

• S • A • N • D • I • E • G •

VOL. 47 | NO. 52 | DECEMBER 22, 2022

Reader

**HOMICIDE
FOR THE
HOLIDAYS**

San Diego's
Christmastime Killings.

Uruapan: best bang-for-your-buck taco in San Diego ■ No payoffs yet after TJ gas explosion

At Risk for Alzheimer's?

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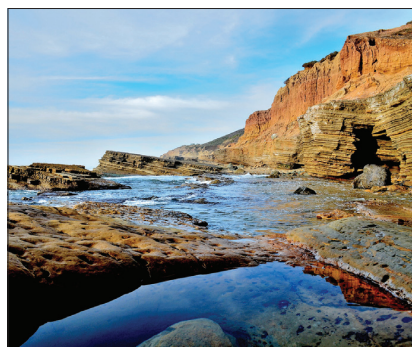
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December 22, 2022



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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

By Reader stringers

TIJUANA

Burning gas and hot air Reparations talk is cheap in wake of explosion

On April 18 of this year, an explosion took place in the 20 de Noviembre neighborhood; a condo was destroyed due to a domestic gas accumulation. One person was wounded. Building shards thrown all over the surrounding properties ended up affecting the neighbors. Since the incident, none of the damages have been paid for by the condo's owners.

Neighbor Silvia (not her real name) said that her house looked like a war zone. "I wasn't here, but I was speaking by phone with my partner when out of the blue, I heard the explosion, and then just silence, followed by screams. At that moment, I felt horrible, because I did not know what was happen-

tions. The only thing they're asking now is to get their car repaired – \$1600 USD. Silvia pointed out that because their car is out of use, they have had issues with their transportation to work, which has caused hard times for them within their jobs.

A mechanic whose workshop is situated next to the condos is still waiting for his dam-

"I got an acoustic trauma, the doctor said. Since that day, I have had headaches and dizziness all the time."

ing." Her partner then explained that after the blasting, she reacted by taking their cats with her outside the house, which was unrecognizable. "The next day, I had to go to the doctor using my job's health care," said Silvia's partner. "I got an acoustic trauma, the doctor said. Since that day, I have had headaches and dizziness all the time. Whether I move my head quickly and then get back to my head's normal position, I get dizzy."

Silvia and her partner agreed not to ask the construction company involved in the incident to cover their psychological and physical side effects as part of their repara-

ages to be paid for. Alejandro Epifanio, who is in charge of the workshop, stressed that three of their customers' cars were seriously damaged, and that the official in charge of assessing the compensation has promised to pay for their repair — eventually. But at the moment, the shop must cover the expense. "We can't just tell our customers that their cars won't be ready for four years while everything is solved. We paid 15 thousand pesos (\$750 USD) for those three vehicles, but we got a lawsuit from the owner of a fourth car. We did arrange an agreement with them, but we are still waiting for it," Alejandro expressed



Three of their customers' cars were seriously damaged.



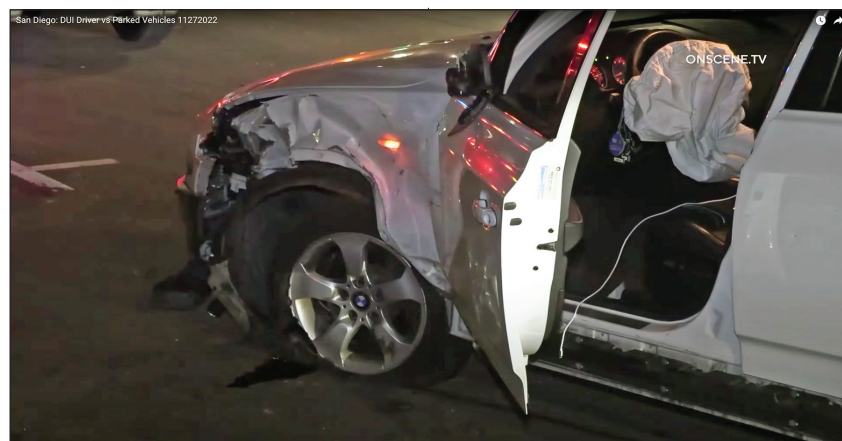
TJ real estate is blowing up — and some of it is also exploding.

frustration: "These things should be sorted out by now, I don't know what the Prosecutor's Office is doing about it. It seems to me that it is just a matter of time before this happens again somewhere else."

Silvia also expressed concern about how things are going in Tijuana regarding condo construction in neighborhoods like hers. "First of all, that building was not for the

On Thanksgiving Day itself, there were just seven.

That relatively low total is partly attributed to press releases by law enforcement and mainstream news reports about their plan to be an active presence during the busy holiday weekend. To wit: California Highway Patrol implemented a Maximum Enforcement Period, during which CHP



"The driver continued for another block before not being able to continue any further."

national market; in fact, there was a Korean-American citizen who owned it, and they are buying them to turn them into Airbnbs. Furthermore, people started to move in while the construction was not finished entirely, but because they're owned by private citizens, I think they can get permissions right away when they want it."

For now, neighbors remain uncertain about when their expenses following the damage will be recovered, and they don't see payoffs coming anytime soon. Further, they say, during the recent heavy rainfalls, water worked its way through the superficial repairs the company did. Damages are getting worse, and increasing the repair bill that they may end up paying from their own pockets.

IVAN MOLINA

officers added resources to seek out unsafe drivers from Wednesday at 6 pm to Sunday at midnight. The result, as the CHP noted in a Tweet, was that while "tragically, 41 people were killed in crashes on the state's roadways during the California Highway Patrol's 102-hour Thanksgiving Maximum Enforcement Period, this total reflects a 28 percent decrease from the same period last year," which saw 57 deaths. (While two traffic fatalities occurred on San Diego County freeways and highways during the Thanksgiving weekend, no additional info was divulged on whether alcohol or drugs were involved in the accidents.) Prior to Thanksgiving weekend, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department had arrested "more than 750

continued on page 3

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Continued from page 2

people for impaired driving in San Diego County” in 2022.

On Thanksgiving morning, Encinitas sheriffs arrested someone on the 300 block of Encinitas Boulevard for a DUI involving alcohol, says *CrimeMapping.com*. A couple of hours later, the Imperial Beach sheriffs detained a person for driving under the influence of alcohol mixed

DUIs. 911 VIDEO NEWS was on location for one of the DUI arrests near the Gaslamp District at about 1:30 am that day. “The male driver and his female companion were eastbound on G Street when he hit a parked truck,” reads the caption underneath the arrest video on YouTube. “The collision sent the truck into the car that was parked in front of it. The driver continued for another block before not being able to continue any further. The female suffered a head injury and was treated by the paramedics. The male was ‘tested and arrested’ for DUI.”

“DUI doesn’t just mean booze,” notes the sheriff’s website. “Prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs, and marijuana can also impair, especially in combination with alcohol and other drugs.”

with an unidentified drug. “DUI doesn’t just mean booze,” notes the sheriff’s website. “Prescription medications, over-the-counter drugs, and marijuana can also impair, especially in combination with alcohol and other drugs.” Later that day, at about 2 pm, the Vista sheriffs arrested someone on the 1600 block of Vale Terrace Drive for a DUI with alcohol. On Black Friday, five DUI arrests were reported; three were in North County early in the morning as shoppers headed out for Black Friday deals.

On Sunday, the last day of the holidays, law enforcement agencies reported 13

Before Thanksgiving Day, the DA’s office said in a press release that in 2021, 39 people were killed in 36 DUI-related crashes. But by November 9, 2022, there had been a “moderate decrease, with 24 people killed, including a 1-year-old child,” it continued. Data shows average blood-alcohol levels of drivers involved in Driving Under the Influence cases are also higher than last year at over .18 percent. Prosecutors say that more than half of individuals being arrested for driving under the influence have both alcohol and drugs in their system — a deadly combination.”

MIKE MADRIAGA

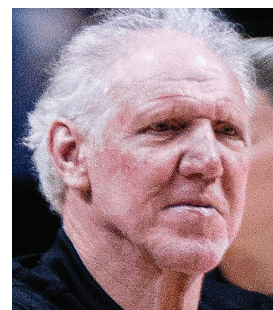
UNDER THE RADAR

Wanted: homeless lobbyist

As homeless people swamp the streets of San Diego, the city’s Housing Commission is preparing to spend big money for a Sacramento lobbyist, presumably to chase a windfall of homeless-related state taxpayer cash. The lobbyist’s job, per a December 14 Request for Proposals, includes introducing commission staffers “to key elected officials, state agency staff, and other pertinent advocacy groups,” as well as “establishing relationships between elected officials, legislative staff, chairs, and consultants of key committees, and other important decision-makers and key stakeholders.” The commission’s new influence peddler, for which compensation has not been set, is also supposed to “analyze and evaluate upcoming State legislation, including but not limited to bills addressing housing, homelessness, local land use policy, transit-oriented development, public housing authorities, and other subsidized housing-related bills, including funding opportunities related to these topics.”

Ex-legislative Democrat and current San Diego mayor **Todd Gloria**, under increasing fire about his laggard’s response on the homelessness issue from a range of critics, including retired basketball star **Bill Walton**, has long been charmed by the opaque wiles of California House lobbyists. Back in 2013, after he became acting mayor following the scandal-induced fall of fellow Democrat **Bob Filner**, Gloria hastily rehired the controversial Sacramento influence-peddling firm of Sloat Higgins Jensen & Associates, which Filner had let go. Shortly afterward, on December 26, 2013, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on a lawsuit by an ex-Sloat employee charging that the firm “tapped its roster of Fortune 500 clients to steer hundreds of thousands of dollars in checks to favored politicians.” According to the account, the complaint charged that Sloat founder **Kevin Sloat**, “who was once an aide to former Gov. **Pete Wilson**, also improperly gave gifts to legislators, instructing that no written record of them be kept.” Sloat and his firm were eventually fined \$133,500 by the state’s Fair Political Practices Commission in February 2014, but the penalty did not satisfy everyone. “It’s not sufficient,” **Jesse Ortiz**, a lawyer for the ex-Sloat employee who sued, told

the *Los Angeles Times*. “I think Mr. Sloat should be held accountable for all of his actions and not just some of them, which is what the FPPC decided to do.” According to the *Times* account, “Sloat admitted to making improper campaign contributions to 37 politicians in the form of expensive wine, liquor, and cigars provided at fundraisers, as well as improperly arranging gifts including sports tickets for three officials.” Not included in the FPPC’s case, the report says,



Bill Walton would like Todd Gloria to step up his game.

was an allegation in the lawsuit that “a state assemblyman received an unreported gift when Sloat ‘made arrangements’ with a Cuban artist to sell the lawmaker a painting at a deep discount from the asking price.” The art was sold at “nearly 50% below the asking price,” the lawsuit alleged. Further, “the price was not available to any member of the general public.” The report added, “Ortiz said the

lawmaker who bought the painting from Cuban artist **Javier Guerra** was Assemblyman **Isadore Hall III** (D-Compton) and that it should have been reported as a gift.”

Gloria’s elected successor, Republican **Kevin Faulconer**, replaced Sloat with Platinum Advisors, run by longtime Democratic fundraiser **Darius Anderson**, whose firm paid \$500,000 to settle a case by then-New York Atty. Gen. **Andrew Cuomo** “stemming from a yearlong investigation into so-called pay-to-play practices in city and state pension fund investment partnerships,” the *Los Angeles Times* reported in August 2010. California disclosure records show that under Glo-

ria, the city now pays Platinum \$42,000 a month, with a total of \$280,000 so far this legislative session for lobbying services in the state capitol. Platinum’s other clients are the GEO Group, the private prison operator, which has thus far this cycle paid the lobbyists \$210,941, per state disclosure filings; and Communities for California Cardrooms, with \$228,309. In October 2018, Platinum gave



Isadore Hall III knew a guy who knew a guy who painted stuff.

\$800 to San Diego County Supervisor **Nathan Fletcher**’s first term campaign, records show.

Nielsen Merksamer, a high-powered lobbyist with ties to Big Oil, is the county’s current biggest lobbyist, getting a total of \$367,656 so far this session. JGC Government Relations was paid \$241,198 during the same period. A year ago, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that JGC was among “dozens of California lobbying firms” that got

continued on page 4

Neal Obermeyer



Under the radar

continued from page 3

“millions of dollars in emergency federal assistance meant for small businesses to ride out the coronavirus pandemic, though some were ineligible for the program.” JGC president **Jonathan Clay**, son of longtime San Diego County lobbyist **Ben Clay**, told the paper he took out a so-called Paycheck Protection Program loan “because he wasn’t sure what his business

model, which relies primarily on lobbying, would look like with the Capitol shut down.” After initial confusion, according to the account, “Clay said he ultimately believed that he had followed all of the correct regulations. His firm — which reported \$721,618 in lobbying payments last year, from clients including the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and San Diego County — received a \$95,358 loan to protect three jobs, which was forgiven as of March. He looked

into getting another loan when Congress added more funding for a second round and did not continue once he found out that the federal government had issued additional guidance preventing the use of PPP money for lobbying.”

— Matt Potter (@sdmattpotter)

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We are, in fact, all going to die

I really enjoyed your article “Anti-Social Contagion.” It makes me happy that there are people like Deanna Polk and Amy Reichert who will stand up for all of our rights. As to the third lady, my prediction is that in 2023 she will be saying, “I was lied to! They said we were all going to die!!”

Sarah Ames
City Heights

Comments from SDReader.com — not edited for punctuation, spelling, or grammar.

“San Diego – Fentanyl City”

Cover story, December 15, 2022
Great article. Thank you Spike Steffenhagen for courageously including your own experiences, for seeing the subject from so many angles, and for bringing visibility to those who are fighting fentanyl.

Angle Appreciator
December 16, 2022

“Y’all are rude”

Feature story, September 28, 2016
When the article starts with a story about him complaining about a woman who doesn’t look up at him so he lets a door hit her in the ass, and he calls her rude? He let a potential act of kindness turned into a rude act himself. Such a hypocrisy. As a native San Diegan I was taught to be polite and courteous to everyone, and I find people here to be mostly polite. And after living in Philadelphia and 3 mountain towns, I find San Diegan friendliness refreshing!

Refreshed in San Diego
December 17, 2022

“The Silk Route Ends in San Diego”

Cover story, September 26, 1996
Beautiful article. Thank you, beloved San Diego Reader writers and contributors. Wonderful authentic stories of remarkable women and men of Afghanistan; true sentiments... I love you Afghanistan and watandara. Let’s create solve LOVE and CON-NECT in our hearts - assalamalaykom

Afghan Afficianado
December 16, 2022

“No DUI deaths in San Diego Thanksgiving weekend”

Neighborhood News, December 12, 2022

Thankfully, there were no deaths. But every DUI is a potential death, and it’s scary for everyone on the road.

Thankful
December 13, 2022

“Polite Provisions’ Christmas Cricket: a creamy, vegan Grasshopper”

Drink Recipes, December 2, 2022
Mmmm sounds pretty tasty!

Thirsty
December 14, 2022

“Spectacular Sunsets, Long Nights Trigger Pointsettias, King Jupiter”

Outdoors, December 12, 2022

I love the night sky. Thanks for sharing the information.

Night Watcher
December 14, 2022

“Dog owners win the battle of Fiesta Island”

Neighborhood News, June 15, 2021
I completely agree that the land plot should be used more rationally.

Wendy Owens
December 14, 2022

“The wildest things on the Funky Fries & Burgers menu”

Feast! Restaurant Reviews, November 30, 2022

Some very delicious place. I already dream of getting there

Frank Turner
December 14, 2022

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Hosses, bosses, and losses

San Diegans at the Renegade explain country music

The Renegade does not hide behind that generic tyranny of the latest urban middle-class version of good taste. The tavern is in-your-face like Willie Nelson with his red bandanna, like Elvis Presley in his Las Vegas glitter and Johnny Cash in his black suits, like Minnie Pearl wearing house dresses, like Dolly Parton with her blond wigs and all the rest to which she alludes in her line: "It takes a lot of money to look this cheap." – *Hawkins Mitchell* **JULY. 10, 1997**

San Diego fireworks fans in a county that forbids them

In 1976 a soundtrack was broadcast live over a radio station, and the fireworks were choreographed and electronically fired in anticipation of the music... The idea sprang from the fertile brain of Rick Leibert, then the program director for rock-and-roll stalwart KGB. Leibert left the station in 1980. He now runs a San Pedro-based business that has developed a specialty in *castillos*, an interesting subset of the pyrotechnics universe. – *Jeannette DeWyze* **JULY. 3, 1997**

San Diego apartment owners tell their war stories

"They eventually moved, and I just got the place redone. It cost me \$3000 to fix and get

it back into rental condition. They weren't really bad guys, they were just pigs. That wasn't the main issue, though. The parking lot was so full of oil and grease from them overhauling cars out there that it was ruining the carpet in the other three units on the property." – *Ernie Grimm* **JUNE. 19, 1997**

Bruce Henderson — stadium prophet

"Every time they raise ticket prices it gives them more and more money to do what? To buy what they hope is a better and better team. The council will have to extend the ticket guarantee, give them \$100 million to stay here, or they're going to leave. The fact is that we haven't locked this team in at all! The Chargers can start shopping the team in 2003 and get to come back and ask



CREDIT: SANDY HUIFAGER, JR.

Mary agrees with Pat: they like country-western because they can understand the words.

the city of San Diego to match the offer of any other city." – *Matt Potter* **SEPT. 25, 1997**

CyberCop vs. TechnoSearch

"Supposedly a prospective employer can't go back into your records more than seven years," says Lane, "and they have to tell you

why you were denied employment." But often an employer won't say how applicants were screened. Instead of saying exactly why you didn't get the job, the employer will give you a pseudo-reason, such as, "You don't meet our present needs." – *Stephen Dobyns* **SEPT. 11, 1997**

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Come on in.

Red Fox reverie

Like other sentimental San Diegans I was disappointed when I learned that the Red Fox Room was being booted from its home in the Lafayette Hotel — a space that it had occupied for half a century. To me, the old Red Fox Room was a beloved time capsule in a city that can't seem to get rid of its antique features fast enough. And the news that it would be moving across the street didn't do much to improve my mood. I had little faith in the place's ability to reincarnate itself in a building that would be some 60 years newer, despite the proprietor's intention to keep the institution more or less the same.

But I am happy to report that it seems they did what they could. The exterior looks like it was 3-D printed into existence — harsh geometry, chilly, white, and featureless — but inside, the dimly lit, vintage atmosphere remains much as it was before, to the point where the stark transition from the street to the interior is a little surreal. The red banquettes, low ceilings, stained glass, and dark wood are still here. I am still able to enjoy a cocktail while seated next to a full suit of armor standing sentry by the bathroom hallway.

The aged patrons still add to the antique feeling, too: an 80-year-old man in a blazer and orthopedic shoes shuffles to the bar to ask for a toothpick; impromptu vocalists join the piano and saxophone to contribute to the music that still happens nightly at 7:30, choosing their favorite songs from 50 years ago. ("I Believe In Music," anyone?)

Tonight, I want to take a closer look at the most famous piece in the interior of this place:



Hearth and history at the Red Fox Room.

the mantelpiece that is mentioned on their website and in every story or review that has been written about the Red Fox Room. Today, it stands over a humble artificial fireplace in the dining room. But it hails from an English pub dating back to 1642, and was later the mantelpiece in the Rathskeller room of the 110-room Santa Monica "Ocean House" belonging to film star — and long-time paramour of William Randolph Hearst — Marion Davies. It came to the Red Fox Room with other fixtures from that location after the house was sold, after spending some time in storage, and maybe some time in Point Loma, too. Hailing as it does from Davies and Hearst's opulent life, the mantelpiece serves as an envoy from a land that Prohibition

never touched, a banner under which the petite star schmoozed and awed her guests.

The images on the tripartite mantelpiece are of biblical scenes: (1) Rebecca at the well with Abraham's servant, revealing through her offer of water both to man and beast that she is destined to be Isaac's wife; (2) Rebecca covering herself with a veil at the moment she realizes she is in the presence of her future husband; (3) Jacob tricking Esau out of his father's blessing at his mother Rebecca's request, after Esau traded his birthright for a meal. The stories, as Red Fox's website will tell you, are from Genesis 24 and 27. So we've got themes of refreshment and hospitality here, of matrimony and family, of trickery and destiny. Good stuff for an inn or a bar, really.

The mantelpiece connects us to so many histories: to a classic San Diego institution, to a legend of the silver screen, to the Gilded

Age spoils of Hearst, to a mysterious inn in Surrey from hundreds of years ago, and to the biblical stories that its patrons would probably have been able to identify without the kind of assistance we more modern souls might need. In any case, I'm glad it's still here.

Happy homemaker (and remodeler)

There was hardly a time in Milan Djokic's life when he wasn't building. He was only nine when he started carrying blocks on the construction sites worked by his father, who had himself learned masonry and other skills in Serbia before arriving in the U.S. and establish-

home." MMD works primarily on large custom projects, both significant remodels and new construction. Historic homes in San Diego make up a significant portion of his renovation jobs. The company prides itself on being a team that can protect a house's "historical integrity" while building to contemporary standards. I talked to Djokic about one such recent project in Mission Hills, a neighborhood in which he has had 15 years of experience. The age of the house — about 101 years old — meant collaborating with the historical review board who had to approve plans, and it also meant working in harmony with old materials and methods.

Hailing as it does from Davies and Hearst's opulent life, the mantelpiece serves as an envoy...

ing his own company. Djokic worked after school and during the summers, and over the years he learned by doing. "All my training was on the job," he says. "I learned to become a craftsman — a carpenter — throughout my years. I did a lot of masonry as well, but carpentry was my main trade."

What this means for him now that he has his own company — MMD Construction, which he established in 2006 — is that unlike some contractors, he has a good sense of the various needs and challenges on his job sites — "what needs to be built and how it needs to be built" — without having to ask around much.

The name MMD comes from the initials of his name, but he says it also means "make my dream," and notes that his outfit's "ideal client is someone who is building their dream

For example, MMD was able to spruce up the windows while keeping the home's original, wavy antique glass, which was still in good shape. When it came to the overall exterior of the house, the old stucco had been applied over tile in a non-standard way that Djokic had never seen before — no paper and chicken wire here — but his team was able to work with it and create the requisite stability and waterproofing. They used carefully chosen old white oak throughout the house, making sure the wood was "in pristine shape," and consistently matched. The doors, floors, panelling, and cabinets were all done by MMD.

After about two years, the house was done. "I think the coolest thing about the job is the end product," Djokic says. He likes the sense of fulfillment at the end of a job, seeing the customers' happy faces. ■



Antique glass preserved within custom woodwork.

An aerial photograph of San Diego, California, showing the city's urban landscape, the San Diego Bay, and the San Diego-Coronado Bridge. The text is overlaid on the image.

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UNREAL ESTATE

by Dave Rice

Sometimes, mistakes are made. Such was the case when I went searching for this week's *Unreal* candidate. We've been looking at our standard enormous, obscenely-priced listings for the past couple of entries, so it felt like a good time to step back and look for something more unique.

Instead of setting my price filter to \$8 million and up, I turned it down to \$1.5 million. Usually this would net me hundreds of McMansion-type homes, far too many to sift through (780 to be exact), but for some reason, I was getting just 29 hits. Looking a little closer, I realized that I hadn't wiped out all of the settings from a previous search, and so I was limited to houses that were both above \$1.5 million and below 1200 square feet of total living space.



Don't think of it as a patio; think of it as outdoor living space that adds considerably to your lived experience of square footage.

Hmm, this might be interesting. In terms of dollars demanded per square foot of space sold, these properties are just as expensive as houses I've written about that could effectively be described as "a medium-sized office complex."

So instead of capping the year built at 1940 or 1950 as part of a search for older, quirkier houses — my original plan — I decided to have a look at these 29 listings. The search turned up a lot of

downtown and beachfront condos (sure), and a handful of old houses on big lots that the listing agents were just begging us to tear down and replace with mansions or multiple units (the value is in the land). But there were a handful of honest-to-goodness little houses (read: perfectly fine for my family of three to live in comfortably) that stood ready to break the average person's bank without any such value-add propositions.

All of that brings us to 948 G Avenue in Coronado, a two-bedroom, one-bath cottage with just over 1000 square feet of living space near the southwest edge of the peninsula, about a half-mile from the famous Hotel Del. For nearly \$2.5 million, the Zillow listing promises us we're getting a "pristine remodel" with "nothing to do but move in and enjoy walks to the beach for views of the glistening sea." That sounds nice, doesn't it?

At just 40 feet wide and 67 feet deep, the entire lot encompasses less area than the majority of homes we tour here, but we're still being sold on the idea that "the layout is perfect for relaxing on the front porch enjoying a book or entertaining in the beautiful backyard for barbecues and smores." And with the beach just under three blocks away, I'm sure there's plenty of opportunity to get outdoors and enjoy the San Diego climate.

The first few photos we see are of that inviting covered front porch,

finished in red brick, with a walkway leading past a postage stamp of manicured front lawn to the street. The wicker furniture does indeed look like a relaxing perch from which to flip through a *Reader* and wave at the neighbors. Inside, we get a look at the living and dining rooms, with rugs covering the old-looking hardwood floors that we're told are present throughout the home. Another shot shows us a second couch tucked into a corner, and then we're on to a small sitting room with no visible television (perhaps it's hiding, all but forgotten, in that blue wardrobe). We're also told that the furniture was all purchased specifically to fit the space, and that it's available for purchase separately outside escrow. How thoughtful.

bedroom is made to feel bigger than it is by a tiny couch and desk. The back patio is mostly covered by pavers, but creeping vines growing up the wall add green space without actually occupying much real estate, leaving room out here for two dinettes, lounge seating, and a barbecue. Parking is limited to a single off-street space behind the white picket front fence, so hopefully street parking isn't as much of an issue here as it was during my decade in OB, which found me frequently walking a half-mile or more to get home.

Public records show a couple of transfers in recent years: first, the Leadley family bought the home in 2008 for a reported \$1,150,000 and proceeded to embark on a 2016 remodel that included the



The kitchen island is an island in the way that Australia is an island. But it works!

The kitchen is modern without being ostentatious, using the same shaker cabinets and quartz counters I put into most of my remodels, but with a nice oversized range and farmhouse-style sink. And the island is bigger than a kitchen this size has any business containing, but it still somehow works nicely. I could take or leave the faux distressed-brick wall, but overall, I like it. The bedrooms are predictably small, though the one actually used for sleeping makes good use of cabinetry, and the office/

addition of the front porch, along with the kitchen and bath replacement and electrical, plumbing, roofing, and solar upgrades. Current owners the Curnuttes bought the house in 2020 for \$1.6 million and added new appliances, refinished the hardwood floors, and did structural repairs, in addition to a laundry list of other upgrades in the listing.

The G house hit the market for the third time this century in mid-October, the \$2,498,000 asking price remains unchanged to date. ■

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It was December 24, 2013, Christmas Eve, shortly after midnight. Ilona Flint was excited. She was just finishing up a long

shift at the Cathy Jean shoe store in the Mission Valley mall. As soon as she and a co-worker finished closing up, she would clock out and walk into the parking lot, where her fiancé, Gianni Belvedere, would be waiting to pick her

up. The two had met seven years earlier in Provo, Utah. They were still in high school then; Ilona, a Russian immigrant, had been just fifteen. They had fallen in love and stayed in love and gotten engaged, and when Gianni moved with his family

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to San Diego, it wasn't long before Ilona followed.

Her closing chores completed, Ilona clocked out at exactly 12:22 am. The moon was in its Waning Gibbous phase, and as she made her way to the parking lot, it hung over her head like a chunky crescent in the night sky. But when she arrived, there was no sign of Gianni. Ilona waited. She called her fiancé's number, but couldn't reach him. She kept calling and calling, but still no luck. Finally, in desperation, Ilona called Gianni's brother Salvatore, who promptly drove down toward Mission Valley, intending to pick her up.

At 1:14 am, Ilona Flint uttered her last words — to a 911 police dispatcher. "Ow, Ow! I think I've been shot!" When the operator asked for her location, Ilona answered, "At the Mission Valley Westgate Mall." Then, nothing. Minutes later, police found Ilona and Salvatore in Salvatore's car, on the east end of the mall, outside the Macy's department store. Both had been shot. Ilona, who had a bullet wound to the head, was pronounced dead at the

scene. Salvatore, shot in the head and torso, was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he died three days later.

The very naughty list

To those with malice in their hearts and murder on their minds, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day are just two more squares on a calendar. But to those of us for whom the holiday season is supposed to be a time of joy, a season of cheer, filled with good tidings and goodwill to all mankind, their actions shock the sensibilities and lodge in the memory, even when the violence is far away. On Christmas Eve, 2007, in the small town of Carnation, Washington, Michele Anderson and her boyfriend Joseph McEnroe killed six members of her family. After pulling up to the Andersons' rural home in their pickup, McEnroe shot and killed Michele's parents, Wayne and Judy Anderson. They dragged the bodies outside, cleaned up, and waited for older brother Scott Anderson and his young family to arrive. As the younger Anderson family got out of the car,

Michele shot her brother several times, killing him, and then turned the gun on his wife, Erica. Erica managed to make it inside the house, grab the phone and dial 911 before Michele tore the phone out of her hands and threw it to the floor while McEnroe shot Erica to death. He then turned

a Santa suit and showed up with a gun at his ex-wife's family home — a week after his divorce had been finalized. He burst through the front door and started shooting, killing nine people, including his former wife, her parents, her two brothers and their wives. He also set the house on fire. Then

Mitchell had invited a 16-year-old girl he had met over to his apartment for an impromptu holiday party.

the gun on Scott and Erica's two young children: Olivia, five, and Nathan, three. Police went to the house after receiving the 911 call, but couldn't get past the locked gate. The bodies weren't discovered until two days later, when a coworker of Judy's went to the house to see why her friend had missed work. Michele Anderson and her boyfriend were brought in for questioning and confessed; their motive was money.

A year later, on Christmas Eve, 2008, in the Los Angeles suburb of Covina, Bruce Pardo, a forty-five-year-old unemployed electrical engineer, put on

he fled to his brother's house, where the next day, on Christmas morning, he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

A decade and a half earlier, in 1992, six people were murdered and two injured between December 24 and December 26 in what the *Dayton Daily News* calls the worst killing spree in the Ohio city's history. The "Christmas killings" began on Christmas Eve, when four teenagers — Laura Taylor, DeMarcus Smith, Heather Matthews and Marvalous Keene, a group known as the "Downtown Posse" — shot and killed Joseph Wilkerson,

a thirty-four-year-old man, in the course of robbing his house. The next victim was an eighteen-year-old girl, killed in a phone booth for her Fila sneakers. Paranoia soon set in, and over the next two days, the other victims were killed because the group was concerned over potential snitches. The band of murderers was arrested on December 26. Taylor, Smith and Matthews are serving life sentences, while Keene was executed by lethal injection on July 21, 2009.

And who can forget sweet little JonBenét Ramsey, the curly-haired blond six-year old who was discovered dead on Christmas Day in the basement of her family's home in Boulder, Colorado. Her skull had been fractured and she had been strangled with a cord, which was still wrapped around the neck of her lifeless body when it was discovered by her father, John. An autopsy revealed she also had been sexually assaulted. Police at first suspected her parents or brother, but all three were later cleared through DNA testing. The case remains unsolved.

Doing in Dad

When the killings are local, they get even further under the skin. On Christmas Eve of 1976, the decomposing body of Donald Tubach, a wealthy forty-seven-year-old travel agent, was found stuffed into the wet bar of his Point Loma home at 3524 Lowell Way. His employees had become concerned when Tubach missed several days of work. On December 15, five days after they had last seen him, his associates, accompanied by police, went to Tubach's house. A search of the residence found only blood and signs of a struggle, but no body. A day later, they received a telegram in Donald Tubach's name, asking that his mail be forwarded to Mexico City. A second telegram requested \$30,000 for a client's travel arrangement. Their suspicions aroused, police returned to Tubach's Lowell Way home on Christmas Eve, December 24. The moment they opened the front door, they knew there must be a dead body in the house.

The odd telegrams, plus a series of transactions on Tubach's missing

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credit cards, led authorities to Mexico City, where Mexican police soon apprehended Tubach's ex-wife, Isabel Zerda Beltran de Tubach, thirty-seven, along with her daughters, Patricia and Gloria — as well as Gloria's twenty-two-year-old boyfriend. The three women were citizens of Columbia; the boyfriend, Federico Frank, was Swiss. Donald and Isabel had been married in February 1973 and lived together in Spain until December 1975, when Donald returned home to San Diego alone. The following June, Isabel returned to San Diego to participate in divorce proceedings. Interrogated by Mexican police, Frank finally confessed that he had stabbed Tubach to death on December 10 at the request of the three women, who were after his life insurance money. He had crawled into the home through an open window and plunged his knife into Tubach six times.

By October 1977, Isabel and Frank had been convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. The two girls were convicted of lesser charges — for being accessories to murder, and for conspiracy to commit murder — and while Patricia, too, was sentenced to life in prison, Gloria, a minor, was sent to the California Youth Authority. According to a January 1989 story in the *San Diego Reader*, "Isabel was sent to the California Institute for Women, where she remains. Patricia was paroled in February 1985 and discharged from parole February 20, 1988. Frank, the actual killer, was paroled March 20, 1986, and discharged from parole March 20, 1989."

Isabel's name last sur-

faced in April 2012, when a U.S. District Court judge dismissed a lawsuit she had filed against prison officials for "orchestrating poisonings up her nose, which will cause a heart attack," as well as orchestrating orgies and failing to treat her tongue cancer. The court noted that Isabel previously "has filed over 150 actions and at least three actions that were dismissed as frivolous, malicious, or for failing to state a claim upon which relief may be granted." Several of those suits also named as defendants then-California Governor Jerry Brown and then-California Attorney General Kamala Harris.

Underage rage

On Christmas Eve, 1991, a twenty-one-year-old Marine corporal, Lindell Mitchell, was shot to death by intruders who broke into his Vista apartment at 210 Cedar Road shortly before midnight. His roommate, Durvin Hammond, twenty-two, was badly beaten in the head. According to the District Attorney's Office, Mitchell had invited a 16-year-old girl he had met and some of her friends over to his apartment for an impromptu holiday party. The party broke up after an argument between the woman and Hammond, Mitchell's roommate, who allegedly slapped the young girl. Witnesses told police the girl threatened to come back with her relatives and shoot up the place.

Around half an hour later, a group of men burst into the apartment, brandishing weapons. Mitchell and Hammond were both beaten, while Mitchell — who had not been involved in the initial altercation with the girl — was also pistol-

whipped and shot in the back. Hammond, who survived the attack, spoke at length with police about that fateful night, but they were unable to find any suspects and the murder investigation went cold. Years later, a joint cold case investigation by the San Diego Sheriff's Department and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service found new evidence and leads that led to the July 2014 arrest, in Louisiana, of Kimberly Andrews, the girl whom Mitchell had invited over to his place. A second suspect, John Wesley Noble, Andrews' uncle, was arrested in October 2015 in Hemet.

Andrews was subsequently convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to twenty-six years to life in prison. Noble pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to fifteen years to life in prison. "It took more than two decades for the defendant to be held responsible for her actions, but ultimately justice was served," District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis told reporters.

Unsilent night

In the wee hours of Christmas Day, 2010, a confrontation over a holiday party in a residential Oceanside neighborhood led to the murder of one man and the arrest of another. Early on December 25, 2010, Elaine Weideauer arrived home from Midnight Mass and was eager to get to bed. She had lived in her little house in the 3900 block of Brown Street, just north of Vista Way and west of College Avenue, for thirty years. It was an older neighborhood of mostly single-story tract homes — the sort of place you might expect to find swathed in peace and

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quiet in anticipation of Christmas Day.

But across the street, forty-four-year-old Jimmy Misaalefua and his family were having a loud party that spilled out into the street, Weideauer later told police. So she stayed up. A short time later, police showed up. Apparently there had been a noise complaint. The cops left and the party went on. Around 2:15 am, the police returned, this time accompanied by a fire engine. And this time, they went straight to the home of another neighbor, Richard Pulley — forty-seven and a former Marine. “There were police everywhere and a fire truck and something had occurred next door at the Pulleys’ home. Whatever it was, it took a while but was resolved,” Weideauer told NBC News.

It was later revealed that

Pulley, angered over the noise, had gotten into an altercation with Misaalefua and then punched his twenty-year-old son in the face. But that was not the end of it.

Just before 3 am, Weideauer heard a woman screaming and several loud gunshots. She called 911 and looked outside, where she saw Jimmy Misaalefua lying in the driveway in front of Pulley’s home. Misaalefua had been shot in the head and in the chest, in front of his family. He was taken to nearby Tri-City Medical Center, where he died of his injuries.

Pulley was arrested and later convicted of second-degree murder. Deputy District Attorney Tracy Prior told CBS that at around 2:45 am on Christmas Day, Pulley had gone back Misaalefua’s house. The two men talked, then moved over

to a cul-de-sac between their homes, where a witness overheard Pulley say to Misaalefua, “I’ve got something for you,” Prior said. At that point, Pulley walked into his home and came out with a loaded gun. He fired two shots at

“You’re sitting here, and Jimmy is six feet under. Life without Jimmy is hard. I don’t want to be here.”

Misaalefua, who by then was standing in Pulley’s driveway. Pulley later testified that he had acted in self-defense, maintaining that he went for the gun only after Misaalefua, who was a much bigger man, had hit him. “I was attacked,” Pulley testified.

The jury didn’t buy it, and after Pulley’s conviction a judge sentenced him to forty years to life in prison. At Pulley’s sen-

tencing, Misaalefua’s widow, Lefu Ena, addressed her husband’s killer: “You’re sitting here and Jimmy is six feet under,” she told him, according to a September 2011 article in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. “Life without

Jimmy is hard. I don’t want to be here.” She said she didn’t believe Pulley had acted in self-defense. “You sit there and look at me with that smile,” she said. “Are you sorry for what you did? Are you?”

Season of giving

On December 24, 2016, twenty-two-year-old Tyler Branon of Fallbrook was celebrating the holidays with family members at his uncle’s Christmas party in Vista. He went out to his car to get something, but never came back. Just before 8 pm, sheriff’s deputies — summoned by reports of multiple gunshots — found Branon sitting in the front seat of his car, parked outside his uncle’s

home in the 1300 block of Morning Glory Lane, near South Santa Fe Avenue. He had several gunshot wounds in his torso. Paramedics were called, but their efforts to revive him were unsuccessful and he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Less than three days later, police arrested Kevin Phan, also twenty-two, an acquaintance of Branon’s. Police said the two men had had a “history of dispute.” Phan was apprehended at his family home in a gated community in Vista’s Shadowridge neighborhood. Phan pleaded guilty to a first-degree murder charge and in March 2018 was sentenced to twenty-five years to life in prison, plus three years.

Right after the murder, a GoFundMe account was set up to help Branon’s family with funeral costs. The account was set up by one of Branon’s cousins, who wrote, “Hello, my name is Catelynn Dumala and this Christmas Eve we lost my cousin in a senseless act of violence. While he was at my uncle’s Christmas Eve party, he went out to his car real quick and when he was at his car he was shot three

times in the torso. Tyler Branon was only 22 years old. We lost him way too early. We need your help raising money for his memorial. It would be very appreciated if we earned this money within two weeks so we can celebrate his life. This means so much to me and my family because we could really use any extra help. Any donations help and would be greatly appreciated. Thank you. RIP, Tyler Branon, you will be missed.”

The fund raised \$10,421, on a goal of \$10,000.

Family gathering

Mom, stepdad, and son were all supposed to be together for the holidays. And, briefly, they were, until son allegedly attacked mom and stepdad shot and killed son. Fifty-nine-year-old Robert Dean died in a hospital on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2019, a day after he had been shot by his stepfather at the family home on Greenlake Drive in Encinitas. Police say Dean had threatened his eighty-year-old mother, Barbara Miller, with a knife, early on the morning of December 23. She screamed for help,

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California Research Foundation

and her seventy-four-year-old husband, William Miller, sprang to her defense. Dean, Miller's stepson, was still clutching the knife when Miller grabbed a gun and fired it at Dean. No arrests were made in the case.

Christmas carjacking

But San Diego's most senseless holiday homicide remains the one on that Christmas Eve 2013 in the parking of the Mission Valley shopping center — senseless because three innocent people died simply by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Yes, three people, not two. There was a reason Gianni Belvedere wasn't answering his phone when Ilona Flint called shortly after midnight. He was dead.

Based on court testimony and newspaper reports, here's what happened. As he had promised her, Gianni drove down to the Mission Valley mall late in the evening of December 23, 2013, to pick up his beloved Ilona. It had been a busy day; the mall was packed with last-minute holiday shoppers, and the Cathy Jean shoe store, like many other retailers, stayed open later than

usual in the days leading up to Christmas.

Driving his green 2004 Toyota Camry, still with Utah plates, Gianni pulled into the parking lot a little early and slumped down in his seat, waiting for Ilona to get off work. At some point, he was approached by a frantic Carlo Mercado, age twenty-eight. A resident of Mira Mesa, Mercado drove a motorcycle and made his money by purposely getting into accidents and then trying to fleece the other drivers. But on the evening of December 23, 2013, Mercado wasn't out to work his scam. He had crashed his motorcycle in a real accident and was desperate for a new ride.

Mercado apparently zeroed in on Gianni because his was the only occupied car he could see. It is believed Mercado tried to carjack Gianni, and that the two got into a scuffle. Mercado then shot Gianni, pushed his body into the passenger seat, and drove off in his car. As Mercado was driving back home to Mira Mesa, Gianni bled out; at some point Mercado transferred the body to the trunk. He stopped for gas, then returned to

Mira Mesa about ninety minutes after he had left to retrieve his damaged motorcycle.

By then, Salvatore Belvedere had arrived at Mission Valley, and an increasingly worried Ilona ran to his car and sat down beside him, in the passenger seat. The two began calling and texting Gianni, wondering where he was. Then they saw his Toyota cruising around the parking lot. It was clear that something was wrong. "They confronted me because I had Gianni Belvedere's car," Mercado later said in a written statement. The car thief responded by firing a spray of bullets into their car from a .22-caliber handgun. And as she lay dying, Ilona called 911.

At first, police had no clue about who killed the two. Gianni was missing, and Crime Stoppers offered a \$1000 reward for information that would lead authorities to the missing young man.

A tearful candlelight vigil was held for Ilona in La Jolla by a former boss, who blurted out to the crowd, "Some piece of garbage did this." A few days later, on New Year's Day, 2014, a vigil was held

for Salvatore at Crystal Pier in Pacific Beach, which had been one of his favorite surfing spots.

Meanwhile, the search for Gianni continued. As his cell phone and credit cards had not been used, authorities began to fear the worst. They were right. On January 17, 2014, Gianni's badly decomposed body was discovered inside the trunk of his car in Riverside. Police had found the car after receiving a phone call from a passerby of a foul odor emanating from a Toyota parked outside a fast-food restaurant. He had been shot in the head by a .22 caliber handgun, the same fate that had befallen his younger brother and fiancé. Boxes of baking soda, along with a can of air freshener, were found inside the trunk. The air freshener can was empty; the trigger had been taped down so

it would spray on its own.

The following day, January 18, 2014, Mercado was stopped at a Border Patrol checkpoint on Interstate 5. Officers found three guns during the stop. Mercado was subsequently booked on weapons charges, and when his DNA profile was entered into a national database, it matched the unidentified DNA that had been lifted from the can, tape, and gas cap of the Toyota.

Mercado was finally arrested for the three murders in June 2014. Five months later, he was found incompetent for trial and dispatched to Patton State Hospital, a forensic psychiatric hospital in San Bernardino. More than a year after that, in December 2015, Mercado was deemed competent by a judge, who ruled criminal proceedings against him could resume. He initially pleaded not guilty

to the murders, in February 2016. But the following January, he changed his plea to guilty and promptly received three consecutive sentences of life without parole, one for each murder victim.

The Belvedere brothers' sister at the sentencing hearing read a letter from their mother, Grace, reminiscing about her two sons' musical talents. Gianni played piano; Salvatore, guitar. They frequently performed at Sunday night family dinners. "Now it's quiet," Grace Belvedere's letter said. "The laughter and loudness have been replaced by silence and sorrow."

Ilona's mother, Inga Flint-Jones, talked about her daughter's early years in the Soviet Union and her love for Gianni. "Life held so much promise for her," she said.

— Thomas K. Arnold

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BUSINESS HOURS: TUESDAY - FRIDAY 9 AM - 7 PM

Calendar

Your Week

AND WELCOME TO IT

Thursday | 22

FELIZ NAVIDAD



Enjoy a free, family-friendly experience featuring holiday décor, lights and displays, a giant Christmas tree, shopping, tamales, *champurrado*, and face painting. The Fiesta de Reyes stage will host live *folklorico* dancing and local music entertainers.

WHEN: Every day, 11 am to 4 pm.

Through Sunday, January 1.

WHERE: Fiesta de Reyes, Juan Street at Calhoun Street, fiestadereyes.com

day was created by his father Frank and they celebrated it throughout George's childhood. Til-Two will continue the

tradition with a variety show of musical guests and dancers. There will be cocktails, bagels, performances, an unadorned pole, and the airing of grievances.

WHEN: Friday, December 23, 8 pm

WHERE: Til-Two Club, 4746 El Cajon Boulevard, City Heights. tiltwoclub.com

HOLIDAY FESTIVAL AT CAMP CHRISTMAS

Behold thousands of computerized lights strung on trees and a water show, both synchronized to holiday music. Plus: Pine Valley train depot, tree top climbing wall, bow and arrow arcade, hayrides, bounce houses, and laser tag. Food options: Rick's Bar-B-Q, Baker's Dozen Donuts, all-you-can-eat soup and salad bar at the Alpine Peak Buffet, and s'mores at the fire pits. The altitude at Camp Christmas is 4000 feet. Warm clothing recommended.

WHEN: Friday, December 16 through Friday, December 23, 5:30 pm to 9 pm

WHERE: Camp Christmas, 8668 Pine Creek Road, Pine Valley. pinevalleycampchristmas.com



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23: HOLIDAY FESTIVAL AT CAMP CHRISTMAS

WHEN: Friday and Saturday December 23 and 24, 5:30 pm to 8 pm and Sunday, December 25, 2 pm to 4 pm

He's touring in support of a pair of concert releases, *Live at the Roxy* and *A Love Letter From Hawaii*.

Friday | 23

FESTIVUS: FOR THE REST OF US

In the 1997 episode of *Seinfeld* titled "The Strike" George Costanza introduced the world to Festivus. The holi-



WHERE: Bahia Resort Hotel, 998 West Mission Bay Drive, Mission Beach. bahiahotel.com/jingle-belle-cruise

WHEN: Tuesday, December 27, 8 pm
WHERE: Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros Avenue, Solana Beach. bellyup.com

Saturday | 24

JINGLE BELLE FAMILY CRUISE

Set sail on a sightseeing cruise on Mission Bay, departing from the Bahia Resort Hotel and the Catamaran Resort Hotel and Spa. Sip on hot cocoa and snack on holiday cookies while singing along with carolers and taking photos with Santa.

Tuesday | 27

DONAVON FRANKENREITER

Laid back troubadour Donavon Frankenreiter has released around a dozen albums and EPs since first hitting the scene in the mid-1990s with his band Sunchild. The avid surfer is heavily influenced by his friend and occasional touring mate, Jack Johnson, and he's a frequent presence at outdoor jam festivals.



DONAVON FRANKENREITER

Rhyme & Verse

Two poems for Christmas by Joseph O'Brien

White Christmas

Forecasters generally consider a white Christmas
to be an inch of snow on the ground
or an inch falling that day.

-News Item

But along the river bottoms, snow found no place,
When together we went walking there
After life fell apart.

Your flustered hands gently wrestled
With the chill in the folds of your overcoat.
Frightened doves, they could not bear to be held,

Holding to themselves
In a barren nest untouched by tenderness,
Yet wanting to fly from flesh to flesh

In a birth of unmolested whiteness.
I knew you as one who lived in minor chords and
Your falling apart was only the latest note,

Inescapable as the ache that comes with snowfall
Disintegrating a forest's edge in a flurry of silence,
The nudging ache that waits forever.

And I knew your latest sorrow,
Like the winter twilight in your eyes, always
Tintured by stars and snow.

Setting your hopes on a white Christmas,
You put a quiet faith in the world's poor weather,
And stood to hear nervous cattails

Tapping at the river's crusted edge—
There, you scanned the overcast skies with eyes
Dark, damp, beautiful as a forest floor—

Always an inch away from drowning in joy.

Uncle Paul's Pear Tree

Uncle Paul played the hunter each Christmas –
Out among the frozen hills with gun in hand,
"It takes more than blood-thirst to hunt, I guess,"
He'd say. "You have to know what's on your land."
He'd come back, a bird in bag and listless
To tell a tale. He'd fumble words in his head,
Then begin: "Today was miraculous..."
He'd wandered around the land of the dead
With light snow from last night as the world's pall.
He'd heard a crow sing for mercy on the ridge,
And in an old pear tree he'd found his soul.
"Like Saul for David, I chased that partridge..."
That pear tree always drops an early fruit,
Yet each year it gives me a bird to shoot."



Joseph O'Brien is the poetry editor for the *San Diego Reader*.

Find more poetry online at SDreader.com/poetry

HOW TO SEND US YOUR LISTING: Have an event? We want it! Festivals, lectures, sporting events (including surfing, kayaking, and sailing), Meetups, conventions, book signings, art gallery openings, conferences, dance performances, expos, poetry readings, classes & workshops — all are welcome. You can submit an event at sdreader.com/events/submit.

ART

Timken Talk: The Spanish Baroque The time period for the Spanish Baroque begins roughly in the 1580s and ends in the early 1700s. The art from this region is characterized by visual realism which was consistent with the rest of Europe. Spanish masters such as Diego Velasquez, Francisco de Zurbaran, and Juan Sanchez Cotan, and others will be highlighted in this docent-led talk. Thursday, December 22, 11am; **free**. timken-museum.org/calendar/list/. (ONLINE)

BEER

Festivus For the Rest Of Us Festivus for the rest of us is a once a year celebration of everything fun. There will be cocktails, bagels, performances, an un-adorned pole and airing of grievances. Friday, December 23, 8pm; **free**. 21 and up. Til-Two Club, 4746 El Cajon Boulevard. (CITY HEIGHTS)

BOOK SIGNINGS

Storytime Storytime with a book-seller or author Sundays, 10:30am; through Tuesday, May 30, Diesel, A Bookstore, 12843 El Camino Real Suite 104. (DEL MAR)

CHRISTMAS & HOLIDAY EVENTS

Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas! A wonderful, whimsical musical based upon the classic Dr. Seuss book. Back for another incredible year, the family favorite features the songs "Santa for a Day," "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch," and "Welcome, Christmas (Fah Who Doraze)," the delightful carol from the popular animated version. Thursdays, 7pm; Fridays, 7pm; Saturdays, 10:30am, 2pm and 5pm; Sundays, 10:30am, 2pm and 5pm; Tuesdays, 7pm; Wednesdays, 7pm; through Saturday, December 31, \$32-\$96. Old Globe - Donald & Darlene Shiley Stage, 1363 Old Globe Way. (BALBOA PARK)

Ebenezer Scrooge's BIG San Diego Christmas Show It's back! San Diego has another show in its Christmas stocking with this fast, funny, and highly theatrical reimagining of one of

the most beloved holiday stories ever told. Fridays, 7pm; Saturdays, 2pm and 7pm; Sundays, 2pm and 7pm; Tuesdays, 7pm; Wednesdays, 7pm; through Saturday, December 24, \$45-\$95. Old Globe - Sheryl & Harvey White Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way. (BALBOA PARK)

Holiday Festival Holiday festival with 20 nights of holiday joy with the Pine Valley Train Depot, a Tree Top Climbing Wall, Bow & Arrow Arcade, Winter Wonderland Hayrides, Rick's Bar-B-Q, Baker's Dozen Donuts, and Alpine Peak Buffet. The altitude at Camp Christmas is 4,000 feet and the evenings can be a bit chilly. Warm clothing – winter jackets, snow hats, scarves, and gloves – are recommended. Thursday, December 22, 5:30pm; Friday, December 23, 5:30pm; \$10-\$17. Camp Christmas, 8668 Pine Creek Road. (PINE VALLEY)

Lightscape Lightscape will transform the 37-acre Botanic Garden with an artistic installation from international artists. This immersive experience at the garden will guide visitors through a world of wonder with over one million twinkling lights in various attractions that come alive at night with color, imagination and sound, while toasting marshmallows over a fire and drinking hot chocolate and other seasonal refreshments along the trail. Fridays-Wednesdays, 5pm; through Sunday, January 1, \$18-\$29. San Diego Botanic Garden, 230 Quail Gardens Drive. (ENCINITAS)

Winter Wonders & Holiday Lights Winter Wonders and Holiday Lights tours: Meet nocturnal ambassadors in the glow of holiday lights. Hot cocoa provided. No tours on December 25. Thursdays, 4:30pm; Fridays, 4:30pm; Saturdays, 4:30pm; Sundays, 4:30pm; through Sunday, January 1, \$20-\$39. Wild Wonders, 5712 Via Montellano. (BONSALL)

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Adult Beginning Bachata & Salsa Dance Lessons Bachata and Salsa classes for adults Thursdays, 6pm; through Thursday, December 29, \$10-\$20. 18 and up. Dancehouse Point Loma, 2180 Chatsworth Boulevard. (POINT LOMA)

Belly Dancing Beginner Class Learn to Belly Dance in a fun and friendly environment. Tuesdays, 6:30pm; through Sunday, December 31, \$20. Dorothea Laub Dance Place Studio, 2650 Truxton Road. (LIBERTY STATION)

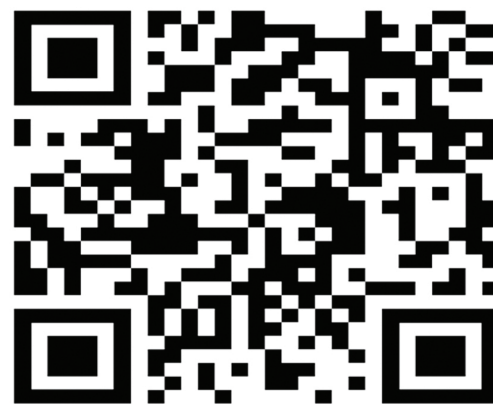
Macrame Holiday Plant Wrap Craft Workshop This workshop includes step-by-step instructions along with all of the supplies. Finish off your masterpiece by designing a 4" planter with festive holiday flowers and accents. Beginners to experts welcome Thursday, December 22, 6:30pm; \$45. Original 40 Brewing Company, 3117 University Avenue. (NORTH PARK)

Employee Appreciation Events

Wedding Receptions



SAN DIEGO CARICATURE.COM



EVENTS

COMEDY

Andrew Callaghan: Channel 5 Live Thursday, December 22, 7:30pm and 10:30pm; Music Box, 1337 India Street. (LITTLE ITALY)

Dante Chang AS SEEN ON: Bobby Lee's TigerBelly podcast, Stand-Up Sit-Down & more! Thursday, December 22, 8pm; Friday, December 23, 7:30pm and 9:30pm; **free.** 21 and up. American Comedy Company, 818 Sixth Avenue. (DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO)

Unscripted Comedy Show The NCT cast creates the entire show based completely on audience suggestions. Fridays, 7:30pm; Saturdays, 7:30pm; through Friday, December 30, \$15-\$20. National Comedy Theatre, 3717 India Street. (MISSION HILLS)

WWC Comedy Uncensored standup comedy Tuesdays, 7pm; through Tuesday, December 27, \$20. 21 and up. Negociant Hillcrest Urban Winery, 1263 University Avenue. (HILLCREST)

DANCE

City Ballet: The Nutcracker Young and old alike will be captivated by Elizabeth Wistrich's choreography, the exquisite costumes, and grand sets. Let your childhood dreams return and inspire you to imagine a bygone time. Thursday, December 22, 7:30pm; Friday, December 23, 7:30pm; \$30-\$103. California Center for the Arts, Escondido, 340 N. Escondido Boulevard. (ESCONDIDO)

Golden State Ballet: The Nutcracker Golden State Ballet presents the beloved holiday tale of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince, all danced to live music from musicians of the San Diego Symphony, playing Tchaikovsky's classic score. Thursday, December 22, 7:30pm; Friday, December 23, 5:30pm; San Diego Civic Theatre, 1100 Third Avenue. (DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO)

Holiday Brunch & Nutcracker Ballet Holiday Brunch Buffet, followed by the dancers of Scripps Performing Arts Academy who will perform The Nutcracker. Pricing includes brunch buffet, performance, tax and gratuity

OUTDOORS

Extreme high and low tides, toyon flaunts red toxic berries

Extreme High and Low Tides Are Set to Occur over several days in late December. On Friday, December 23, the tide reaches a high of 7.61 feet at 8:26 am and then falls to -1.96 feet at 3:45 pm. On Saturday, the tide peaks at 7.6 feet at 9:12 am and a low of -1.94 feet at 4:32 pm. Either of these low tide occasions are perfect for exploring marine life in the tidepool areas along San Diego County's coastline. But if any strong winter storm happens to arrive from the west during these peak tides, some flooding of low-lying coastal areas around San Diego is likely. On the brighter side, birdwatchers have an opportunity to spot species of rare shorebirds that get pushed to the edges of local bays and coastal marshes by the high water.



TOYON FLOWERS (*HETEROMELES ARBUTIFOLIA*)



HIGH TIDE APPROACHING AT CABRILLO MONUMENT'S TIDEPOOLS IN POINT LOMA.

Toyon, or "Christmas-Berry," one of the more distinctive shrubs of Southern California's native chaparral plant community, is now flaunting clusters of bright red — but fairly toxic — berries. In coastal San Diego, toyon can be found wherever large patches of native vegetation survive, but especially in the thick chaparral covering some north-facing slopes. Note: toyon branches may look inviting to cut as a Christmas wreath — but they're protected by California state law. And while it's pleasant to enjoy viewing the fruits during the holiday season, don't be surprised if a flock of cedar waxwings swoop in and strip the entire shrub of color.

There's a New Moon on December 23. It's called a "New Moon" because it starts a new lunar cycle. During this phase, the Sun and Moon are closest together in the sky, on the same side of the Earth. From our perspective, the Moon appears totally dark; we cannot usually see it because we are facing the Moon's shadowed side, which receives no direct sunlight. If we were to travel to the other side of the Moon, the part that faces the Sun, it would be totally illuminated.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Vibe Social This group is an introductory meetup for authentic relating and relational mindfulness practices. Practice self-exploration and connection utilizing a series of tools from improv, authentic relating, and other mental health practices. Mondays, 6pm; through Saturday, December 31, \$10. Temple, 5032 Niagara. (OCEAN BEACH)

Writers Round San Diego Writers Round San Diego is a musician

community that mixes Nashville style songwriter rounds with open mic rounds. The idea is to put story & song centerstage to create an intimate listening room where writers can encourage each other & build a network of support. Mondays, 6pm; through Monday, December 26, Park & Rec, 4612 Park Boulevard. (UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS)

FOOD & DRINK

Snow & S'mores Reserve a fire pit with seasonally inspired gourmet s'mores platters, single-origin Stirring Up Nostalgia hot chocolate and a charcuterie board. Thursday, December 22, 5pm; Friday, December 23, 5pm; Saturday, December 24, 5pm; Sunday, December 25, 5pm; \$200. Omni La Costa Resort and Spa, 2100 Costa del Mar Road. (CARLSBAD)

FOR KIDS

Jurassic World: The Exhibition a family-friendly immersive 20,000-square-foot experience. Visitors walk through the world-famous "Jurassic World" gates, explore richly themed environments and encounter life-sized Velociraptors, a Brachiosaurus, and the most fearsome dinosaur of

all, the mighty Tyrannosaurus rex. Monday-Sunday, 11am; through Sunday, April 16, Westfield Mission Valley Center, 1640 Camino del Rio North. (MISSION VALLEY)

NATURE

Guided Nature Walk Join a MTRP Trail Guide on a guided nature walk and learn about the plants, animals, geology, history, and ecology of the park along a scenic trail. Walks start from the Visitor Center, are free and open to the public, with no reservations required. Walks are canceled if raining. Saturday, December 24, 9:30am; and Wednesday, December 28, 9:30am. **free.** Mission Trails Regional Park, One Father Junipero Serra Trail. (SAN CARLOS)

Guided Nature Walk Join a MTRP Trail Guide on a guided nature walk and learn about the plants, animals, geology, history, and ecology of the park along a scenic trail. Walks start from the Visitor Center, are free and open to the public, with no reservations required. Walks are canceled if raining. Saturday, December 24, 9:30am; **free.** Kumeyaay Lake Campground, Two Father Junipero Serra Trail. (SANTEE)

SPECIAL EVENTS

Kwanzaa Celebration 42nd Annual Kwanzaa Celebration "Tribute to the Ancestors" Monday, December 26, 6:30pm; Tuesday, December 27, 6:30pm; Wednesday, December 28, 6:30pm; **free.** WorldBeat Cultural Center, 2100 Park Boulevard. (BALBOA PARK)

Live After Five Community event series featuring live music, art, happy hour specials from local businesses, and more. C Street between Third and Eighth. Thursdays, 5pm; through Thursday, December 22, **free.** Gaslamp Quarter, Fifth Ave., between Broadway and Harbor Drive. (DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO)

SPORTS & FITNESS

2022 Holiday Bowl The SDCCU Holiday Bowl will feature one of the top teams from both the ACC and Pac-12. Following the game, the KGB Sky Show will light up the San Diego skyline over Petco Park with its fireworks display. Wednesday, December 28, 5pm; \$35-\$225. Petco Park, 100 Park Boulevard. (EAST VILLAGE)

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ON STAGE IN SAN DIEGO

THEATER LISTINGS

Theater listings and commentary are by Matthew Lickona unless otherwise noted. Information is accurate according to material given us, but it is always wise to phone the theater for any last-minute changes and to inquire about ticket availability. Many theaters offer discounts to students, senior citizens, and the military. Ask at the box office.

1022 Oceanfront: A Black Family Christmas

Playwright Dea Hurston collaborated with three other co-creators, two of whom star in the show and one of whom wrote songs for it, to produce what her program note calls "a holiday piece created for actors of color to tell a story about people of color." The result is something like a highly polished, super-sized, musical Christmas episode of a beloved sitcom. Problems, mostly of the relationship variety, are presented, but only so that they may be triumphed over, talked through, joked about, or otherwise resolved. The Black family is a black family — well, except for the adopted Hispanic younger brother of protagonist James, the grown-up son of a strong single mother, headed home with his loving (but not wilting) wife to...Carlsbad? Yep: 30 years ago, Dad achieved his American dream of home ownership in the California beach town — even though the Powers that Be found ways to make him pay more because of his race. (That Was Then here; later, when a character asks, "What trouble could three black men possibly get into walking around at night?" the line evokes laughter, mostly of the not-nervous variety.) Now, the place is Christmas Central, where people are quick to share both songs and feelings along with food and cheer, the sort of place anyone might want to go and spend a holiday evening.

NEW VILLAGE ARTS TOURING PERFORMANCE. CALL 760-433-3245 TO RESERVE SEATS AND VISIT NEWVILLAGEARTS.ORG FOR LOCATIONS

A Christmas Carol

Quaint it ain't. The virtues of Cygnet Theatre's production of Dickens' Christmas ghost story are all there at the outset — really, before the outset, when the cast members are strolling about the stage singing carols and telling jokes. The jokes are silly; the carols, sincere. And then as the play proper gets started, they shift smoothly and spookily into declaring the news of the day: Jacob Marley is dead. You might smile a bit at just how often they repeat that cold fact, but a cold fact it remains, and there you have it: this is a sad and sometimes scary story about mortality and doom, but told with the charm, wit, and warmth necessary to keep hope alive. Marley is dead, but Dickens does what Father Abraham would not in the story of the rich man and Lazarus: he sends the damned dead man to warn one who is still living: old Ebenezer Scrooge. And what a warning: here and elsewhere, the production achieves a maximum of stagecraft with a minimum of effects. It may be relatively easy to make the puppets portraying Ignorance and Want properly creepy,



Lamb's Festival of Christmas: A Christmas Carol: Songs and spirits, ghosts and glory.

but it's trickier to give sweet life to Tiny Tim, and it's a credit to the versatile cast that they manage it with seeming ease. Most remarkable of all: everything here works to wipe away the dull dinginess of familiarity and restore the old magic to the story of a nightmare that rouses a soul from its selfish slumber.

CYGNET THEATRE, 4040 TWIGGS ST., OLD TOWN. 619-337-1525. 7:30PM THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS, & SATURDAYS.

Annie The Musical

Little Orphan Annie has reminded generations of theatergoers that sunshine is always right around the corner, and now the best-loved musical of all time is set to return in a new production — just as you remember it and just when we need it most. Annie, directed by Jenn Thompson, features the iconic book and score, written by Tony Award®-winners Thomas Meehan, Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin.

SAN DIEGO CIVIC THEATRE, 1100 THIRD AVE., DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO. 619-570-1100. 7PM TUESDAY, DEC. 27 & WEDNESDAY, DEC. 28.

The Dangerous Christmas

"It's the holidays. Keep murder in the family," suggests The Dangerous Christmas, the newest comedy-thriller from master storyteller and nationally published playwright, Charles Carr. Inspired by actual events, a mysterious antique and the man determined to possess it by any means pull a group of friends into a decades-old intrigue that turns their world upside down and threatens their very lives. The Dangerous Christmas deftly blends a challenging mystery that will keep you guessing with wry humor and a heartfelt message about the meaning of the season. The cast is complemented with colorful sets and a full musical score and sound effects.

CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, ESCONDIDO, 340 N. ESCONDIDO BL., ESCONDIDO. 760-839-4138. 7PM THURSDAY & FRIDAY.

Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas!

*You all know the story, the sweet simple plot/ Of how the old Grinch learns what Christmas is not/ For twenty five years now, this show has been playing/ So surely there's nothing new that's worth saying?/ It's fun for the kiddies, the sets are outstanding/ And yet, something's odd in the whole Whoville branding... Ok, enough of that — though it's worth noting that the Old Globe's adaptation of this Christmas classic plays fast and loose with the rhythm of Seuss when it suits. But the point stands: after you hear the Who kiddies scream "Mine!" as they fight over their toys, and see the Who grownups sing about how it's the thought that counts even as they chase madly after every on-sale gift item, you may be tempted to conclude that the Grinch has a point in his hatred of Christmas. You may even start to like the old Grinchy rotter (played as a cross between Jim Carrey and Tim Curry by Andrew Polec, resplendently made up and costumed, and nailing it in the facial expressions department). And if that happens, well, it sort of takes the wind out of the dramatic sails. He's not an anti-hero; he's a bad guy in need of saving. Still, at least his conversion at play's end still makes sense. For their part, the Whos could use a come-to-Jesus (well, come-to-Cindy Lou Who) moment to explain their astonishing response to losing everything they've worked so hard to achieve. They assure us in song that Whos like Christmas, but why, exactly? Maybe that's just their jam? The planning, the presents, the party? That's what they tell us, anyway. But soft — even as I type this, I can hear the "Bah, humbugs" echoing in my brain, warning me against dimming the Christmas cheer and urging me to laugh and sing along. (The sing-a-long is a great touch, by the by. *You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch...*)*

OLD GLOBE - DONALD & DARLENE SHILEY STAGE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY,

BALBOA PARK. 7PM THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS, 10:30AM, 2PM, & 5PM SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS, 7PM TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS.

Ebenezer Scrooge's BIG San Diego Christmas Show

What's a modern theatrical production to do with a story most everybody knows by heart? Playwrights Steve Rosen and Gordon Greenberg have decided that if some familiarity is good, then more is better, and set Scrooge's story right where the theater stands today. They keep the setting in olden-days 1919, the better to preserve the mutton-chop facial hair, the top hats, and the lack of furnace heating. But they're happy to go present-day for the sake of a joke. They're happy to go all sorts of places: meta, silly, clever, even weird. But while you can play Tiny Tim for laughs by making him a puppet with a live, adult human head — just one clever bit of prop work in a production that makes the absolute most of a few crates, chairs, ladders, and window casings — there's only so much humor a show, even a feel-good show, can get from the plight of a dying child. Or, for that matter, from the haunting of an old man's loveless heart. It's to the cast's great credit that they are able to execute the massive shifts in tone when the rim-shot rat-a-tat of jokes must give way to the story's pure feeling without giving the audience emotional whiplash.

OLD GLOBE - SHERYL & HARVEY WHITE THEATRE, 1363 OLD GLOBE WAY, BALBOA PARK. 619-234-5623. 7PM THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS, 2PM & 7PM SATURDAYS.

Lamb's Festival of Christmas: A Christmas Carol

Kerry Mead's adaptation of Charles Dickens' iconic redemption story, wrapped in the gorgeous music of the season. Lamb's Players Theatre presented A Christmas Carol last December to great acclaim and sold-out shows. Then the Omicron surge swept through the fully vaccinated cast, and they were forced to cancel the final five performances. So they decided to bring it back for 2022.

LAMB'S PLAYERS THEATRE, 1142 ORANGE AVE., CORONADO. 619-437-0600. 7:30PM FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS.

UPCOMING SHOWS

Ain't Too Proud: Life and Times of the Temptations

Follow The Temptations' journey from the streets of Detroit to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. With their signature dance moves and unmistakable harmonies, they rose to the top of the charts creating 42 Top Ten Hits with 14 reaching number one. The rest is history - how they met, the groundbreaking heights they hit and how personal and political conflicts threatened to tear the group apart as the United States fell into civil unrest. This story of brotherhood, family, loyalty and betrayal is set to the beat of "My Girl," "Just My Imagination," "Get Ready," "Papa Was a Rolling Stone" and more.

SAN DIEGO CIVIC THEATRE, 1100 THIRD AVE., DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO. 619-570-1100. JAN. 3 THROUGH JAN. 8.

Alice in Wonderland

The City of Temecula offers the fifth session of Temecula Presents' Student-Led Arts Education Internship Program allowing students to gain experience in the theater industry. This free program provides local youth access to three months of mentorship from professional artists and expert advisors and encourages dynamic, innovative community building, and learning through youth-focused arts and cultural projects. Enjoy *Alice in Wonderland* with book, music, and lyrics by Janet Yates and Mark Friedman based on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through The Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll. This brand new musical version of the timeless classic takes you down the rabbit hole with the ever-curious Alice to a land of zany adventures where nothing is as it seems.

OLD TOWN TEMECULA COMMUNITY THEATRE, 42051 MAIN ST., TEMECULA. 866-653-8696. FEB. 3 THROUGH FEB. 5.

Daddy's Dyin' Who's Got The Will?

Welcome to the small town of Anytime, Texas, U.S.A. It's a family reunion and Daddy is about to die. Surrounded by this patriarch's clan of children who have come to support their elderly dad and find out the contents of his will, things get out of hand. It is not the story of the impending demise of the father or of the drafting of his will, but of a rebirth of the spirit of the family unit.

OLD TOWN TEMECULA COMMUNITY THEATRE, 42051 MAIN ST., TEMECULA. 866-653-8696. FEB. 10 THROUGH FEB. 19.

Edgar Allan Poe's Gruesome Gallery of Grotesquerie

Through tales of murderous madmen or supernatural mystery, Poe's enigmatic musings endure because they allow us to confront some of our greatest fears and delight in the darkness while reflecting on our own life. Co-developed in collaboration with Junior Theatre students and performers, this wholly original production will fuse storytelling, poetry, music, movement and puppetry to explore the works of Edgar Allan Poe. This celebration of all things macabre is a JT World Premiere. Recommended for ages 10 years and up.

CASA DEL PRADO THEATRE, 1600 VILLAGE PL., BALBOA PARK. JAN. 13 THROUGH JAN. 22.

Frozen - The Musical

From the producer of The Lion King and Aladdin, Frozen, the Tony®-nominated Best Musical, is now on tour across North America and the critics rave, "It's simply magical!" (LA Daily News). Heralded by The New Yorker as "thrilling" and "genuinely moving," Frozen features the songs you know and love from the original Oscar®-winning film, plus an expanded score with a dozen new numbers by the film's songwriters, Oscar winner Kristen Anderson-Lopez and EGOT winner Robert Lopez.

SAN DIEGO CIVIC THEATRE, 1100 THIRD AVE., DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO. 619-570-1100. JAN. 18 THROUGH JAN. 29.

The Main Line: A Musical Revue

To commemorate Black History Month, *The Main Line*, A Musical Revue tells the story of the late gospel singer, Mahalia Jackson. Written and directed by Jennie Hamilton.

COMMUNITY ACTORS THEATRE, 2957 54TH ST., OAK PARK. 619-581-2634. FEB. 3 THROUGH FEB. 26.

Mean Girls - The Musical

Mean Girls is a ferociously funny new musical from an award-winning creative team, including director Casey Nicholaw (Aladdin, The Book of Mormon), composer Jeff Richmond ("30 Rock," "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt"), lyricist Nell Benjamin (Legally Blonde), and book writer Tina Fey ("30 Rock," Bossypants).

SAN DIEGO CIVIC THEATRE, 1100 THIRD AVE., DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO. 619-570-1100. FEB. 28 THROUGH MAR. 5.

San Diego Opera: The Puccini Duo

The Puccini Duo brings to life two great Puccini one-act operas. Suor Angelica tells the story of a woman (Marina Costa-Jackson) who bears a child out of wedlock and is sent to a convent for penance. After seven years, she is visited by her aunt, the Principessa, who brings tragic news of her son, which sets in motion a series of dire actions that ultimately result in tragedy, forgiveness, and peace. The comic-opera Gianni Schicchi begins with the death of wealthy Florentine Buoso Donati, and his distraught family who are upset about being forgotten in his will. So they enlist the help of fixer Gianni Schicchi who helps turn the tables, but not in the way they expect. Considered a comic masterpiece, this is a dark satire based on a real story mentioned in Dante's Inferno and includes the famous aria "O mio babbino caro." Making a welcome return for these performances is mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, who will sing the role of the Principessa in Suor Angelica, and will take on the title role of Gianni Schicchi, a role traditionally sung by a baritone, for an opera first! Directed by Paul Curran and conducted by Yves Abel, San Diego Opera's Principal Conductor. Sung in Italian with projected English translations. The approximate run time is 1 hour and 55 minutes, including one 20 minute intermission.

SAN DIEGO CIVIC THEATRE, 1100 THIRD AVE., DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO. 619-570-1100. FEB. 11 THROUGH FEB. 19.

San Diego Opera: Tosca

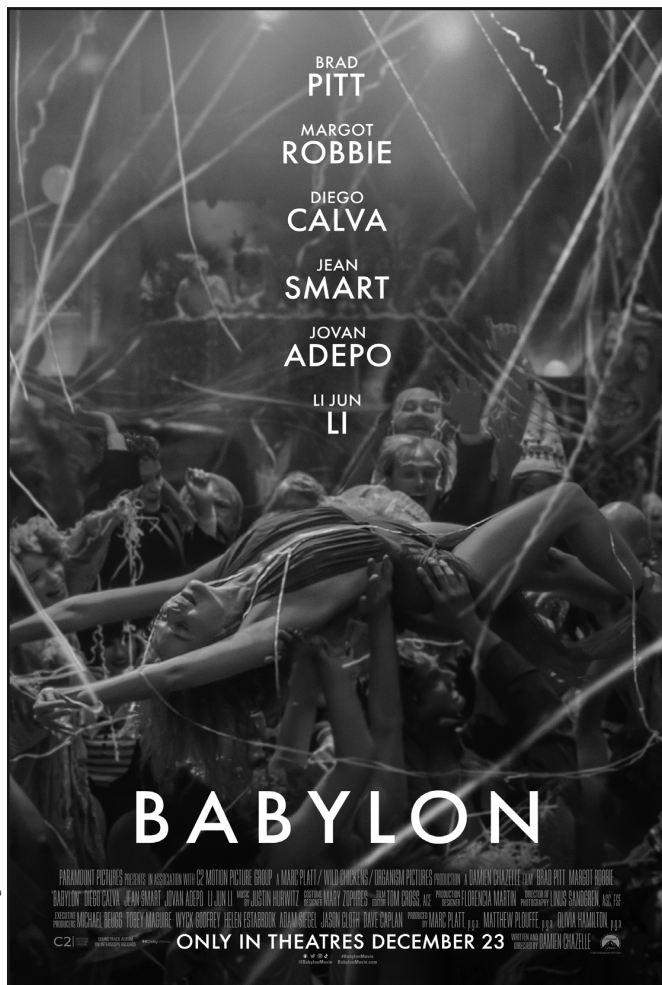
Tosca is Giacomo Puccini's gripping drama filled with torture, treachery, lust, execution, and suicide. Scarpia, the chief of police, wants only two things: to recapture the escaped prisoner Angelotti and to seduce Tosca, an opera singer of incredible voice and beauty. Tosca is in love with Cavaradossi, an artist and sympathizer of Angelotti. After arresting Cavaradossi for harboring Angelotti, Scarpia plays with Tosca's emotions, promising to free Cavaradossi if Tosca will succumb to Scarpia's desires. But Tosca has a plan of her own, all of which unfolds with tragic consequences from which no one can escape. Soaring and sensuous, filled with such beautiful arias as Tosca's "Vissi d'arte," Cavaradossi's "Recondita armonia" and the powerful choral piece "Te Deum," Tosca has some of opera's most beloved music, and one of opera's most gripping plots. Tosca welcomes the return of soprano Michelle Bradley in the title role, and Greer Grimsley in his signature role of Scarpia. Argentinian tenor Marcelo Puente makes his San Diego Opera debut as Cavaradossi. Directed by Alan Hicks and conducted by Valerio Galli.

SAN DIEGO CIVIC THEATRE, 1100 THIRD AVE., DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO. 619-570-1100. MAR. 25 THROUGH MAR. 28.

MOVIE LISTINGS

A Na'vi rider is shown riding a Pterodactyl over the ocean. The Pterodactyl has large, colorful wings with orange, yellow, and black patterns. The rider is a Na'vi with blue skin, wearing a harness and holding onto the Pterodactyl's head. The background features a cloudy sky and distant mountains.

Empire of Light — Watching writer-director Sam Mendes' latest, it's hard to shake the suspicion that he fell in love with the setting — an achingly beautiful old movie house/general nightspot in an English seaside town — and set out to make a movie around it. Because while the place looks fantastic — Roger Deakins' camerawork has the interior's Art Deco woodwork radiating color almost as richly as the exterior's neon trim — the story skips from this to that with all the depth and impact of the stone that frustrated new employee Stephen (Michael Ward, beautiful) sends skipping across the local lido during his conversation with his mentally unstable fellow worker Hilary (Olivia Colman,



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IN THEATRES DECEMBER 23

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CURRENT MOVIES

sympathetic). He's frustrated because he has to deal with rising racism in late '70s England; she's unstable because — well, causes are tricky, but it's clearly the case that she's had a bad time of it in the Men in Authority department. Just now, she's trapped in a tawdry office-visit affair with her boss Donald (Colin First, seedy), who begs her to suck it when she just wants to wank him and get it over with. She'd much rather share a secret tryst with Stephen, and what do you know, he's happy to play along. Is it a young man's coming of age tale of life lived and wisdom won, or a middle-aged woman's journey through adversity to satisfaction? Is it about the magic of the movies and the escape they offer, or the need to cast fantasy aside and face the duller adventure offered by reality? Maybe with a little more craft and care, it could have been all of them, but as it is, skip, skip, skip. Late in the film, Hilary asks projectionist Norman (Toby Young, appealing) why he made a particular momentous decision; his mystified reply may match the viewer's own as to what Mendes had in mind here. 2022. —M.L. ★ (IN WIDE RELEASE)

The Fabelmans — Directed by Steven Spielberg, the surreal comedy stars Gabriel LaBelle as 16-year-old aspiring filmmaker Sammy Fabelman, Michelle Williams as his artistic mother, Paul Dano as his successful scientific father, Seth Rogen as honorary "uncle" to the Fabelman children, and Judd Hirsch as Mitzi's Uncle Boris. 2022. Sgt. Tiki (IN WIDE RELEASE)

Gremlins — Nobody is taken very much aback on meeting a pointy-eared furry little beast who speaks and sings in English, in a voice like Disney's Chip 'n' Dale. But after all, in this "typical" American small town (so beloved of executive producer Steven Spielberg), school is still in session on Christmas Eve Day and a subtitled Cocteau film is broadcast on local TV that night, and the grasp on character and psychology is more or less the exact equal of Dr. Seuss (e.g., the Widow Scrooge who vows to capture a troublesome mutt and put him in her spin-dryer). But it's rather as if Dr. Seuss had decided to supplement his reputable pediatric practice and peddle mind-altering, brain-damaging substances to the older kids on the school playground: the animated stuffed animal, when gotten wet, spawns egg-sized fur balls that grow up to be sharp-toothed batlike hellions who like to smoke, drink, break-dance, throw open the classic trenchcoat and expose themselves to females, and much, much worse. To find, or to imagine, the ideal customer for this concoction is a chore. The problem, in part, would be to find someone young enough not to be bothered by the cuteness and not to notice the total insincerity. (The horror element, much diluted by the two aforementioned qualities, would not be part of the problem for the indicated age group, though a number of presumably grown-up critics professed, or pretended, to be bothered by it.) Such restrictions, of course, would not leave anyone around who could appreciate the cinematic in-jokes, but those are inappreciable anyway. With Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, Hoyt Axton, and Frances Lee McCain; directed by Joe Dante. 1984. — D.S. ● (DIGITAL GYM CINEMA)

Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio — People are sometimes afraid of what they



White Noise: Baumbach does DeLillo.

don't know... From the mind of Academy Award®-winning filmmaker Guillermo del Toro and award-winning stop-motion legend Mark Gustafson, it's a story you think you may know... but you don't. 2022. (REGAL ESCONDIDO; REGAL PARKWAY PLAZA)

How the Grinch Stole Christmas — A major ouch. The kiddie-lit holiday homily — "Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store./ Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more" — illustrated in theme-park sets and costumes (rodent snouts on all the citizens of Whoville save the little heroine, Taylor Momsen, and Christine Baranski). Jim Carrey, as the hairy green Scrooge-cum-Sasquatch, is under so much makeup he might as well be voicing a cartoon. Directed by Ron Howard. 2000. — D.S. ● (IN WIDE RELEASE)

I Wanna Dance With Somebody — Amusingly positive account of the unfortunate life led by Whitney Houston, from New Jersey choir girl to one of the best-selling and most awarded recording artists of all time, to a crack addict dying in the bathroom. Directed by Kasi Lemmons, written by Anthony McCarten, produced by music executive Clive Davis, and starring Naomi Ackie. 2022. (IN WIDE RELEASE)

The Mean One — First, he stole Christmas. Now, he's back for blood. Just in time for the holidays, this Grinch parody recasts the eventual hero of Whoville as a vicious murderer. Directed by Steven LaMorte and written by Flip and Finn Kobler. 2022. Sgt. Tiki (REGAL ESCONDIDO; REGAL RANCHO SAN DIEGO; REGAL SAN MARCOS)

The Menu — A couple (Anya Taylor-Joy and Nicholas Hoult) travels to a coastal island to eat at an exclusive restaurant where the chef (Ralph Fiennes) has prepared a lavish menu, with some shocking surprises. 2022. Sgt. Tiki (IN WIDE RELEASE)

The Polar Express — Neither an "instant classic" nor the polar opposite, but a middling addition to the holiday repertoire: computerized illustrations

of the Chris Van Allsburg children's book about a little boy already too old to believe in Santa ("This is your crucial year"), snatched out of his bed on Christmas Eve for a faith-restoring train trip to the North Pole. Is seeing believing? — or vice versa? (The answer to the explicit question, "Could this be nothing but a dream?," is a firm "No!") The fundamental animation technique of drawing on top of live-action figures — as in Ralph Bakshi's version of *The Lord of the Rings*, for example — is nothing new, but it has never looked quite like this: a mobile billboard or magazine ad airbrushed to the thickness of cake frosting, giving the image a velvety, mossy, furry, peach-fuzzy feel. Filmmaker Robert Zemeckis, who really did foment a revolution in animation in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, does not now appear likely to repeat the feat. But only time will tell. (Maybe when computer-generated touch-ups have

become as commonplace in Hollywood as cosmetic surgery, we'll look back on *The Polar Express* as the breakthrough.) There are some marvelous sights on parade — the ghostly first appearance of the choo-choo out of a clearing cloud of steam and swirling snow; the wind-borne ticket that returns to its holder via a relay network of a pack of wolves, an eagle, a rolling snowball, etc.; the perilous slog over the top of the railcars against a relentless salvo of blinding snowflakes; the train snaking across an ice-covered track; the red-brick Victorian architecture of the Pole — but these, without exception, are significantly liberated from the live actors. They are free-hand animation. The recognizable face of Tom Hanks, behind a walrus mustache and half-moon glasses, in the part of the train conductor and chief proselytizer for childlike credulity, is something of a distraction — a disruption in the cartoon universe — in the same way that

an overly recognizable voice can be a distraction (Robin Williams in *Aladdin*, Eddie Murphy in *Shrek*, Albert Brooks and Ellen DeGeneres in *Finding Nemo* — name your own). But Hanks's voice, in a handful of other roles besides that of the conductor, almost as though he alone were reading the Van Allsburg text for audiotape, has been sufficiently disguised or electronically altered to be no more than a minimal distraction. 2004. — D.S. ★★ (IN WIDE RELEASE)

Puss in Boots: The Last Wish — Charismatic outlaw Puss in Boots discovers that his passion for peril and disregard for safety have taken their toll. Puss has burned through eight of his nine lives, though he lost count along the way. Getting those lives back will send Puss in Boots on his grandest quest yet. Antonio Banderas returns as the voice of the notorious PiB as he embarks on an epic journey into the Black Forest to find the mythical Wishing Star and restore his lost lives. But with only one life left, Puss will have to humble himself and ask for help from his former partner and nemesis: the captivating Kitty Softpaws (Salma Hayek Pinault). 2022. Sgt. Tiki (IN WIDE RELEASE)

Tár — From producer-writer-director Todd Field comes TÁR, starring Cate Blanchett as the iconic musician Lydia Tár. If you want to dance the mask, you must service the composer. TÁR examines the changing nature of power, its impact and durability in our modern world. 2022. Sgt. Tiki (DIGITAL GYM CINEMA)

The Whale — A reclusive English teacher attempts to reconnect with his estranged teenage daughter. Directed by Darren Aronofsky, starring Brendan Fraser, Sadie Sink, and Ty Simpkins. 2022. (IN WIDE RELEASE)

White Noise — Noah Baumbach adapts Don DeLillo's novel about a suburban family on the run after a catastrophic event. Starring Adam Driver and Greta Gerwig. 2022. (LANDMARK HILLCREST)

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the inside track blurt

Musical relations Lauren Leigh began singing around the age of five, accompanying the songs in *The Little Mermaid* until she knew them all by heart. Her aunt, local singer-songwriter Eve Selis, told her that she was already

the doubting, questioning, and crying in the shower. And there's a song called 'I Loved You,' which is kind of like an Etta James romantic heartbreaking song." She also wrote a tune for her son Jack while he was in the hospital,



Lauren Leigh: PayPal pal helped *Ghost in the Picture* appear.

a vocal prodigy. "I didn't have perfect pitch," says Leigh, "but I guess I was hitting the notes and keys right." Music is in her blood: besides Selis, her father Claudio Martin is a guitar virtuoso, and her cousins in the band Omo Cloud perform as well. Now grown up and performing all around San Diego, Leigh has fronted classic country bands such as Wild Heart, as well as singing with Pink Floyd, High Tide Society, Analog Project, Back to the Garden, and others. Recently, Leigh released her second solo full-length, *Ghost in the Picture*.

Half the songs on the album were written about a pandemic romance gone sour. In addition, her best friend died that year, and her son was admitted to the hospital. "I was dealing with a lot of different variances of grief and loss," she says. "This album is a reaction to that — basically, a lot of heavy topics." Her recent failed relationship with a fellow songwriter is discussed in the first track, "Foul Play." "It's a breakup song, [about] being angry that it's over:

"Jack's Lullaby," with other songs touching on topics of depression, mental health awareness, and healing.

She says she wasn't thinking about making an album last year, but she'd written a bunch of new songs based on recent events and experiences. Then a friend told Leigh that she needed to make this album right away, ponying up \$5000 via PayPal to get her started and serving as executive producer. "I was like, 'Oh crap, oh my gosh, we're going to make this album.' I went ahead got the ball rolling and started imagining in my head what the album looked like, sounded like, and which songs I wanted to include and which ones I didn't." The project was recorded at two studios and completed in September. All the instrumentals except drums were tracked at Stairway Studios in Los Angeles over one weekend. Lauren employed the musicians herself, booking an Airbnb for everyone and paying them for their time. "Two full days, two twelve-hour-long days, and it was exhausting."

The percussion parts were recorded at her drummer's home, while the vocals were tracked with local mainstay Jeff Berkley at his Satellite Studio. Some of the backing vocals were recorded at the San Diego home of Josh Taylor and Sandy King (King Taylor Project), after Leigh found herself with a few new ideas but no more studio time. "They are brilliant at arranging vocals, specifically backing vocals," she says. After Taylor and King's pass, the masters were sent back to Berkley for final mixing. There are a total of eight songs on the album. "It's like drugs!" says Leigh of the ordeal. "That's why people keep doing this, it's an insane process. You basically bankrupt yourself just to hear your own songs the way

you want to hear them."

Leigh regularly performs at St. Mark Golf Course in San Marcos, where she'll appear on Friday, December 30 for a late afternoon set. The album release party for *Ghost in the Picture* is set for January 4 at the Belly Up in Solana Beach. It's going to be a family affair, with her cousin's group Omo Cloud opening the show and a guest appearance by Aunt Selis. "It was very important to have my aunt on the show, I want it to be a big night. This is little Lauren, being like five years old watching Eve play, and I want to get on stage with her. It's not just me sitting with her band; it's us sharing a bill together. She's been a hero of mine forever." The relatives will be taking turns appearing with Leigh, including her father Claudio Martin, who will be playing guitar on the opening song.

— Gabriel Garcia

Find Blurt online at SDReader.com/blurt

CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Bush, Andrew Hamlin, Dryw Keltz, Jay Allen Sanford, Spike Steffenhagen

You can submit a listing, download mp3s, watch videos, subscribe to event alerts, get directions, and find more information about these shows online at SDReader.com/music.

THIS WEEK'S SHOWS

411 Market Street San Diego, CA 92101. :
Thursday, 7pm — Andrea Loraine Jazz Trio.

Bellamy's Restaurant:
Thursday, 6pm — Dalton Gazette.

Belly Up Tavern:
Thursday, 8pm — Betamaxx. \$20-\$35.
Friday, 8pm — Cash'd Out. \$26-\$46.
Tuesday, 8pm — Donavon Frankenreiter.
Wednesday, 8pm — Yachtley Crew. \$30-\$53.

Cannonball:
Thursday, 5pm — Andrew Peña.
Tuesday, 5pm — Kai Kalama.

Casbah:
Thursday, 8pm — La Diabla and Cumbia Machin. \$12.
Saturday, 8pm — Exile on Kettner Blvd. Free.
Monday, 8pm — Marujah and True Stories. \$10.
Wednesday, 8pm — Starcrawler. \$20.

Duck Foot Brewing Company:
Tuesday, 7pm — SD Jazz Collective.

Duck Foot Brewing Company, 8920 Kenamar Drive. :
Thursday, 7pm — Blonde Brothers.

Duke's La Jolla:
Friday, 3pm — Kai Kalama.
Tuesday, 4pm — Johnny Martin.

Estancia La Jolla Hotel and Spa:

Saturday & Wednesday, 6pm — Keni Yarbrow.
Tuesday, 6pm — DevvLov.

Fairmont Grand Del Mar:
Friday, 6pm — Farrah Camu.

Farmer & the Seahorse:
Friday, 4:30pm — Dawn Mitschele.

Fast Times:
Wednesday, 6pm — Barefoot Hackney Goalie.

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego:
Thursday, 7:30pm — Winter Schmitter: A Hanukkah/Solstice Concert. Free.

Garage Kitchen + Bar:
Friday, 7pm — Adam Bergoch.

House of Blues:
Thursday, 7:30pm — Machine Head. \$28-\$75.

Humphreys Backstage Music Club:
Friday, 8pm — Billy Joel Holiday Show by Billy Nation. \$15-\$35.

L'Auberge Del Mar:
Thursday, 5pm — Tolan Shaw.

La Valencia Hotel:
Thursday, 5pm — Christian Taylor.
Friday, 6pm — Keni Yarbrow.
Saturday, 10:30am — Jemille Violet.
Sunday, 10:30am — Helena Holleran.

Madam Bonnie's:
Friday, 7pm — Guapacha Latin Duo & Band.

Mission Bay Resort:
Thursday, 6pm — Johnny Martin.
Friday, 6pm — Anna Ballew.
Sunday, 6pm — Keni Yarbrow.
Monday, 6pm — Jesse Johnson.
Tuesday, 6pm — Helena Holleran.
Wednesday, 6pm — DevvLov.

Mr. Peabody's Bar & Grill:
Thursday, 9pm — Blame Betty.

Music Box:
Friday, 7:30pm — Infected Mushroom. \$35.

Nick & G's:
Saturday, 6pm — Helena Holleran.

Nova SD:
Friday, 8pm — Lee Foss. \$20.

Ocean Beach People's Organic Food Market & Deli:
Friday, 6pm — Riley and Sage. Free.

Pala Events Center:
Thursday, 7:30pm — LeAnn Rimes. \$35-\$55.

Soda Bar:
Friday, 8pm — Noche de Verano Sin Ti. \$18.
Wednesday, 7:30pm — Victims Family and Gibby Haynes. \$25.

Tidal:
Friday, 5pm — Johnny Martin.
Sunday, 1pm — Olivia Rohde.

University Club Atop Symphony Towers:
Tuesday, 4:30pm — Farrah Camu.

Waterbar:
Thursday, 4pm — Mockery.

Westfield University Towne Centre:
Thursday, 12pm — Ben Benavente.
Friday, 12pm — Sarah Rogo.

Winstons Beach Club:
Friday, 8pm — Barbara Wire, Kimmi Bitter, Sleepy Pearls. \$8-\$10.

UPCOMING SHOWS

Alila Marea Beach Resort:
Thursday, Dec. 29 — Keni Yarbrow.

Athenaeum Music and Arts Library:
Thursday, Jan. 5 — San Diego New Music: soundON Festival. \$12-\$85.

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Jeff Berkley and Calman Hart, collectively known as Berkley Hart, have earned a following for their multi-performer theme concert productions, such as *Oh Berkley, where Hart Thou* (covering music from one particular film). The duo will be joined by several guests on December 21 at the Music Box in Little Italy for their annual *Berkley Hart Christmas Show*. Earl Thomas, Lisa Sanders, Josh Weinstein, and King Taylor Project are all slated to appear.



Barefoot Hockey Goalie tends to create bizarre rock operas, such as *Darius*, *An Interview With Thomas Edison*, and *Fedik's Butcher Shop*, the latter about Estonian Butchers and their adventures in America, with songs about hoodlums and raccoons. Their EP *Kid Champion* concerns an ill-fated boxer's battle against the Devil. On December 28, the band will debut *Clairemont: A Suburban Rock Opera* at Fast Times in (where else?) Clairemont.



Originally from Cardiff, Wales, Jonny Tarr makes electronic soul music on guitar, synth, sax, flute, vocals, loop station, samples, and blowing sax. His first fully self-produced album *The Rules* was released this past summer via local Pacific Records, and he has a new tribute project covering the music of the band Chicago. He'll perform Friday, December 30 at L'Auberge Del Mar.



With a dearth of rock and roll events happening around town on Christmas Eve, why not check out the Casbah's annual local all-star tribute to the music of the Rolling Stones, *Exile on Kettner Blvd?* This year, the collective of area band members will perform the entire *Goat's Head Soup* album, along with selected prime cuts from the band's 60-year discography.

MICHAEL BUCHMILLER/PACIFIC RECORDS



This year's *Christmas With Pacific Records* compilation will be released digitally by the local label, although it will receive an expanded physical release next year. Contributors include Audrey Callahan ("My Christmas Wish For You"), Laurie Beebe Lewis ("Mary Did You Know?"), The Tourmaliners ("O Little Town of Bethlehem"), The Shambles ("Warm This Winter"), and others. Cover artwork was provided by Michael Buchmiller of the Satanic Puppeteer Orchestra.

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THE GONZO REPORT

Rap rumble

Sipping smoke and spitting rhymes at Lux Lounge

Nothing like a little sea moss in the system before the battle kicks off. Sixty-three-year-old Miss Sherry Elie, owner and organizer of the CRS (Cut it, Roll it, Smoke it) San Diego Rap Battle League, buys me a sea moss smoothie at Fuel Thy Cells on University Avenue as we wait for the competition to begin. There's a reason why rappers love this shit: if you don't know, sea moss stimulates thyroid function, gets rid of excess mucus, kills bad bacteria in the gut, and supports healthy blood pressure. All key health benefits for competitors preparing to step into the battle lights next door at the Lux Lounge, located within a La Mesa strip mall. Oh, and they love good weed, too.

We walk over to the Lounge with our sea



If you go first, you have the edge of striking the first blows, but if you go second, you can work with what the first rapper rhymes.

moss smoothies in hand and Modelos stashed in Whitney Blue's bag — but her nephew Finny keeps shotgunning the bottles and they go quick. Meanwhile, Dee, employed as the videographer for the night, is getting his cameras dialed in. Miss Sherry sits us inside the venue on commodious strawberry-colored bench seats close to where the organized oral assault is



about to pop off. Fittingly, a UFC fight flickers on the TVs stationed around the lounge. The hookah at our table gets fired up simultaneously with the first battle of the evening.

The competition consists of two five-minute rounds, and host Badnewz Brown flips a coin to determine which rapper will kick things off. The unrestrained crowd surrounds the two

rappers beneath a trio of bright spotlights. I see Dee behind the tripods with his camera, catching his angles. The first rapper starts to spit a few bars. I ponder whether it's an advantage to go first or second. If you go first, you have the edge of striking the first blows, but if you go second, you can work with what the first rapper rhymes and spin something clever right back — like an elbow to the eye socket — which is exactly what happens during the opening battle.

With the final word, the second rapper secures the victory, barking "This verse is about to leave you torn like Drake and Wayne/I can't complain/His bitch let me stick my fingers in her box like Raising Cane's!" Boom, the crowd holds their fists to their gaping mouths and erupts with cries of "Ooooooh" and "That's fire!" Miss Sherry hops on the mic and announces a ten-minute outdoor smoke break. "You can smoke the hookah in here, but you gotta smoke the weed outside!"

In the parking lot, it looks like locomotive smoke is billowing from the bodies of fans, who are outfitted in ball caps, TruGrind gear, hoodies, and CRS T-shirts in Rastafarian colors. The rappers and the show-goers all mingle together, passing blunts and cracking jokes with each other. There's no apparent bad blood. In Miss

(continued on page 26)

Find The Gonzo Report online at sandiegoreader.com/gonzo

FRI. JAN. 13 SUPER DESTROYER Death of California, Upon the Water, Samsara, Ikana		TUE. FEB. 21 ROTTING CHRIST Carach Angren, UADA, Gaerea
TUE. JAN. 17 DEFEATED SANITY Malignancy, Prophecy, Strangle Wire	SAT. JAN. 28 DAMAGE, INC. with special guests	WED. FEB. 22 TSUNAMI BOMB + DEATH BY STEREO The Hammerbombs
THU. JAN. 26 WITHIN DESTRUCTION Distinguisher, Fox Lake, Carcosa, Shawshank	FRI. FEB. 10 D.R.U.G.S. Varials, The Callous Daoboys, 156/Silence	SUN. FEB. 26 SHOW ME THE BODY Jesus Piece, Scowl, Zulu, TRIPPJONES
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IMMORTAL BEAUTY

BY GARRETT HARRIS

A Christmas opera in which the elf gives himself

Who's in the mood for a Christmas opera? It may seem like a strange question, because there aren't any Christmas operas, are there? Yes, yes there are. Several, in fact. Well, a handful, anyway. First, there are the *Die Hard* Christmas operas. These operas, set during Christmas, don't really have anything to do with Christmas. The obvious one is *La Boheme* by Giacomo Puccini. The first and second acts are set on Christmas Eve. The other *Die*

Hard Christmas Opera is *Paul Bunyan* by Benjamin Britten. This opera concludes with a Christmas party. But good luck trying to get to the end to enjoy that yuletide celebration; I find *Paul Bunyan* to be an insufferable opera.

I listened to the opening scene of *It's a Wonderful Life*, as that's the only section of the opera that is available online. I tend to be a Jake Heggie fan, but this wasn't working for me. At least in this version, Clara

ence the angel is now Clara the angel, which creates some vocal variety. *El Nino* is available on YouTube, and if you like the style of John Adams, you might enjoy his Christmas creation. I, myself, do like John Adams — but not for Christmas.

My favorite, of course, is Pfitzner's *Das Christenfein*. The story is hard to find, but there is a nice summary of the plot on the personal blog of a singer who has performed an English version of the opera. Elfein is not one of Santa's elves, but rather a forest elf who is curious about the human traditions of Christmas. Tannengreis, the spirit of an old tree, warns Elfein regarding humans. Humans cut trees down for Christmas, after all. A brother and sister come through the woods on their way to the doctor, because the sister, Trautchen, is very sick. Some of their servants also show up with the task of chop-



Merry Christmas? A 1910 painting of Hans Pfitzner.

ping down a Christmas tree. A living version of the Christ Child also arrives and promises to bring a tree to Trautchen.

The opera concludes with the Christ Child arriving at Trautchen's home with the tree but also with the news that he must now take her to heaven, because her time has come. Elfein is moved to pity and asks if he can take Trautchen's place. The Christ Child agrees. Trautchen lives. Tannengreis, the tree spirit, is reconciled to humankind, and Trautchen's brother regains his faith. Elfein is allowed to

return to earth to visit every year on Christmas and his new name is Christelfein — Christ's Elf. The story is told with a narrator.

Pfitzner's music is in my wheelhouse. It is post-Romantic and pre-*The Rite of Spring*. It is full of beauty and splendor. The final chorus is all anyone could ask for. I plan to listen to it repeatedly over the coming days, because why not? Is it the greatest music ever written? It's not even close. But it is charming and atmospheric, and it feels like Christmas.

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Observatory North Park:
Tuesday, Jan. 10 — The Sound of Animals Fighting.

Pal Joey's:
Saturday, Jan. 7 — West of 5. Free.

Panama 66:
Sunday, Jan. 8 — Uptown Rhythm Makers. Free.

Pechanga Arena San Diego:
Friday, Dec. 30 — OMFG NYE.
Saturday, Dec. 31 — OMFG NYE.
Saturday, Jan. 14 — Subtronics.

Petco Park:
Saturday, Dec. 31 — Proper NYE: Sofi Tukker, more.
Sunday, Jan. 1 — Proper NYE: Sofi Tukker, more.

Pilgrim United Church of Christ:
Sunday, Jan. 8 — Java Joe's Reunion Show. \$25-\$30.

Rancho Bernardo Library:
Saturday, Jan. 14 — Giacoso Woodwind Quintet. Free.

San Diego Civic Theatre:
Tuesday, Jan. 3 — Ain't Too Proud: Life and Times of the Temptations.
Wednesday, Jan. 4 — Ain't Too Proud: Life and Times of the Temptations.
Thursday, Jan. 5 — Ain't Too Proud: Life and Times of the Temptations.
Friday, Jan. 6 — Ain't Too Proud: Life and Times of the Temptations.
Saturday, Jan. 7 — Ain't Too Proud: Life and Times of the Temptations.
Sunday, Jan. 8 — Ain't Too Proud: Life and Times of the Temptations.

Soda Bar:
Thursday, Dec. 29 — Glass Spells and De Lux. \$18.
Friday, Dec. 30 — L'Eclair and Pearl & the Oysters.
Saturday, Dec. 31 — Swami John Reis and Mrs Magician.
Friday, Jan. 6 — Rodeo Rave: DJ Dance Party.
Saturday, Jan. 7 — ForevAvicii: EDM House Party.
Friday, Jan. 13 — Idlehands and Ghost Parade.
Saturday, Jan. 14 — Take On Me 80s New Wave Party.

Soma:
Thursday, Dec. 29 — Pierce the Veil and Dragged Under.
Friday, Dec. 30 — Pierce the Veil and Dragged Under.
Saturday, Dec. 31 — Pierce the Veil and Dragged Under.
Friday, Jan. 6 — Jeff Rosenstock and Cheekface.

Sunshine Brooks Theatre:
Friday, Jan. 13 — Gunhild Carling.

Tower Bar:
Saturday, Jan. 7 — The Grim and The Humblers.

VYBZ Nightclub:
Thursday, Jan. 5 — The Industry TakeOver. \$20-\$75.

Westfield University Towne Centre:
Thursday, Dec. 29 — Ben Benavente.
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Winstons Beach Club:
Friday, Jan. 6 — Sam Grisman Project. \$20-\$25.

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—THE— GONZO REPORT

continued from page 25

Sherry's words, "It's a community, a culture." Moments later, I see a path being cleared as one of San Diego's heaviest hitting rappers glides through a jam of people. "Here come Don Elway," Dee says. He rolls up to us and embraces Dee. They're already connected through their respective hustles. Dee describes Elway's brand of hip-hop as the urban street voice of his city. Something for the grinders.

After a few more bouts and a couple more smoke breaks, I take a pull from Badnewz Brown's bottle of Hennessy and scramble in for the main event. Squaring off on the checkered floor will be Chef Trez and Shi Dog, fans of whom have been elevated and energized by the outdoor puffing activities and the array of food being

served at a table in the back. The munchie menu includes nachos, tostadas, Hot Cheetos, and even vegan options like chocolate and peanut butter cookies. (Miss Sherry offers up her 420 edibles as well, including my favorite, Trips Ahoy cookies.)

We sit back down next to Don Elway and another killer in the San Diego underground rap scene, Big June. Whitney Blue is ripping through her second order of nachos. Finny got too faded and walked home. Dee is working the camera from across the lounge. The heavyweights of the evening begin taking their swings. Shi Dog begins with some opening jabs, but Chef Trez answers back with some heavy blows to Dog's ego and gets him punch drunk. Trez delivers the knockout blow after dropping dynamite bars like "It's clearly level Shi/ You didn't catch the signs/ My hours went back when I came here/So smoking you was something I knew I'd do ahead of time!" Boom, roasted. ■

Michoacán's Finest

For the latest reviews from Reader writers and a complete searchable list of 2000 restaurants, please visit SDReader.com/feast

A second home for Uruapan carnitas

Carnitas Uruapan Family Restaurant; 7149 El Cajon Blvd., College Area. "Family owned and operated since 1986," it says on the hard-cover menu. Actually, this place, Carnitas Uruapan Family Restaurant, opened only a little more than a year ago, on that section of El Cajon Boulevard that sits midway between the College Area and La Mesa.



Same beloved Uruapan carnitas, served in a much larger location. This quarter pound carnitas taco goes for \$3.50.

However, the table-service eatery is sister restaurant to Carnitas Uruapan Mexican Food, and it's *that* La Mesa counter shop fans have raved and written about for nearly four decades now.

Uruapan is the name of a city in the Mexican state of Michoacán, the birthplace of carnitas, and its namesake taco shop earned its following for consistently



Shredded beef enchilada and pork tamale combo plate.

serving some of the best in San Diego, long over-achieving out of a small, single-room space near the 94 freeway.

I've paid regular visits for years, sometimes dining in, more often ordering from a makeshift drive-thru lane squeezed into its narrow parking lot. And if I wasn't sure what the differences between the original shop and the newer "family restaurant" might be, I would surely spot them the moment I arrived.

The newer location is four or five times the size of the original, featuring three distinct dining rooms and a separate bar. At this Carnitas Uruapan, you wait to be seated; a server takes your order at the table; and rather than a menu board mounted above the pick-up counter, there's this hard-cover book.

Regulars will find plenty of overlap between the two menus, except the family restaurant offers fewer burritos and more seafood dishes. It's the type of place where you're more likely to order combo plates, served with rice and beans, and typically between 12 and 15 dollars. Such combos have long been available at the original location, but I've never thought to order one before.

Maybe I should have: the rice and beans are outstanding. Some of these plates make simple meals out of pork chops, chili verde, or ranchero steak. Other plates are true combinations, featuring some assortment of enchilada, taco, tamal, or *chile relleno*. If you have trouble deciding, try sharing the sampler plate, which offers one of each, plus a *sope* and half pound of carnitas for \$29.50.

Of course, being the specialty of the house, a carnitas plate is always a safe bet (half pound for \$7.50, one pound for \$14.50).

Less safe but more adventurous would be one of Uruapan's other pork specialties: *chicharrones* (\$4.50/\$9) or *buche* (\$5.75/\$11.50). If you haven't yet acquired a taste for pork skin and stomach, respectively, you can always hedge on the Cochi Plate, which features all three pork dishes for \$14.50.

To be honest, a broad range of dishes means they tend to be hit or miss. I was a little let down by a pork tamal, satisfied but ambivalent toward an order of green pozole, and uncharacteristically impressed by a shredded beef enchilada.

However, I think it's worth poking around the menu to find the gems, especially because you can salvage any meal for a mere \$3.50 investment. That's how much it costs to order a carnitas taco a la carte. And this is not a street taco, but a seven-inch corn tortilla packed with no less than a quarter pound of Uruapan's superb pulled pork, plus diced onions and guacamole. In other words, the best bang-for-your-buck taco in the entire San Diego region.

by Ian Anderson



The entire original Carnitas Uruapan taco shop dining room could fit inside any of the three dining rooms of its family restaurant.

Christmas Day Dining on Mission Bay This Christmas, reserve your table for a festive dining gathering on the shores of Mission Bay. Savor a champagne brunch with your choice of entrée as well as buffet selections including a seafood cold bar. For dinner, look forward to a special three-course Christmas menu with holiday favorites. Sunday, December 25, 11am and 5:30pm; \$50-\$120. Oceana Coastal Kitchen, 3999 Mission Boulevard. (MISSION BEACH)

Christmas Day at Manchester Salon Festive dinner at the Manchester Salon with a buffet featuring traditional holiday favorites for all the family to the sound of live entertainment. Sunday, December 25, 10:30am; \$130-\$260. Fairmont Grand Del Mar, 5300 Grand Del Mar Court. (CARMEL VALLEY)

Christmas Eve Dinner Feast of 7 Fishes at the Ocean View Room with a prix fixe dinner. Vegetarian and vegan options happily prepared upon request. Saturday, December 24, 4pm; **free**-\$125. George's at the Cove Ocean Terrace, 1250 Prospect Street. (LA JOLLA)

Christmas Eve & Night Menu Hotel guests and San Diego residents alike are invited to enjoy a specially-curated, pre-fixed menu for \$52 per person. Saturday, December 24, 5pm; Sunday, December 25, 5pm; \$52. Andaz San Diego, 600 F Street. (DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO)

Christmas Eve Dinner Executive Chef Bryn McArthur has concocted a Christmas Eve four-course dinner menu with a festive flare. Saturday, December 24, 5pm; \$105-\$205. Amaya, 5300 Grand Del Mar Court. (DEL MAR)

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PERSONALS

BECKY G. Happy holidays to you and your family. Peace love Leslie.

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

DARLING FRANK, I flew over our home last night with Santa and blew you some Kisses did you get them? Your love, Katherine.

"DO NOT JUDGE. You don't know what storm I've asked her to walk through" - God.

"DON'T CRITICIZE WHAT you don't understand" Bob Dylan.

HATE is not a family value!!

I'D PAY YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS and be friends too. After all I am in the family and scooter trash is my very favorite. I'm glad to see somebody that knows what is up too. Peace out lol

IF THEY STAND BEHIND YOU, protect them. If they stand next to you, respect them. If they stand against you, defeat them!

IF YOU ARE NEUTRAL in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor!

KELLY W. Just wondering if you are checking here? Peace

KIESOWS AND THEIR OFF-SPRING, Happy holidays!!! Peace love Leslie stay healthy, safe, and have fun!

LOOKING FOR ELISA CORDERO MARTINEZ Located in Escondido, CA last time I knew. If you are here or know her, please have her call (619) 609-4029.

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MAY THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world, now & forever. Sacred heart of Jesus, pray for us. Saint Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. Saint Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer nine times a day, by the ninth day your prayer will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. EW

OLDER VIETNAM VET served our country and his disabled wife are in very much need of any and all complete donations such as a recliner lift chair, a complete bedroom set, full power kitchen appliances, and a full size couch set. We do not own a car or know anybody that has a truck but any and all donations would be appreciated. Thank you and God bless. Please call (619) 269-3434 and leave message.

RUSTY R. Happy holidays to you and your family. Peace love Leslie.

THE DRIVEWAY SOCIETY would love to invite everyone to enjoy this year's beautiful Christmas lights throughout our town!

TIME IN A MOMENT. Mind to behold. Nighttime sky upon ocean shore. Loved, respected.

WHAT ONE PERSON SEES as degrading and disgusting and bad for women might make some women feel empowered and beautiful and strong!

BEULAH... my son and granddaughter are coming to visit next month.

OCEAN SAND SKY WIND earth stood still, time for a moment, time to behold. Mine to behold, unrequited.

PB GARNET ST 2020 purse ripped off, covid fund, cash, tablets, jewelry, coincidence or not? Questionable or returned, court issue.

ST. THERESA OF CALCUTTA she said "whatever you do in your family, for your children, for your husband, for your wife, you do for Jesus".

BEULAH, I miss you already. Watching the voice all by myself.

FOSTER A DOG FOR CHRISTMAS don't have dogs see the inside of this gas chamber. The shelter puts them to sleep every day to make room for more. Let them live not die alone. Foster or adopt a dog. Connie (619) 253-0005.

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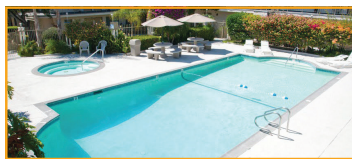
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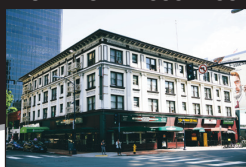
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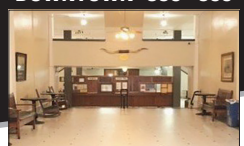
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MUSIC

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AUTOMOTIVE

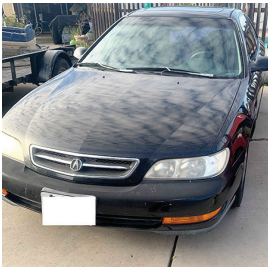
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DATA ENGINEER— San Diego, CA. The position of Data Engineer is responsible for programming, creating logics and using code to build and update database. Salary range is from \$143,250 to \$173,854 p/y. Apply to: California Coast Credit Union, www.calcoastcu.org/about-us/careers/

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ROAM

It was my second night on Catalina Island and a pervasive chill was creeping up my hands and feet as a young moon rose in the night sky. Normally, I'd have been blissfully asleep, wrapped in my warm mummy sleeping bag. But not that night. For the second night in a row, I was lying in my single-person tent, trying not to shiver by clinging to my only source of warmth, a Mexican blanket I bought years ago in Tijuana.

I had made the decision not to bring my sleeping bag, because I wanted to field-test whether I could sleep comfortably with just a blanket. Why did I want to do this? Because I had to know whether I could cut a few ounces off my pack weight by swapping my sleeping bag with a blanket. Well, it turns out that not all ounces are equal; I should have brought a proper sleeping bag instead of the four-pound novel I carried with me.

I had spent the morning backpacking from Hermit's Gulch to Black Jack. The distance was 9 miles with an ascent of 3115 feet, and I arrived at the second campground in the early afternoon. The next few hours were spent resting my achy feet, because not only did I forgo a sleeping bag, but I also decided not to bring my hiking boots. Instead, I brought my well-worn trail runners, causing me to spend the morning coming to terms with the fact that they weren't designed to support both me and a 40-pound backpack for a multi-hour trek.

So far, the trip had been a bleary slog punctuated by a few pleasant moments, which included the ferry ride to Avalon, the coffee that I picked up there at daybreak, and the bison I saw just before stopping for lunch. Otherwise, I had spent the day tramping along endless hills and valleys of chaparral and green and brown grass. The thru-hikers that I met were a bit more reserved than the thru-hikers I was used to bumping into



Hiking to the air field from Black Jack.

in the High Sierra, and I felt lonely as I passed them with just a wave and a "hello." The rough-and-tumble series of events were beginning to hang over me. I was starting to wonder if I was getting too old to backpack and whether I should give it a rest. But then I reminded myself that I didn't have enough money to travel any other way, and I rolled over in my tent and sighed. Sleep found me not long after.

I woke up the next morning as dawn's rosy fingers cut through the low-lying fog that had crept uphill in the night from the coast. It took a half hour to break camp, pack my gear, and munch on a stale Cliff Bar. The air was still icy, so I started on the trail to warm myself. As I journeyed, I passed the island's airport and stopped to take a photo of a shallow pond. I wasn't able to secure a permit to camp at Little Harbor on the west side of the island, so I stepped off the Trans-Catalina Trail and stayed on the east side, where I found a battered trail that took me directly to Two Harbors. It was a 10-mile trek with an easier elevation change than the day before,



My camp at Two Harbors.

only climbing around 1576 feet. Because I had fallen off the main path, I never saw a single soul, aside from a pair of silhouettes on a nearby peak.

Two Harbors was an absolute jewel. The campground was empty and quiet, though every once in a while I heard a playful squeal from someone on a jet ski in the water. There was a gentle breeze and the occasional squawk from a seagull. I stripped down to my hiking shorts and waded into the ocean. It was cold against my skin, but not cold like the penetrating chill from the previous night. As I bathed, I went over my itinerary in my head.

My initial plan had been to walk from Avalon to Two Harbors and then back to Avalon to take the ferry to Dana Point. But after two days of sore feet and two nights of poor sleep, I decided to cut short my experiment and take the ferry from Two Harbors to San Pedro the following morning. Once I got to San Pedro, I would still be about 50 miles from my car in Dana Point, so I'd have to improvise.

As night fell, I warmed myself by a fire I built from leftover wood. Just above the flames, I could see the boats in the harbor swaying with the ocean current and I reflected on the fact that I was looking at the site where Natalie Wood died. At one point, an island fox emerged from the gloom and stepped into my camp – though it scampered off when I shifted in my chair to get a better look at it.

The next morning, I took the first ferry out of Two Harbors to San Pedro. I met a nice couple from Bakersfield who bought me a beer for the ride back. We spent the ferry ride chatting about our adventures. Once we docked, we went our separate ways. Everyone seemed to make a mad dash for their car — well, everyone except me. I

chatted it up with a couple groups of backpackers and asked if they were headed south to San Diego, but they were headed north to L.A. and wished me luck getting home.

Fortunately, my phone still had some juice and I walked along concrete and asphalt to the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce, where I bought a bus pass. My giant backpack attracted a lot of eyes from people on the street, except from the homeless. They nodded at me or left me alone. Eventually, I caught my bus and made it back to my car, four hours and three transfers later. The high point of the ride came when one of the bus drivers encouraged me to apply for a job because I looked down and out. He said they started at 18 dollars an hour, and for a moment, I considered the offer. I also enjoyed checking out the shops and mansions as the bus meandered through Laguna Beach.

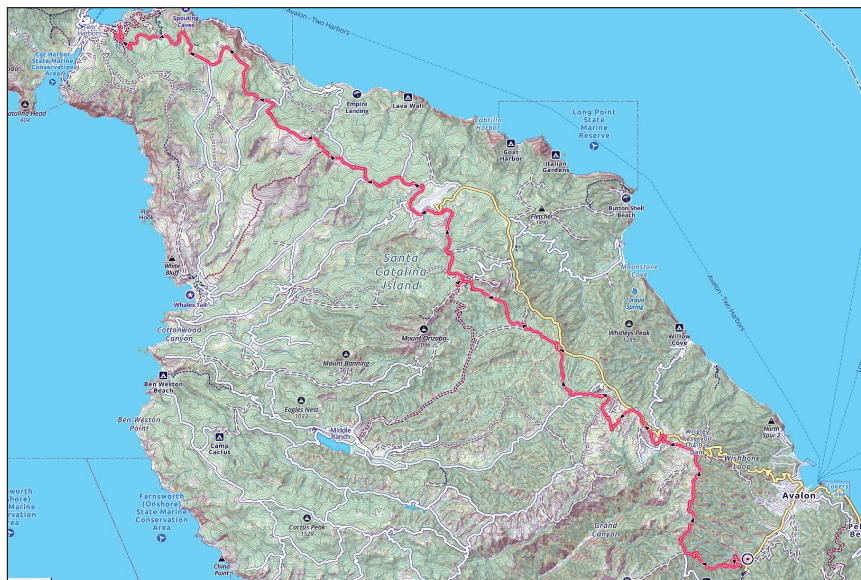
Catalina is a charming island with a quaint coastal vibe. It can be desolate, but it can also be full of cheer if you look for company in the strangers backpacking alongside you. The richness of the island comes from its ability to let you experience remote conditions in a highly accessible area. This is good practice if you want to get a taste of backpacking without the risk that comes with being in a more inhospitable area. The modularity of the island's trail system also allows you to carve the full 38.5 mile hike into smaller sections like I did; this is especially helpful if you want to experiment with your gear in the field. Simply put, Catalina Island is a sort of proving ground that can help you to develop a bit of character if you've forgotten, or have never known, the sharp taste of suffering and the gray face of defeat.

— Ryan Brothers

TRANS-CATALINA TRAIL TRANS-CATALINA TRAIL FROM AVALON TO TWO HARBORS

Located on Catalina Island, this is a moderately challenging backpacking expedition. With a length of about 19 miles and an elevation gain of 4,700 feet, the trip took me three days.

Distance from downtown San Diego: 65 miles to Dana Point Ferry
Hike length: 19 miles • **Difficulty:** Strenuous • **Season:** October – May



Trans-Catalina Trail

do you drink 20 drinks a week or more? Participate in our research study! Study compensation up to \$200. Call our research coordinator for more information: (858) 552-8585 x2509

BRUNCH CHEF/LINE COOK SOUGHT Seeking weekend brunch cook; some weekday hours available. 15 minutes east of Alpine & Viejas. Competitive wage + tips. Opportunity for growth with elevated menu & some of your specials! Cook amazing eggs & more! thepine-valleyhouse@gmail.com

CAREGIVER RANCHO BERNARDO We are looking for a woman. She'll help with daily duties for senior man with minor mobility problem. IHSS registration is a must. We'll help to get it. \$20/hr * 60 hr/month. Ad is not for unsolicited services or offers. (858) 360-0388 leave a msg.

PAID BLOOD DRAW STUDY Adults 65-80 volunteer for a paid blood draw study. Volunteer and help advance medicine when you participate in a pad blood draw study. No insurance is required and transportation is available. Contact us to learn more: (855) 367-8834. / recruitment@artemis-research.com

CAREGIVER (EAST COUNTY). Active Quadriplegic male seeking PT caregiver in East County area (Santee/Lakeside La Mesa/ El Cajon). Must have reliable transportation and be dependable, energetic, enthusiastic, compassionate. Experience preferred but will train right person. Must pass fingerprint and background check. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination required. Duties include: personal care, transferring, dressing, bathing, grooming, cooking, cleaning, shopping. Please send resume or brief description of why you are an excellent candidate to agarciar14@sbcglobal.net or leave message at (619) 596-9343.

DRIVER Drive your own mini-van or SUV. \$23-\$28/ hour when factoring in mileage reimbursement + benefits! Essential and stable employment. Full- & part-time shifts. Immediate openings. (858) 444-2350, or apply in person: 9710 Distribution Ave. SD, 92121.

REGISTERED CAREGIVERS Hourly/live-in available. \$16 per hour & other benefits. Must have reliable transportation. Assertive Homecare Services, 8893 La Mesa Blvd., Ste B, La Mesa. (619) 466-6890.

LOOKING FOR IHSS CERTIFIED CAREGIVER for active senior woman. Looking for someone long term, Tues-Thurs, 8am-4pm and one weekend per month, hours are open. Willing to help with gas. Please text (619) 488-0822 ASAP.

RESEARCH STUDIES AVAILABLE IN OCEANSIDE looking for schizophrenia volunteers, 18-65 years old. Compensation will be paid, transportation is also available to those who qualify. Please call Travis (619) 706-7529. Referral number only.

CAREGIVER, RANCHO BERNARDO afternoons. Help physically challenged man. Enrolled in IHSS or willing to enroll. Vaccinated and boosted, leave number. (858) 487-1225

HAVE A SPARE BEDROOM? Earn a competitive stipend caring for an adult with a developmental disability in your home. www.MentorsWanted.com. (858) 694-0120.

BOOZE NEWS

BY MATTHEW FLYNN

Beery Christmas (and other holidays)!

It's that time of year again: time for some of your favorite local breweries to release their holiday quaffs — and whether you're looking for pronounced pine notes or something dark and heavy to get you through a long, cold, wintery night, there's a seasonal San Diego beer for you. Of course, this being San Diego, there's no shortage of holiday-themed IPAs to go around; and if the beers themselves aren't enough, there's also plenty of festive packaging.

For the third year, **Second Chance Brewing** has released its popular Frosty the Hazeman. As Second Chance co-founder Virginia Morrison jokes, the festive

beer “tastes of (Christmas) pine, (sugar) plums, and fig(gy pudding).” The 7% ABV hazy IPA also features some resinous tropical fruit notes, courtesy of Mosaic, Citra, and Ekuano cryo hops. Fans of Second Chance's other limited-release hazy IPAs such as Buried in the Haze and Disco Balloon will find the beer familiar but more complex, with pronounced flavors and a richer aroma brought about through the dry-hopping process.

Burgeon and Pure Project have teamed up for the fifth year in a row to release Home for the Holihaze, and 8.8% ABV murky IPA featuring Citra, Citra Cryo, Riwaka, and Strata Hops. Pure Project's Winslow Sawyer explains, “Home for the Holihaze is a celebration of our favorite hops of the year. This makes each year's release unique because, as an agricultural product, the beer will have nuanced differences from its hop varieties.” Strong citrus notes of orange and lemon combine with an aroma of passion fruit to deliver an experience somewhere between a fruit cake and the ubiquitous hazy IPAs found at tasting rooms throughout the county.

Duckfoot Brewing brought back its Deck the Hops Double IPA, which has the strongest pine notes of this holiday bunch, courtesy of the addition of fresh spruce tips during brewing. Getting in the spirit of things, Duckfoot's Kenna Quiroga

describes a hop profile of “Citrusy Citra hops [that] keep spirits bright, while Chinook hops marry it all together with fa-la-la-floral notes.” With a hint of rosemary added for extra spice,



Santa's Little Helper once again hits the shelves around town

to really bring home the experience of sipping a Christmas tree forest.

Lastly, no San Diego holiday season roundup would be complete without **Port Brewing** releasing Santa's Little Helper. The popular Russian Imperial Stout pours dark and syrupy with a tan head and comes in at 9.5%. Co-founder Tomme

Arthur explains, “We have been making Port Brewing Santa's Little Helper here in San Marcos since 2006. The base recipe has remained the same since we started. A couple years back, we

began the process of adjuncting and iterizing some versions, as we landed a set of cases in a large box store that rhymes with Mostco.” Santa's Little Helper now comes in three versions: the original, featuring malty notes of roasted coffee and dark chocolate; one with hazelnut adjuncts; and one with vanilla cacao. Unfortunately, it has been several years since Port has released a barrel aged version, but one can always put it on a Christmas list and hope Santa gets the message.

For more craft booze news, see sandiegoreader.com/news/booze-news



Second Chance gets into the holiday spirit

with vanilla cacao. Unfortunately, it has been several years since Port has released a barrel aged version, but one can always put it on a Christmas list and hope Santa gets the message.

JOBS WANTED

ELDER CARE PROVIDER SEEKS POSITION with a senior gentleman. I have 50 years experience. Desire a position in North County. (760) 330-1963.

I'M LOOKING FOR A CARE-GIVER JOB preferable elder people or disabled. I have a vehicle and I'm experienced in that. I would like to have a live-in area and I could be a caregiver. I'm excellent at cooking. I know Medical etc. And I'm willing to help. My number is area code (442) 341-1308.

FREELANCER LOOKING FOR WORK! Mature female in serious need of cash paying gigs, nothing illegal or inappropriate please! No scammers/spammers need reply either. I most enjoy domestic “chores” like cleaning, cooking, dog walking & such. Please contact me with offers ASAP! Thanks! sandiegolady13@gmail.com

LOOKING FOR DISHWASHER POSITION Vacation relief or P/T. Lots of experience. Greg @ mobile (858) 282-5937.

FULL TIME JOB WANTED by High school/College graduate healthy 64 male southern Californian vaccinated, with reliable transportation. Seeking steady full-time employment in Miramar, La Jolla, Solana Beach, Carlsbad, north county. Dale Hauskins (858) 401-2973.

IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE for P/T, F/T or temporary employment. Mid-City area preferred. Greg @ mobile (858) 282-5937.

WANTED / TRADE

BUYING RECORDS, CASSETTES, CDs, Tubes. Cash paid for LP & 45 records, vintage stereos/speakers, cassettes/blank cassettes, CDs, vacuum tubes, reel tapes, 8-tracks. Brands include McIntosh, Marantz, Sansui, Fisher, Scott, Pioneer, JBL, Altec, Tannoy, Western Electric & more. Also buying Sports & Non-sports cards. I come to you! Call/Text (619) 889-5237.

LOOKING FOR ROOM in exchange for cooking, cleaning, errands, etc. Located in Escondido, willing to go as far as El Cajon, La Mesa. (619) 609-4029

BUYING GARBAGE PAIL KIDS CARDS Cash for 1st and 2nd series Garbage Pail Kids (1-83 a & b) and full sets, unopened boxes. San Diego local. (832) 651-8302 / ashscoot@aol.com

BUYING OLD BASEBALL CARDS Buying old baseball and other sports/non-sports cards. Pre-1980 preferred but buying more modern stars and rookies. Cash paid. San Diego local. Comics, autographs, memorabilia too. (832) 651-8302 / ashscoot@aol.com

PAID SMOKING RESEARCH STUDY if you are a male smoker 50+ years old you qualify for our research study. We will send a study kit to your house and ask you to complete a simple sample collection. You will receive a \$40 gift card. Email smoking.sandiego@gmail.com for more info

WANTED MOON POD CHAIR good condition, will pay \$75 cash, delivered Downtown San Diego. Please contact (619) 453-7951.

WANTED TO BUY used electric handicap scooter, if in good condition and relatively “new”. (619) 907-4767

FOUR INCH STEEL PIPE WANTED I'm looking for 4 inch I.D. thick wall steel pipe that is 10 feet long or longer. If you have pipe that is reasonably priced or if it is old I will pick it up and haul it away for free. (760) 746-7209 the phone is a landline, no texting.

SOLAR PANELS WANTED I'm looking for solar panels that are reasonably priced or if they are old I will haul them away for free. I'm setting up an off grid system not connected to the electric grid. Let me know what you have, (760) 746-7209.

OB SPACEMAN PAINTINGS WANTED Private collector seeking any and all of his art. Contact me at clintcarycosmicart@gmail.com or call or text (760) 535-6501

I BUY OLD GUITARS AND guitar amps. Working or not. Call me (619) 279-7833.

NEED MONEY? I pay cash for comic books and come to you, (619) 933-6275.

WE BUY SILVER AND GOLD coins and bars. Call me (619) 279-7833.

WANTED: OLD SLOT CARS. Or old toys. Cell/text #619-279-7833.

GOT ANY OLD SURFBOARDS? I pay cash. I come to you. Cell/text (619) 806-6703

SEWING MACHINES I buy Singer 221 Featherweight sewing machines. Cell/text (619) 806-6703

I BUY VINYL RECORDS all types, great prices paid. We don't just buy 2-3 records, we buy your whole collection. Call (619) 250-3088.

I BUY SAXOPHONES trumpets, trombone, tuba, flute, clarinet. Or? Or any old band instruments. Call (619) 279-7833.

WANTED: Speakers, amps and other old stereo gear! The most cash paid always! Brands like JBL, Altec, McIntosh, Marantz

and more! Call 1(619)-303-8031; e-mail JBL@cox.net.

OLD DRUM SETS AND CYMBALS Cash paid. Call (619) 280-2075.

I BUY OLDER STEREO GEAR Working or not ok. Pioneer, Sansui, Klipsch, JBL, Fisher, Yamaha, Dynaco, McIntosh, Tannoy. What do you have? I got cash and I'll drive to you. Call or text me for pictures (619) 279-7833.

WILL PAY CASH... For records, CDs, DVDs, and clothes. Professional Singing Lessons available. Musicians Wanted. Call Jeff Clark, (858) 382-7396.

GARAGE SALES

MIRA MESA GARAGE SALE Women's sweaters, men's sports hats, men's t shirts, various sci-fi convention souvenir books and posters, knick-knaks'. By appointment only. Call (858) 693-3409, evenings.

FOR SALE

2 BRAND-NEW LIONEL TRAIN SETS All complete with other Lionel train parts and HO train parts. All good working condition,

very collectible. Call Joe for information (619) 357-1844

9' SHUFFLEBOARD TABLE Shuffleboard in a 9' Table Fits in Any Space Poly-Coated Playing Surface Offers Smooth, Fast Puck Action Pedestal Legs with Levelers Provide Optimum Stability Abacus-Style Scoring Includes 8 Pucks (4...Red 4 Blue, cover \$400 obo cash only. (858) 302-6376 / dustbutcher1026@gmail.com

SHOES AND TRAVEL BAG 3 or 4 pairs of women's shoes, new, size 7 or 7.5. And a travel bag, new. Each item is \$10 each. (619) 283-8417

STAMPS FOR SALE lot's of stuff, (858) 257-8520.

BLACK SQUARE MIRROR (24"X 24") This good looking contemporary wall mirror w/ gold trimming would compliment a nice home or office. Actual mirror size is 17.75"x 17.75". Heavy duty hanging hardware is included. Clean and in good condition. \$25. Text (619) 796-5510 for more info/pics. / cadbcgsd@gmail.com

FLOOR LAMP WITH 2 GLASS SHADES This 72" vintage dark brown torchiere lamp has a side light with an adjustable goose-neck, beautiful tan glass shades (13" & 5.5"), rotary on/off switches, 1" metal pole & 10.5" base.

CLIFF BROWN AUTOMOTIVE			
FREE BRAKE INSPECTION & ESTIMATE	SMOG CHECK SPECIAL ★ STAR Certified \$3175* <small>Smog Test or All Cars 2000 and Up Same Price. Good through December 30, 2022.</small>		★ STAR Certified SMOG CHECK TEST ONLY \$5175 <small>+ \$8.25 cert. Most vehicles. Trucks, vans & European cars extra. Must bring DMV renewal notice. Limited time offer. Cars 1999 and older.</small>
	FREE EXHAUST INSPECTION & ESTIMATE		ENGINE STEAM CLEAN AVAILABLE Most Vehicles
NEW CV AXLE from \$159 ⁹⁵ <small>Parts & Labor</small>		30,000-MILE SERVICE SPECIAL from \$279 ⁹⁵ 4-cyl. Most vehicles. <small>Service includes: • Maintenance tune-up Oil and filter change • Lube chassis • Radiator coolant change Air filter replacement • Fuel injection cleaning Check brakes, suspension</small>	
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Coupons must be Presented Prior to Service • Senior Discounts Available • Offers Expire December 30, 2022			

Very good condition. \$75. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

TABLE LAMP METAL CYLINDER BODY The body of this unique table lamp is 4.5" in diameter and 12" tall. The cream soft deep drum linen shade is 10.75" on top & bottom diameter & 9.25" in height. Modern and good looking. Very good condition. \$20. Text (619) 800-5568 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com



1971 VW BUG DUNE BUGGY Cash only - 60k miles, like new, 11,500 obo - street legal - updated registration. (760) 420-3641 / kent.alisha1@gmail.com

53 NOISEMAKERS - TURN OR BLOW These noise makers are of different designs & colors for New Year, special events & parties. Make lots of fun noises. All new and never used. \$25 for all 53 pieces. Text (619) 796-5680 for more information and/or pictures. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

VINTAGE SOLID WOOD MIRROR This mirror (31-3/4" x 16" x 1-7/8") w/ 3/8" wood frame weighs 18.5 lb. Hanging hardware not incl. The glass is 1/2" thick & has some dark spots, scratches and discoloration which reflect its vintage nature. \$20. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

09 BMW 3 SERIES 2D CONVERTIBLE Excellent condition - approx 102,000 mileage. \$18K OBO. White exterior & red leather interior. Automatic 6 speed. 6.0 cylinder 3.0 liter. Power door locks, windows & Steering. Air conditioning. Anti-theft. AM/FM stereo & bluetooth. Keyless entry & start. 110217AA@gmail.com

CRUTCHES FOR ADULTS 5'10"-6'6" Designed for people with

mobility impairments, Guardian aluminum push button crutches are for tall adults up to 300 lbs. The crutch pads, hand grips and crutch rubber tips are all in excellent condition. \$15. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

ROTOTILLER: TROY-BUILT Rototiller, model 21B 34M8711, 208cc, it was purchased new a few years ago, it was never used, selling for only \$575., (760) 746-7209.



VINTAGE TABLE LAMP BRASS BODY This 29" lamp is quite beautiful with a soft pleated linen shade (7.5" top, 17.5" bottom & 11.5" side). It has some fabric tears on the back. The body has some discoloration which reflects its vintage nature. \$25. Text (619) 796-5510 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

1.25 HP GARBAGE WASTE DISPOSAL Heavy duty American standard disposal handles most types of food waste Incl. coffee grounds, vegetable scraps, peelings & small bones. Connectors & accessories not included. Clean & in excellent condition. \$75. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

BEAUTIFUL GLASS TABLE LAMP This classic table lamp with brass trim base & cream pleated shade is very pretty and in excellent condition. 26.5" tall overall, body 16" high, base 6.5" across, shade 7" (top), 18" (bottom) & 12.5" (side). \$35. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

SILK FLOWERS IN CHAMPAGNE VASE 3 attractive arrangements available: \$8 each, \$22 for set of 3, \$30 for set of 4, or \$78 for all 11 vases. Great for special events and functions. Vases are 3" in diameter (top opening & bottom base) and 10" tall. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com



FABERGE PAVLOVA WINE GLASSES 9 stunning ballerina crystal wine glasses, by Igor Carl Faberge. As new, no chips or flaws. See pics, contact me any questions. Only \$35.00 ea. (858) 395-5656 Rick



PIONEERSX636 RCVR & AR SPEAKER \$65 Pioneer SX-636; 25 Wrms. Noisy after hour-needs repair AM/FM & meters work. VGOOD appearance-worth fixing or for parts. \$100 Teledyne Acoustic Research speakers. 2-positions for use. 6" woofer, good foam, 1.5 in tweeter.

1968 TOPPS MICKEY MANTLE POSTER test issue. Great condition. Call for price. (619) 791-0278.

BOOKS, RECORDS Book shelves, painting. Music magazines 1993-2014 National Geographic 1970-2001. Text for details (858) 750-8903.

CAMERAS Nikon with two lenses SLR, \$100. Antique Kodak camera, 100 years old, \$50. (760) 757-5445

CASSETTE TAPES can be used for recording. 10 each. Contact Paul (619) 222-0278.

ELECTRIC HOTPLATE still in the box \$20. Contact Paul (619) 222-0278.

FIVE FT COMMERCIAL GRADE fiberglass shower unit for handicap \$300. Call Tom at (619) 264-7148.

FLOOR LENGTH FORMAL GOWN sequins, soft peach, size 16 worn once, \$40. Call Ronnie (619) 346-9765.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE 24 boxes new clear mini lights, 100 per box.

Green wire 23 feet lighted 21 feet, all \$50 (760) 749-8266.

KAUAI 6 NIGHTS AT gorgeous Pono Kai for only \$525 on ocean over trade for use of your coastal time share in San Diego (858) 337-4367.

MISC FOR SALE I am selling the following items: a couple of brand new clocks fancy candle holder blue v-tech house phone all these items you must buy for 40.00 obo ask for james @ (619) 450-7914 first come first serve!! Don't ask me questions about my items. / j.fifield31@gmail.com

OSCILLOSCOPES Hickok model 5002A, three oscilloscopes, I don't have probes, all three for only \$150., total price, call (760) 746-7209.

PEXTO SHEAR MODEL 269A: Pexto trim tab shear, 4 inch wide cutting blade, 16 inch depth, 20 gauge maximum thickness of material being sheared, it was used to shear small pieces of aluminum, mounted on heavy duty stand, \$375., call (760) 746-7209.

PORTABLE CD PLAYER with charger and headphones still in the box \$40. Contact Paul (619) 222-0278.

RECURBENT BIKE Innova dual function folding upright recumbent bike for sale. Price is \$150 and it's complete with the owners manual. Phone number is (858) 525-2339.

SHOPSMITH MARK V MULTI-TOOL Includes table saw, band saw, scroll saw, lathe, belt sander, jointer, dust collector, many extra parts & accessories, plus a separate table for mounting tools when not in use, excellent condition, \$975., call (760) 746-7209

VARIOUS WOMEN'S SHOES some tennis, some dress. \$8 per pair. My phone number is (619) 283-8417.

VINYL 60S - 80S LP & 45S Personal collection of approx 350 LPs & some 45s from 1960s-80s. Save time and money—all have been checked for audio quality, and listed in detail at danesworld.com/vinyl.

VTECH LANDLINE PHONE with built in answering machine \$20. Contact Paul (619) 222-0278.

WHEELCHAIR FOR SALE \$1000 or best offer. Contact Herb (619) 286-3841.

WINTER WETSUIT FOR SALE Nearly new Billabong Absolute / Competition 4/3, medium-tall, used once, MSRP \$259, must sacrifice at only \$75, Encinitas, (760) 274-5264.

WOOD JEWELRY BOX W/ GLASS LID This beautiful solid wood jewelry box (10.5" x 6.5" x 3" high) has 6 top compartments and an open bottom storage. The lid looks very nice with clear glass framed by wood molding. Very good condition. \$25. Text (619) 800-5568 for more info or pictures. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

BEAUTIFUL SOLID WOOD BOX This vintage box (5.5" x 3.5" x 2" high) with a hinged lid is nicely stained and varnished. It can be a wonderful storage place for jewelry, tarot, oils, art & sewing supplies, and other lovely things. \$15. Text (619) 796-5510 for more info or pictures. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

SOLID WOOD SWIVEL BAR STOOL This counter height (25.5") barstool with armrests is very sturdy and beautiful. It has 3" vinyl foam pad, rattan wicker back & bronze protector on footrests. It swivels perfectly and in very

good condition. \$60. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

5 QT. CROCK POT SLOW COOKER This 180-250 watts Rival crockpot has a removable stoneware pot & plastic lid. There are some stains inside the base under the pot & the plastic lid is no longer clear but the crock pot is in good condition. \$12. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

CRYSTALS Amethyst cluster on geode and clear quartz point. Have had these specimens for years, time to pass them on. \$20 for both. (619) 664-2146 / surgeprotector@protonmail.com

DEADBASE X Complete guide to Grateful Dead concerts and song lists. Hardcover, complete, excellent condition, 596pp. Sells used for \$220 and up online. \$100. (619) 664-2146 / surgeprotector@protonmail.com

SOLAR PANEL MOUNTING SYSTEM Universal mount holds 10 large solar panels, can be used when roofs aren't suitable for mounting solar panels, can be used to power an off grid EV charging station, if your roof is shaded by trees or needs repair, excellent, \$2,600., (760) 746-7209.

4 BEAUTIFUL NEW INTERIOR DOORS Premium knotty alder, solid wood, mfg. by Craftsman In Wood in Arizona, 1-3/4" x 3" x 8", no hinges or handles, they are extra doors from my remodel, I paid \$1,500. each, selling for \$750. each, (760) 746-7209.

BLACK & DECKER ELECTRIC EDGER This corded electric edger has a high-torque motor and an edge guide that converts the edger to a trencher. It features a 7-1/2" blade with 3/16" thickness with adjustable depth. Very good condition. \$35. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info and/or pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

BOOK COLLECTION, 570 BOOKS 238 hardcover & 67 softcover, about 264 cookbooks, some hardcover & some softcover, selling all for \$390., no haggle price, (760) 746-7209.

SCHULTZFORM SLOTFORMER SF12 For Cabinet makers, used to bend laminates for countertops, purchased new for \$5,000., it was used once-like new condition, selling for \$2,900., (760) 746-7209.

2 IN 1 QUAD AND INLINE SKATES This Roller Derby skates combo adjusts up to 3 Sizes with the push of a button. Quickly interchangeable chassis allow you to switch from quad roller skates to inlines and back with ease. Excellent condition. \$25. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

3 WHEEL RUGGED RACERS SCOOTER This scooter with adjustable height, anti-slip deck & flashing LED wheel lights is for toddlers or young kids. It has a flip-out seat and foot pad which allows your child to scoot sitting or standing up. \$15. Text (619) 800-5568 for more info/pics.

WOOD SHELVING WITH 2 BRACKETS This Rubbermaid white laminated shelving (12" x 72" x 3/4") resists staining, scratching & warping. It's ready to be installed with two 10.25" x 9" brackets. Supports up to 300 lbs. with proper installation. \$15. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

BLACK SPORTS/ GYM/ DUFFEL BAG Marksign bag (17" x 14" x 11") is good looking, versatile, and very durable. It has zippers on top and all around with 2 side pockets. Mesh materials for

maximum ventilation. Never used in excellent condition. \$15. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

MANUAL LAWN CORING AERATOR This heavy duty Yard Butler powder coated steel aerator is 36.5" tall with 9" cushioned handles. A firm step onto the foot bar of the aerator will remove two 3.5" x 0.5" diameter plugs. Excellent condition. \$25. Text (619) 796-5680 for more info/pics. / cadbcscd@gmail.com

WEIDER ULTIMATE BODY WORKS GYM Weider Ultimate Body Works Home Gym. This item is in "like new" condition with clean, unworn vinyl. Folds flat for storage and extends to twice its length. \$100, cash only. Safe and convenient pick-up location, near the Hillcrest DMV/Farmers Market. yasminebratz@hotmail.com

ARIAT WESTERN BOOTS New, 2 pairs size 6.5 \$50 all, text (619) 872-8250.

BELLY DANCE CLOTHING assortment, veils, waist bands, jewelry, assorted varieties and prices. Call (619) 101-3591.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS plexiglass display board 63x63, \$35. Fiber optic snowman, \$10. Ornaments \$1-5. Tin cans and baskets, \$1-5. Snow villages \$15-25. Artificial tree, \$10. (619) 218-4031

COMFORTER duvet fit full to queen bed, reversible pink lavender, gently used in guest room, good condition, non-smoking home \$15. Telephone 1-858-484-4483.

DRIVE SHOWER HANDLE brand new in box, \$25. (619) 601-3591

DRIVE WALKER brand new, used one. 500 pounds max, \$100. Call (619) 601-3591.

WWII GUN RIFLE BOX Excellent condition, original lining and wax paper, \$75 or best offer. Call (619) 601-3591.

BRAND NEW RED TRICYCLE for sale \$250. For photos, please text (858) 733-0770.

BIKE HOOKS/PUMP Heavy duty extra large bike hooks, 4 pack, never used, \$10. Telescoping bike pump, quick inflation with gauge, used once, \$10. Contact (619) 380-4861.

HOT WHEEL CARS some misc good stuff. Also slot cards and old baseball cards. Call for more info and pricing, (619) 791-0278.

AUTO GPS vehicle device by Garmin, \$175 OBO. (619) 282-5105

CHRISTMAS METAL TREE STAND for fresh tree, holds water, large to XL, used one time only, like new, \$7 bargain, last chance. (858) 484-4483

DINNERWARE 20 piece china set, like new, dishwasher and microwave safe, pretty pattern, \$25 for set. (619) 282-5105

MISC FOR SALE drones from \$11, stun gun/flashlight combination \$20, all brand new. Grow lights. Text for prices and pictures. (619) 850-3264

LAUNDRY HAMPER New. Must sell. Cylindrical (round) off-white cream color hamper is 21 inches high, 12 1/2 inches in diameter. It has a lid on it. Fits most bathrooms. For more info call (858) 693-3409, evenings.



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MentorsWanted.com

ASSORTMENT OF WOMEN'S SWEATERS for the winter. Brand new. Sizes small to medium, solid as well as stripes, some with pockets and can be worn as jacket. Please call (858) 693-3409 for more details.

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SERVICES

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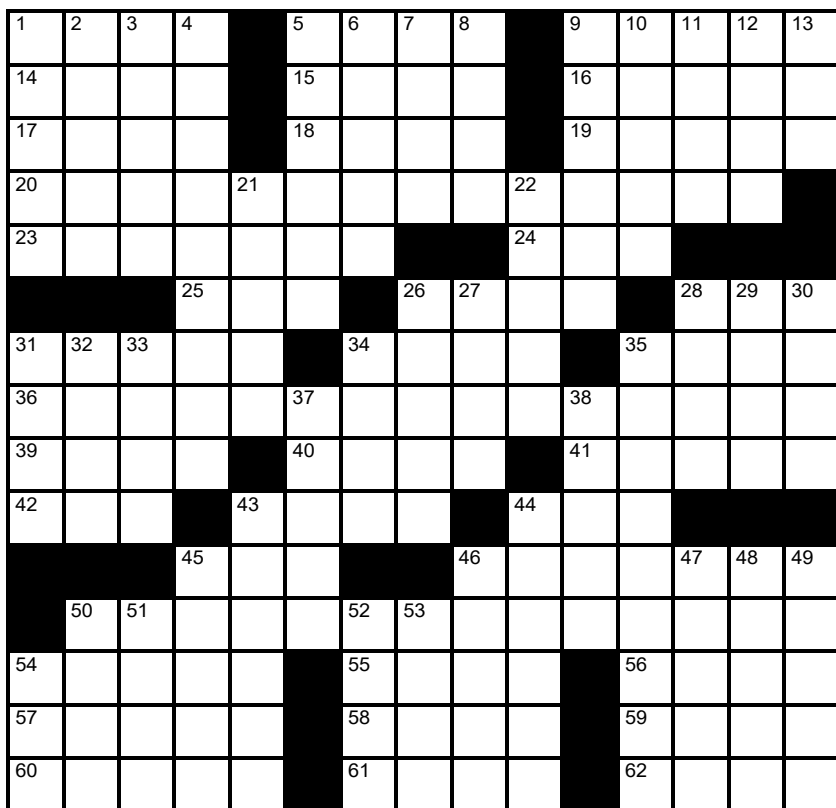
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Thanks to all our winners so far and to those who will keep with us.

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Across

1. 5'4" and 6'2": Abbr.
5. Spill the beans
9. Stacy who played Mike Hammer on TV
14. Song that might prompt a "Brava!"
15. Skye of "Say Anything ..."
16. Ernest or Julio of wine fame
17. 500 sheets of paper
18. "No ____, no glory"
19. It has two hemispheres
20. "About that thing that went wrong on Apollo 13 ..."
23. Nice enough fellow
24. Special ____ (military activities)
25. 35mm camera type
26. Rage

28. "CrazySexyCool" trio
31. Movement founded by Tarana Burke
34. Actress Meyer of "Starship Troopers"
35. "Mon petit ____" (French endearment)
36. "About that honorific given to one's superior male offspring ..."
39. Shawkat of "Arrested Development"
40. Cookie with a wasabi flavor in China
41. Steakhouse order
42. Exclamations of regret
43. Woody ____, bartender on "Cheers"
44. Tyronn who coached the Cleveland Cavaliers to an NBA

- title in 2016
45. Faux ____
46. Genre for Dire Straits and Steely Dan, facetiously
50. "About that theater production that explains how old the penny is ..."
54. Dagger's partner
55. "Hmm ... I doubt that"
56. Name in a noted '90s breakup
57. Diwali celebrant
58. Tea brand with Wild Sweet Orange and Refresh Mint flavors
59. "Moi? Never!"
60. Fabulous writer?
61. Bird symbolizing grace
62. Meniscus location

Down

1. Brother of Groucho, Chico, Gummo and Zeppo
2. Origin of the word "alphabet"
3. Bit of pageant wear
4. 600 Home Run Club member
5. California state park south of Monterey
6. Replete (with)
7. Voting no
8. "Why you gotta ____ rude?" (lyric from the 2014 Magic! hit "Rude")
9. Cold war mole
10. Some noblemen
11. Jai ____
12. Snippet from a film
13. Sweet pea

21. Qaanaaq dwelling
22. "Don't Know Why" singer Jones
26. Played a high wind
27. "Do ____ others ..."
28. Bro of van Gogh
29. Mortgage, e.g.
30. It's good for what ails you
31. Org. featured in the documentary "This Film Is Not Yet Rated"
32. Hard to handle, in a way
33. Baseball Hall of Famer Speaker
34. She helped Marlin find Nemo
35. Science fiction subgenre
37. Calf-roping loop

38. Assignment from a piano teacher
43. Kind of dancer
44. Coral reef enclosure
45. Madrid museum
46. "Hold Me Closer, Tony ____: And Other Misheard Lyrics" (2007 humor book)
47. Johnny who used to cry "Come on down!"
48. Social stratum
49. Hit 1986 Mr. Mister song named after a prayer
50. Ballerina's bend
51. Forever, seemingly
52. "Fiddlesticks!"
53. Defrost
54. When tripled, a dance move

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE:

D	I	E		A	P	T	T	O		O	P	R	A	H
R	N	A		N	E	H	R	U		H	E	E	L	S
O	T	S		T	R	O	U	T		I	R	V	I	N
P	R	E	S	S	U	R	E	D	R	O	P			
B	U	S	H	Y					I	N	B		P	O
O	D	I	E		F	R	E	D	R	O	G	E	R	S
X	E	N	A		A	R	C			R	A	P	C	D
				R	E	D	R	O	B	I	N	S		
G	A	V	E	L				N	A	B		S	A	D
S	H	A	R	E	D	R	O	O	M		I	R	O	N
N	A	T		M	M	I				J	E	T	T	A
				R	E	V	E	R	S	E	O	R	D	E
R	I	C	A	N				S	O	A	K	S		E
K	L	I	M	T				E	S	T	E	E		C
O	K	A	Y	S				N	E	E	D	Y		O

SUDOKU

MEDIUM:

8		3			6		5	
1				7			4	
	4		9				1	
		2		9				7
		1	7	4	8	9		
9				6		5		
	1				4		9	
	2			5				3
	5		6			1		4

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S SUDOKU PUZZLE:

HARD:

6	9	4	8	1	5	2	3	7
3	7	8	2	4	6	9	5	1
2	1	5	9	7	3	8	6	4
5	4	6	3	2	7	1	8	9
9	8	1	6	5	4	7	2	3
7	3	2	1	8	9	5	4	6
8	2	7	4	6	1	3	9	5
4	5	9	7	3	2	6	1	8
1	6	3	5	9	8	4	7	2

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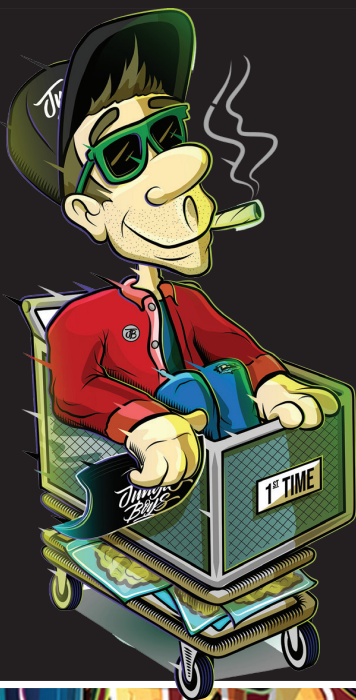
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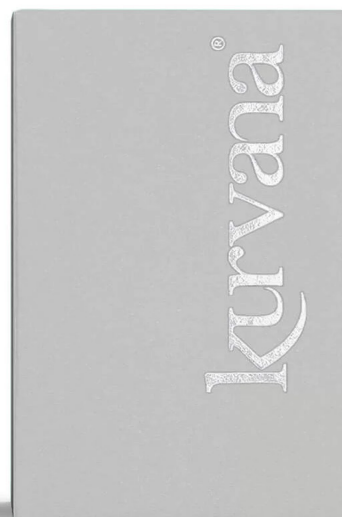


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