the savings are real.

In summary yes, the Clos du Bois is great value at the discounted price, and with the holidays here there will be more sales at supermarkets for sure. Try the scan on your favorite wine, it will give you roughly what you should be paying. If you don't have a smart phone, ignore the retail price and look at the bottom price and the total discount. There are some real deals out there.

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*Dining
with
Dills*

STORIES @ THE PLAYHOUSE: WINGS,, STORYTELLING EVENT AT SIERRA MADRE PLAYHOUSE ON DECEMBER 5

Sierra Madre Playhouse presents the second event in a projected series, Stories @ The Playhouse on Monday, December 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. The event consists of true personal storytelling. Our second show's theme is Wings, a narrative deep dive into the personal experiences of seven people sharing critical moments that changed their lives, and humorous anecdotes that shaped their perspective. The evening will be book-ended with songs by the band Bishop, melodiously underscoring this journey.

The storytellers include Susan Diol, Torri Higginson, Patricia Herd, Carlos Kotkin, Eliza-beth Sampson, Kevin McCorkle, Greg Swartz.

Presented by Sierra Madre Playhouse. Produced by Elizabeth Sampson and Alicia Sedwick.

Covid-19 safety protocols in effect on the day of the event will be observed. As of this writing, it means that audience members must wear masks inside the Playhouse auditorium.

Stories @ The Playhouse: Wings. Monday, December 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. At Sierra Madre Playhouse, 87 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre, CA 91024. This is just east of Pasadena. Ample free parking in lots behind the Playhouse and across the street. General admission is \$20, seniors \$18. Reservations: (626) 355-4318. Online ticketing: <https://sierramadreplayhouse.org>

Here's what audiences have to say about Cori Cable Kidder as Patsy Cline:

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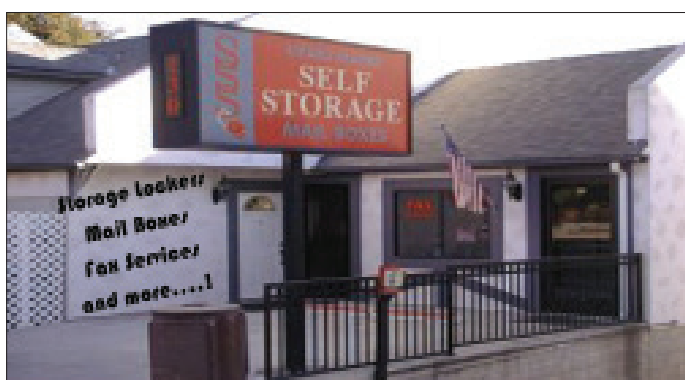
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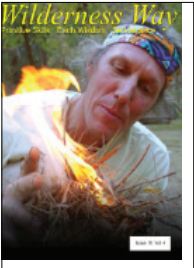
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CHRISTOPHER Nyerges

DISCOVERING SANTA CLAUS



[Nyerges is an educator, and the author of several books, such as “Urban Survival Guide,” “Extreme Simplicity,” and others. This story is extracted from Nyerges’ latest book, “Watermelon Dreams.” He can be reached at www.SchoolofSelf-Reliance.com.]

Christmas was always a special time. In my very earliest memories, the religious overtones were subtle, or not obvious, to me. I was taken to church every Sunday, of course, but the Christmas decorations and gatherings were all something that hap-pened at home, not at church. When I was too young to speak, I realized that Christ-mas was the season that happened during the coldest time of the year, and it meant that we’d have a fire going in the fireplace, people would be coming over, and there’d be lots of gifts and food. The food was cookies, tangerines, and walnuts.

One of my earliest Christmas memories was when I was told that Santa Claus would come to our home and bring gifts, and that he had some way to figure out where I lived. I didn’t know exactly why, but there was a great mystery about this fat, bearded, red-suited Santa man. People spoke about him in hushed tones, and would even sometimes stop talking about him when I came near.

My brother Tom told me that Santa Claus would come down the chimney – something I found hard to believe considering how fat the man appeared in the pic-tures. We both peered up into our fireplace one day and wondered how Santa could get through the narrow passageway. And why would he choose such a difficult point of entry?

“Plus, doesn’t dad have a screen over the top of the chimney to keep the pi-geons out?” Tom asked. I didn’t know. “I hope he remembers to remove it for Santa.”

On Christmas Eve, our dad showed us a plate of cookies and a thermos of cof-fee that had been set out for Santa.

We barely slept, and I tried to not sleep so I could be the first to rush out and catch a glimpse of this Santa. But I fell asleep, and Tom woke me and Rick. We jumped out of bed, and ran down the hall. We weren’t particularly interested in gifts, but we wanted to catch a glimpse of Santa before he whisked away back up the chim-ney. We were too late, but the three of us carefully examined the remaining evi-dence. There were no cookies left on the plate – only crumbs – and there was only a small amount of coffee left in the cup. Tom held the cup and carefully peered into it, and then Rick and I stared into the cup, the proof that Santa had come and departed.

“See?” said Tom. We all continued to stare into the cup a while longer, as if it might reveal some secrets to us.

In a few more years, I noticed that people didn’t fully hide their comments from me when speaking about Santa Claus.

“He believes in Santa Claus?” was met with muffled response. What an odd question, I thought. Why shouldn’t I believe in Santa Claus?

When I actually learned about this mythical aspect of Christmas, I did go through a period of confusion and even anger at the world of make-believe perpetrated entirely by adults and foisted upon me. I suppose I felt bad because I really wanted to believe in Santa Claus, and I felt that he was a positive figure. And I had been told to “be good” for Santa Claus, and that Santa Claus knew everything I was doing. I was very puzzled by all this, but I got over it.

In fact, I felt very uplifted when I learned that there was an actual historical per-son upon which Santa Claus was based: a Catholic bishop in Asia Minor (Turkey) of the 3rd century named Nikolaos of Myra gave gifts to poor newlyweds around Christ-mas time. A century or so later, sainthood was bestowed upon him, and he was known as Saint Nicholas.

In honor of this very real person, people began to give gifts to others, especially others in need, during the Christmas season and say it was “from Saint Nicholas.” What a wonderful story! What would have been wrong with telling me that historical story rather than the garbled mythology?

Katnip News! BEHOLD THIS BEAUTY!



Yes! Echo Bella is cer-tainly a beauty to be-hold! Her fur is the color of autumn, with orange, black, and gray with white. She's the picture of health for her age, 15, has a good appetite and needs no meds. She had a very loving home, but her own-ers had to move and things just didn't work out through no fault of Bella's. She is sweet and friendly and she'd love to be in a comfy home where she could live out her golden years in "purr bliss!"



Purr-ty please don't let this gorgeous girl spend more time in a cage. Submit your application to start the process for a meet & greet. We know you'll fall in love! Apply at www.lifelineforpets.org.

Pet of the Week

Sapphire is celebrating Adopt-A-Senior-Pet Month by reminding us how great “older” pets can be! Six-year-old Sapphire knows some tricks, appears to be housebroken and is quite content to amuse herself with a chew toy that is not a shoe. She walks very well on leash; she’s a plug-and-play dog! This sweet senior can be a little shy with new people, but given a bit of time and space, she will investigate and decide that everything is OK. Once she has assessed the situation, Sapphire will lean into you and put her head in your arms for pets. Sapphire also loves toys- tennis balls are high on her list and she loves a good squeaker. Sapphire really is a gem!



Like all senior pets, Sapphire is eligible for the Seniors for Seniors program, which means her adoption is free for any human over sixty. 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 an adoption appointment at pasadenahumane.org. Adoptions are by appointment only, and new adoption appointments are available every Sunday and Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. Pets may not be available for adoption and cannot be held for potential adopters by phone calls or email.



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Thurber's Tail.com HOW MY DOG BROUGHT JOY TO MY ELDERLY DAD

Editor's note: This column is an excerpt from Tom Purcell's new book, "Tips from a New Dog Dad." Read more chapters at ThurbersTail.com.

My Lab puppy, Thurber, was born on Christmas Day, 2020 — the best Christmas blessing I ever received. But he bestowed even greater blessings on my mother and father.

In his 87th year, my father was facing a series of health challenges.

Waiting for the other shoe to drop — waiting for a middle-of-the night call to help pick him up from a fall — had become the norm.

Visits to my parents’ house were becoming less joyful and more stressful as my dad, with limited mobility, needed help getting in and out of his chair and had to ask his kids to assist with the many daily tasks he used to do himself so effortlessly.

We gave my father endless support as his needs grew but his decline brought sadness, and the sadness began permeating my parents’ home, hitting us hard every time we entered the front door.

That all changed the day I brought my puppy Thurber home.

Thurber’s first visit

The day I picked Thurber up in Punxsutawney, Pa., my plan was to drive directly to my mom and dad’s house.

I slipped into their house quietly through the garage and sneaked up the back steps.

I knew they’d be in the family room watching an old movie. That’s what they often did in the afternoons — and, sure enough, that is what they were doing.

In I walked, a soft cuddly puppy in my arms — and the room lit up like a Christmas tree.

The joy was immediate and, just like that, my mom and dad were transformed from their late 80s into giddy, 10-year-old children.

I set Thurber on my father’s lap and the puppy was in his glory, his tail wagging wildly. Dogs always loved my father and sensed instantly, and correctly, that he was the alpha male in the room.

The two played and cuddled a good long while as Thurber climbed all over my dad and found an especially comfortable spot between him and the arm of his recliner.

I brought Thurber over to my mom and she too was thrust into instant joy and affec-

tion. We never think of our parents as being children, but with a puppy in her arms my mother became a happy little girl.

It was as if her father, who died when she was only 19, was watching over her again — providing her with the warmth and security he did so well in her childhood.

After a time, my mother set Thurber on the floor, where I lay enticing him to play with me.

I laughed aloud as he jumped on me and showered me with his affection, but it was more than just puppy affection that brought me so much joy.

It was wonderful to feel the undivided love and playfulness my puppy directed solely at me.

Better yet, it made my mother and father happy to see their middle-aged son being made so happy by the puppy who would now be an integral part of his world.

An angel of joy

I stayed a few hours that Friday afternoon, the first time in months we were able to forget about my dad’s health woes — the first time we laughed in I don’t recall how long.

The power of a puppy is transformative, and my transformation was just beginning then, and continues still.

There is a saying I came across in which God is talking to a puppy and he says, “I removed your wings so they won’t know you are an angel.”

Well, on the day I brought Thurber home, he became an angel of joy to my father and mother.

I didn’t know that for the next year and a half I’d be able to bring him to my parents’ house for multiple visits that inevitably resulted in childlike happiness for us all — sadness left their home instantly every time Thurber visited.

And when Thurber celebrated his first birthday on Christmas Day of 2021, we had the celebration in my parents’ home, and it was a grand event full of laughter and joy.

I didn’t know last Christmas that my father would leave us nine months later — he’d leave us a few days after we’d celebrate his 89th birthday.

But I will treasure forever the many joyful visits Thurber and I made to my parents’ home, in which their difficult days were made so much brighter by a furry angel with hidden wings!

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ASSISTED LIVING OR NURSING HOME?

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In Assisted Living, one will get the support as needed, such as getting help with showering, grooming, and dressing. Again, these services are based on the seniors needs.

There are many reasons in working with us. At Safe Path for Seniors, we will assess the senior and depending on their care needs and budget, make recommendations. For example, we may suggest that the right fit is a Board and Care Home (normally a 6-bedroom house) as opposed to an Assisted Living Community or a Memory Support Facility. You will work with an experienced agent who knows the industry well and will give you recommendations. The good news is that there is no cost for this service.

If you have any questions about placing a loved one, visit www.safepathforseniors.com or call Steve at 626-999-6913

HOW TO BUY OVER-THE-COUNTER HEARING AIDS

Dear Savvy Senior: I'm interested in getting some of the new over-the-counter hearing aids that just became available a few months ago. Can you offer any tips to help me with this? Straining to Hear



Dear Straining:

The new FDA approved over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids that started rolling out this fall are a real game changer for the roughly 48 million Americans with hearing loss. Adults with impaired hearing can now walk in and buy hearing aids at a pharmacy, big box chain, consumer electronics store or online, without a prescription and without consulting an audiologist.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved this new class of hearing aids to lower prices and improve their availability.

About a third of people ages 65 to 74 and half of those over age 75 have hearing loss severe enough to affect their daily life. Yet about 80 percent of people who would benefit from hearing aids don't wear them, according to the National Institutes of Health, primarily because of the hefty price tag.

Traditional hearing aids ordered through an audiologist cost anywhere from \$1,000 to \$7,000 a pair and are not covered by most private insurers and traditional Medicare. The new OTC hearing aids range from \$200 up to \$3,000.

Who Should Get Them?

OTC hearing aids are specifically designed for adults (18 and older) who have mild to moderate hearing loss. You don't need a hearing exam or prescription to buy them, and they are designed so you can fit and tune them yourself.

Do you have mild to moderate hearing loss? The specific signs are having trouble hearing or understanding conversations, especially in noisier environments, over the phone, or if you can't see who's talking. Or, if you need a higher volume of TV, radio or music than other people, or have to ask others to speak more slowly, louder or repeat what they said.

If, however, your hearing problem is more severe than that, for example, if you also have trouble hearing loud sounds such as power tools or motor vehicles, or if you struggle to hear conversations in quiet settings, then your hearing loss is considered more significant than over-the-counter aids are intended to address.

To help you get a basic sense of your hearing problem, you can take an app-based test like Mimi (mimi.health) or SonicCloud (soniccloud.com).

If you find that your hearing loss is significant, you'll need to work with an audiologist or hearing instrument specialist to find a hearing aid that works for you.

What to Look For

To help you choose a good OTC hearing aid that meets your needs and preferences, here are some important points to keep in mind.

Return policy: It can take weeks for your brain to adjust to hearing louder sounds through a hearing aid, so be sure to choose a brand that offers at least a 30-day free trial period, or money back return policy. The FDA requires manufacturers to print their return policy on the package.

Set up: Many OTC hearing aids require a smartphone or computer to adjust and operate the devices to your specific needs, while others have the controls on the device. This will also be labeled on the box. Choose one that fits your preference and comfort level.

Battery: The package also should tell you what kind of battery the device uses. Some of the older versions of hearing aids have replaceable batteries, but many of the newer ones have rechargeable batteries that come in a charging case, where you charge them up every night.

Customer support: Some companies offer unlimited customer support to help you adjust or fine-tune your hearing aids, while others might limit support or charge extra. Be sure you check.

For more information, including product reviews, see the National Council on Aging's OTC hearing aids buyer's guide at NCOA.org/adviser/hearing-aids/over-the-counter-hearing-aids.

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

SENIOR HAPPENINGS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY! ...NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS*

Flo Mankin, Alberta Curran, Carmela Frontino, Kathy Wood, Lena Zate, Joe Pergola, Janice Kacer, Valerie Howard, Lois Stueck, Jean Wood, Shirley Yergeau, Pat Krok, Irene Nakagawa, Anna Ross, Mary Steinberg, Mary Bowser, Susan Clifton, Mary Higgins, Kim Buchanan, Leigh Thach and Sue Quinn, Jill Girod, Pat Krok, Jeanne Martin* To add your name to this distinguished list, please call the paper at 626.355.2737. YEAR of birth not required

SIERRA MADRE SENIOR CLUB Every Saturday from 11:30am-3:30 pm in the Hart Park House Senior Center. Join us as we celebrate birthdays, holidays and play BINGO. Must be 50+ to join. For more information call Mark at 626-355-3951.

DOMINOES TRAIN GAME 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 11:00 am— 12:30 pm Hart Park House The object of the game is for a player to play all the tiles from their hand onto one or more trains, emanating from a central hub or "station". Call Lawren with questions that you may have.

PAINT PALS

Thursday, 10/13 10:30 am—Hart Park House If you enjoy painting, sketching, water color, or making some other form of artistic creation please join our new program, PAINT PALS!!! Bring a project that you are working on to the HPH and enjoy some quality art time with other artists looking to paint with a new pal.

TEA AND TALK SENIOR BOOK CLUB Tuesday Oct. 12 and Oct. 26 — 9:00 am Staff has launched a new book club series, Tea and Talk, which meets twice a month to discuss the fun, suspense, intrigue, love and so much more that each selection will have in store!

FIBER FRIENDS Tuesday, 10/4 and 10/18 —10:00 am If you enjoy knitting, crocheting, embroidery, needlepoint, bunka, huck, tatting or cross stitch then we have a group for you! Bring your current project, a nonalcoholic beverage, then sit and chat with likeminded fiber friends. We meet in the Hart Park House

CHAIR YOGA Every Monday and Wednesday, 10-10:45 am Please join us for some gentle stretching, yoga, balance exercise and overall relaxation with Paul. Classes are ongoing and held in the Memorial Park Covered Pavilion or the Hart Park House..

HULA AND POLYNESIAN DANCE Every Friday, 10-10:45 am Bring a lei, your flower skirt or just your desire to dance! Hula in the Park is back and waiting for you to join in on all the fun! Memorial Park Pavilion.

BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC - Tuesday, Oct. 11 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Methodist Hospital will be holding a free to seniors clinic once a month in the Hart Park House. Walk in are welcome - no pre-registration required.

LOTERIA: Oct. 20 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Come down to the HPH (Hart Park House) for a lively round of Loteria (Mexican Bingo) Prizes await!

OCTOBER CRAFT Tuesday, October 25 10:30am Hart Park House

Have you ever had interest in balloon art? Well you are in luck! Join Recreation Coordinator Pardo as she instructs us on how to create a cat, bat or pumpkin balloon column. Space is limited so please call or email Lawren to reserve your spot.

SENIOR CINEMA Wednesday, 10/12— 1:00 pm **HUBIE HALLOWEEN** PG-13 1h 43m Good-natured but eccentric community volunteer Hubie Dubois finds himself at the center of a real murder case on Halloween night. Despite his devotion to his hometown of Salem, Massachusetts (and its legendary Halloween celebration).

Wednesday, 10/26 – Beginning at 1:00pm **THE BIRDS** PG 1h 59m

SPECIAL MEDICARE PRESENTATION NEW DATE! Thursday 10/20, 9:00 am-10:00 am Hart Park House Please join Duarte Councilmember Vihn for a Medicare presentation. Pastries and coffee will be served during this informative presentation. Space is limited, call Lawren to reserve your spot.

OUT TO PASTOR

A Weekly Religion Column by Rev. James Snyder

IF ONLY I WOULD TAKE NOTES



As a writer, I always have a small notebook in my shirt pocket to take notes when I have an idea. I don't have too many ideas, so I want to write down any I get so I don't forget them. That has helped me out on

many occasions.

There is one exception. When The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage talks to me, I fail to take notes about that conversation. You would think after being married as long as I have, I would know better.

I never think of it until she asks, "Do you remember what I told you this morning?" That always catches me off my guard, which I think she just may be doing this on purpose.

Usually, she says this after lunch, and I have no recollection of any morning conversations. But, because I don't remember, I get in deep trouble.

My confusion along this line is simple, is she saying this because it's true or because she knows I don't remember things? I believe that at this stage in our marriage, she has a good idea of what I can remember. Sorry to say, I don't.

Then I come in and have to face, "Do you remember what I told you this morning?"

Once, trying to get a step ahead, I said, "Yes, I do remember, and I'll get to it tomorrow." Thinking this will solve a problem, I smile and go about my business. But, boy, was I wrong.

I can never outmaneuver The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. When I said that, she replied, "Great, what are you going to do tomorrow?"

I knew I was backed into a corner and responded as cheerfully as possible, "I'm going to do tomorrow what you told me to do this morning."

I didn't get off on that one. I didn't think I would, but you never know until you try.

At my age, I'm not quite sure how the game is being played. I cannot tell if what she was telling me now is what she said to me in the morning. I think she plays me along this line, because if I forget something, then it's all on me.

I try to tell The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage that, at my age, I'm too poor to pay attention. I tell her when I save up enough money, I will spend it on paying attention. She never buys that. She looks at me, both hands on her hips, and says, "What have I told you about saying that?"

If only I could remember, I could beat her at this game. I'm unsure if I'm forgetting or if it never actually happened. I have no viable proof.

One day I tried it out for myself to see if I could trick her. She came into my office, and I said, "Remember what I told you this morning?"

"Yes, I do," she said with a smirk, "here are the batteries you asked me to get at the store."

All I could do was say, "Thank you, my dear." I have no recollection of ever asking her to pick up any batteries for me at the store. If I did, I sure don't remember.

I have to give her credit on this one, she got me.

Turnaround is fair play, or so I thought, I came up with another idea.

The next time she said, "Remember what I told you this morning?" I looked at her and said, "Yes, my dear, and here are the donuts you asked me to get you this morning." I then handed her a box of doughnuts from the bakery.

She replied, "If you remember, I said, don't go nuts today."

I just can't win.

Of course, if I did get a notebook, I would have to buy a new one every week to keep up with her conversations with me. It might be worth the investment; it could keep me out of trouble.

One time she asked me, "Do I need to get you some hearing aids?"

I'm thinking more about getting a recorder to tape our conversations. Unfortunately, I can't find one with that much memory to record her conversations.

I had one more ploy, at least a try. The next time she said, "Remember what I told you this morning?" Then, with my hands behind my back, I brought them forward with a bunch of flowers, gave them to her, and say, "Yes, my dear. Here are those flowers you requested."

What was the great pay-off for that time, I couldn't remember? She looked at those flowers and then looked at me and smiled and said, "Thank you." And that's all she said.

I racked my brain all day trying to figure out how in the world I was able to capture that one.

I may be learning to pay some attention; nobody knows how long this will last, at least me.

Reflecting on this I was reminded of one of my favorite Bible verses.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

My big failure is when I try to lean on my own understanding instead of trusting God. My trust in God will raise me above human understanding, which puts me on the right track. Also, my trust keeps me going in the right path.

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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



or position in the world. In other words you don't have to be Jewish, male, old, or rich to be a mensch. I thought of the word this morning as I attended Grandparents' Day at my granddaughter's new School. This is a School for age three to five year old preschoolers and is under the umbrella of Cal Tech and JPL or something that I don't quite understand. The woman who welcomed the attending grandparents made an attempt to explain as talked about the purpose of the School. We learned that the School was not interested in early exposure to academics or accepted civility or the nurturing of any special talents. She said the School intended to foster a kind of self-discovery by its toddlers who were not expected to stay in line or nap quietly or meet the teacher's expectations. She emphasized that the School was not simply intended as a place where the kids could be dropped off while their parents were off making a living while knowing that their kids were safe.

This School was about something else. It was something called self-discovery wherein each child would somehow learn to meet their own needs rather than the need of controlling teachers who tried to mold them into some acceptable form that pleased their parents or their teachers. The students were encouraged, or rather allowed to creatively find themselves and their own interests and abilities. Rather than having one teacher trying their best to control thirty kids, which is how I remember School, there were about one teacher-observer person for about every five kids. She used the word "holistic" as a way of explaining what went on. A grandparent asked if that meant "hands on" learning and wondered what particular curriculum was followed. The welcoming woman said that no particular curriculum was followed and she used the word "holistic" again. Before writing this article I looked up holistic education and learned that it is a "comprehensive approach to teaching where educators seek to address the emotional, social, ethical need of the student rather than just laying a strong foundation in a core curriculum in an attempt to develop a compassionate understanding of the world around them."

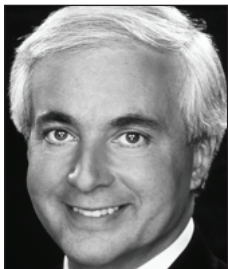
I doubt that such language would have provided answers to questions of grandparents. Other questions were about safety, available medical services, privacy, and other things that parents and grandparents think about. During the morning as I watched about twenty five kids racing around in a large back yard as they rode scooters and tricycles and jumped from one place to another. My wife turned the pages of a book and pointed out animals and the sounds they made to my granddaughter who was interested for a while and then took off running. She found a scooter and then a tricycle and managed to fall off each one but seemingly unharmed picked herself up, righted the bike, and continued racing around not in line with any other kids but doing her own thing.

I could not help but thinking that my mother and grandmother, to use another common Yiddish word, would be "plotzing" if they witnessed such behavior. Even if you don't know the word you can picture collapsing with strong annoyance or emotion. Oy, what if they get hurt or rip their clothes or worse yet, although never expressed that way, act in a way to embarrass us? What will the neighbors think? Today, my friends who are not dead are now retired and report that the thing they enjoy most is just trying to please themselves without anyone telling them what to do. Should it take a whole lifetime to find out that what one wants to do is to decide for oneself.

Looking at all of those kids this morning I wondered what I really wanted for each of them. What I wanted for them in my terms is for each of them to grow to be a mensch. A mensch to me is a person of honor and integrity who behaves not to impress others or to avoid criticism or to be successful. It is the outer expression inner qualities of character, rectitude, dignity, a personal sense of what is right and responsible. These are the qualities one would hope for in a friend and describes someone with a sense of compassion who reminds all of us why humans are of value.

The word "rachmones" which is the Yiddish word for compassion is a quintessential word that lies at the heart of Jewish thought. We have to care but we have to do more than care. We have to know what is right and do it. Maybe if teachers and traditional education and traditional parental needs don't get in the way our younger generations might have a chance. Wouldn't that be nice?

PETER FUNT



TV TOSSES TINSEL ON 158 HOLIDAY FILMS

When it comes to sappy holiday movies, you either scorn them as you would another pair of reindeer-themed socks, or you eagerly binge on offerings such as "My Southern Family Christmas," produced by Hallmark and described thusly:

"Under the guise of a journalist, Campbell has a chance to get to know her biological father for the first time — without him ever knowing who she really is. ... Campbell must decide if she's going to keep her identity a secret or reveal the truth to her father — a decision that will change their family Christmas forever."

You can't make this stuff up. Well, actually, you can if you work at Hallmark, which for the third straight year has managed to produce a cache of 40 highly-profitable holiday movies. Since imitation is the sincerest form of television (a line credited to Fred Allen), it's not surprising that 27 different networks and streamers have jumped in this year and combined to produce a record number of largely lookalike holiday films. The industry-wide total is a remarkable 158.

For Hallmark, it's the most wonderful time of year in terms of ratings and revenue. I estimate that the company spends a bit over \$100 million to produce its Christmas films, many of which are shot in Canada to reduce costs. The Hallmark Channel reportedly reaps about one-third of its annual revenue from the 40 projects, or about \$350 million, and this year it partnered with NBC to stream its movies on Peacock.

Leading the pack in popularity so far is "Falling for Christmas" on Netflix, which was gifted with more than 31 million views in its first four days. The draw probably isn't the tired plot (a woman with amnesia falls for a handsome stranger at Christmas) but rather the return of actress Lindsay Lohan after years away from the screen.

The upstart Great American Family channel produced 18 Christmas films this year and managed to stir some controversy. The service is run by Bill Abbott, a former Hallmark exec, who lured one of holiday filmmaking's biggest stars, Candace Cameron Bure, away from Hallmark to produce and star in Christmas movies that were less secular than the sort Hallmark favors. "I knew that the people behind Great American Family were Christians that love the Lord," Bure said in an interview, "and wanted to promote faith programming and good family entertainment."

Hallmark, meanwhile, is aggressively broadening its holiday storytelling and next month will offer "The Holiday Sitter," its first Christmas film with an LGBT love story. Bure caused a fuss on social media after saying she isn't keen on such themes.

The Lifetime channel is releasing 26 holiday titles this season. My favorite, at least based on the blurb, is "Santa Bootcamp," in which an event planner named Emily is sent off to holiday bootcamp and meets "a drill sergeant with a heart of gold, who helps Emily rediscover the magic of Christmas and find romance along the way."

Even the shopping channel QVC has produced a holiday film, "Holly and the Hot Chocolate," about a food critic who finds herself stuck in the small town of Pine Falls at Christmas. But wait, there's more! QVC is selling a special hot chocolate in partnership with gourmet retailer Serendipity.

How much holiday film fluff can viewers handle? So far, ratings are substantial, ad revenue is robust, and currently — perhaps due to economic and political malaise — the appetite appears almost limitless for formulaic fare that seems to get viewers where they want to go.

The frenzy is so great that TV is even making a Christmas movie about making a Christmas movie. "When a holiday rom-com movie shooting in her town needs a costume designer, Kerry, a local shop owner, steps into the role," says the blurb. "She rediscovers her passion for costume design and finds herself falling for Brad, the film's famous leading man."

Hallmark calls this film, "Lights, Camera, Christmas!" which pretty much sums up the holiday viewing season.

Peter Funt's new memoir, "Self-Amused," is now available at CandidCamera.co

PUT THE LIGHTS ON MENSCHKEIT

Don't worry if you are unfamiliar with the word. I had never heard it spoken and thought I had made it up. I looked it up in the dictionary and somebody had beaten me to it. It is a Yiddish word meaning someone who has the qualities of a mensch. No surprise. Perhaps you are familiar with the word "mensch" which gets bandied around much like other Yiddish words like "schlep" which has entered the language and commonly used without ever being defined. To me the word "mensch" has nothing to do with its derivation which undoubtedly comes from the German word meaning "men".

To me the word is not limited by ethnicity, gender, age, or position in the world. In other words you don't have to be Jewish, male, old, or rich to be a mensch. I thought of the word this morning as I attended Grandparents' Day at my granddaughter's new School. This is a School for age three to five year old preschoolers and is under the umbrella of Cal Tech and JPL or something that I don't quite understand. The woman who welcomed the attending grandparents made an attempt to explain as talked about the purpose of the School. We learned that the School was not interested in early exposure to academics or accepted civility or the nurturing of any special talents. She said the School intended to foster a kind of self-discovery by its toddlers who were not expected to stay in line or nap quietly or meet the teacher's expectations. She emphasized that the School was not simply intended as a place where the kids could be dropped off while their parents were off making a living while knowing that their kids were safe.

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RICH & FAMOUS

EXTRAVAGANT GIFT SUGGESTIONS?



Aren't we all looking for gift suggestions for those hard to buy for relatives?

Well, I stumbled on a unique bit of information detailing gift purchases from world leaders to world leaders. Did you know foreign countries give gifts to other foreign countries? Diplomatic Gifts!

Most of you know the country of France gave us the Statue of Liberty in 1886 basically thanking us for rebelling against the British and winning the war of Independence. The statue of Liberty is really a statue of the Roman Goddess of Free-dom, Libertas.

Yearly since 1947, Norway has sent a 20+ meter (65 feet tall) high spruce tree to the United Kingdom where it stands in Trafalgar Square for the Christmas season. This is Norway's way of thanking the British for helping them resist the Nazi's in World War II. Norway fell to the Nazis and the British gave the Norwegian exiled government refuge where they could organize resistance against the Nazis.

Red China gifted the National Zoo in Washington D.C. with two giant pandas following the groundbreaking 1972 trip to Red China by then President Nixon.

British King George VI commissioned a sword to be created for Joseph Stalin, the leader of Russia. Why? Because Stalin led the Russians in a five month battle, we now referred to as the Battle of Stalingrad. This was the first major defeat by the Germans and their co-conspirators.

On a smaller note the Commander of Egypt in 1827 gave French King Charles X a giraffe trying to persuade the King of France to support the Turks in the Greek War of Independence. Apparently, the French people went crazy for the giraffe.

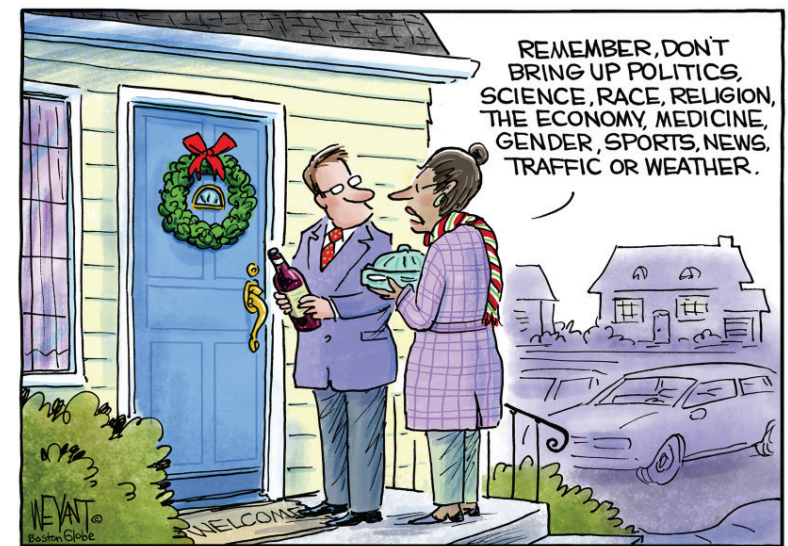
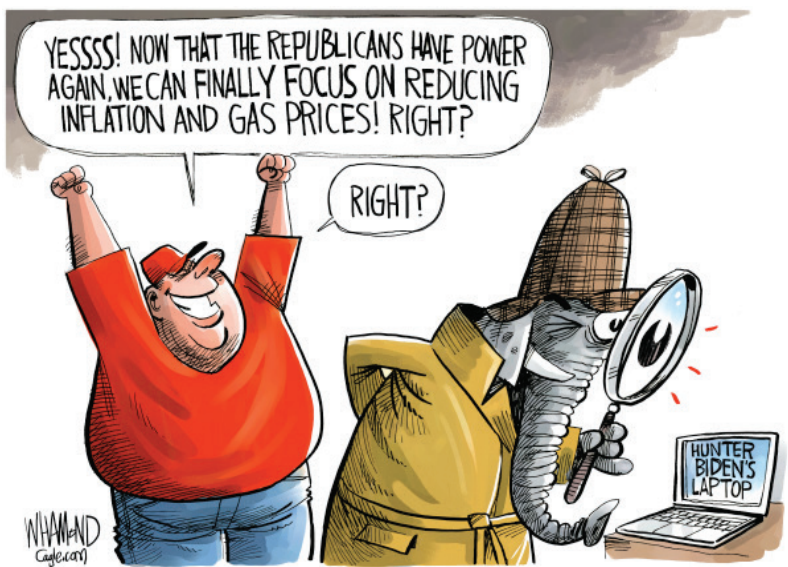
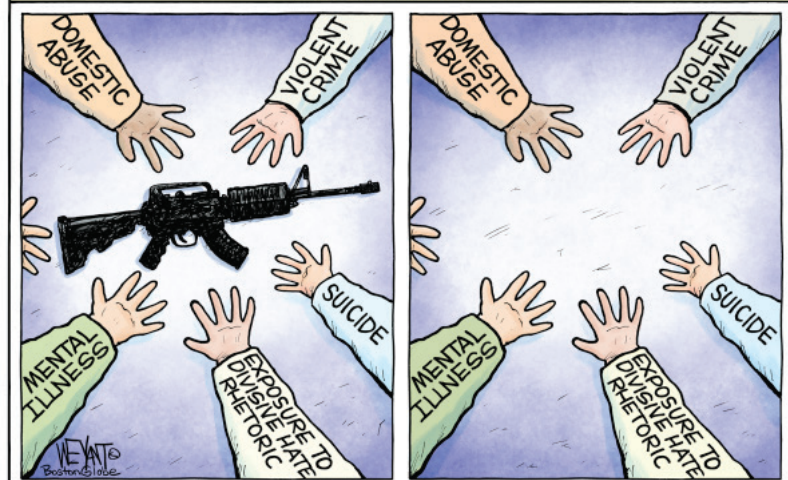
When the Obama family visited Australia in 2011 the Australian Northern Territory Administration gifted the Obamas, crocodile insurance. I found out the President is not allowed to accept gifts that exceed \$390. That bit of information might come in handy someday.

Speaking of reptiles the Indonesian government, in 1986, offered President Reagan two Komodo dragons. President Reagan probably determined roaming the halls of the White House was not a good idea, the Komodo dragons were pre-sented to the National Zoo down the street from the White House. Realizing for dragons were males, a third female was later lent to the zoo and offsprings of the original Komodo family still roam the National Zoo.

Russian Dictator Josef Stalin gifted North Korea Dictator Kim Il Sung with a bullet-proof limousine. Dictator Sung considered Dictator Stalin's gift to be a thoughtful gift. No kidding!

If you haven't made New Year's Eve plans, my band, JJ Jukebox is performing at a New Year's Eve party at Nano Café in Sierra Madre. We would love to bring in 2023 with you and yours. If interested contact the restaurant, (626) 325-3334 for reservations.

Quiz: Can You Spot the Difference That Saves 40,000 Lives A Year?





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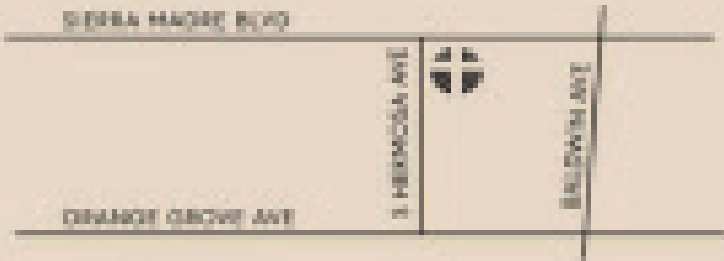
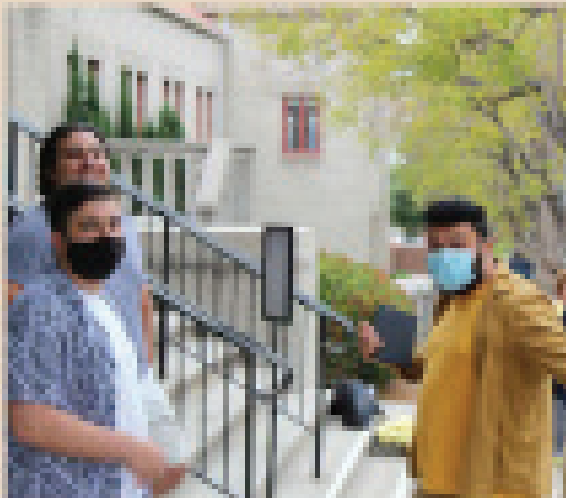


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