

Show Some Gratitude This November

By Cheryl Thode

Happy November, readers! I hope you are enjoying the Fall weather and looking forward to a warm, tasty Thanksgiving meal. While reading, take the time to breathe and reflect on how much you have done, witnessed, and been a part of this past year.

If you are like I am, it sure has been a lot. From your own personal moments, to the events of your family and friends, to the dealings of our nation and world, a lot of changes have taken place this year. It can be overwhelming. However, the month of November provides a reprieve.

November is a wonderful time to reflect on our lives, remember our loved ones, and ultimately practice gratitude for our place in this crazy world. This month truly is a gift. It allows us the grace to pause and see the reality of our situa-

tion. Remember, it was just four years ago, when we were under lockdown and unable to share a meal with our loved ones.

I still find it crazy, the amount of change our city, state, nation, and world were forced to make during the pandemic. However, when I take the time to reflect on the past four years, there is one huge lesson that comes to me, "You cannot take your family, friends, and loved ones for granted." November gives us the opportunity to act out that lesson.

Life is too short to allow division, anger, or stress to affect our interpersonal relationships. November is a time when we, as a nation, can gather together and express gratitude. It is an ideal time to look at our lives and appreciate all the people who are a part of it. What's more, once you start acting

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Gail and Steve Litvack, standing, right, are grateful they can celebrate a bountiful Thanksgiving with their son, Michael, his wife, Cathryn, their children and their extended family of 30 guests.

Music Mends Minds Celebrates 10th Year



Here's a photo from a past 5th Dementia concert. Join them at their 10th anniversary concert on Saturday, December 7 at 2 p.m. at the Brentwood Presbyterian Church.

By Gabriella Sonnhalter

Nestled in the heart of Brentwood, a unique organization is making a difference in the world of music therapy. Music Mends Minds, founded by Carol Rosenstein, is dedicated to showcasing the transformative and healing power of music for individuals with neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's, dementia, and Parkinson's. What started as a local initiative has now grown into a wonderful worldwide movement.

Carol discovered her passion for music therapy after her husband was diagnosed with a neurodegenerative disease. The first time she witnessed the profound impact of music was when he played piano. She saw him light up with both joy and mental clarity.

This personal revelation inspired her to share the healing power of music with others, using it as a

therapeutic tool for those affected by neurological diseases. It has now been ten years since Carol created Music Mends Minds.

"Suddenly the gift of music became something that I could help to fix something that was unfixable," described Carol.

Music Mends Minds started humbly, with 30 people meeting at Windward School in West Los

Angeles. Now, there are chapters all across Los Angeles and the world. This group consists of members from all over the Westside, and calls itself the 5th Dementia. They meet every Thursday for an hourlong rehearsal. About 50% of the group suffers with a neurodegenerative condition. The others are musicians and singers who enjoy playing with them.

This weekly hour offers band members a chance to truly be themselves. Their faces light up as they strum their guitars, sing into the microphone, or play harmonicas. The music fills the room with a kind of vibrancy and emotion that goes beyond the medical diagnoses that many of them face.

"When you lose your voice and the ability to speak clearly, my doctor said singing was the best

thing to do, to keep that. And, it's a fun therapy," said Carol Hicks, one of the original members of the 5th Dementia.

The mission of Music Mends Minds is to harness the power of music to unlock memories, improve mental health, and provide emotional support for individuals and their families. But, beyond that, it fosters joy, connection, and purpose.

"To have a program like this, that really gets to the heart of the matter, is incredible. There are things in all of us that remain, no matter what happens. And music, we're so lucky, is one of them," said Monika White, a local musician who plays in the group's band.

The organization has become a

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Do You Recognize These Neighborhood Celebrities?

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The Caregivers from Right at Home Treat Their Clients Like Family

By Gabriella Sonnhalter
Right at Home is committed to providing the highest quality care for loved ones in need of assistance at home. Whether it is companionship or help with daily tasks, Right at Home ensures that its caregivers are not only well suited for the job, but also a perfect match for clients' needs.

Caregivers at Right at Home are hired through an extensive interview process, beginning with a thorough screening. All caregivers must have legal authorization through the state, ensuring top-quality service.

Tim Petlin, the head of Right at Home's Santa Monica office, was inspired to enter healthcare by his mother, a nurse from a long lineage of nurses. Tim's dedication to the field runs in the family, with two siblings and five nieces working as nurses. Tim pursued the business administration side of healthcare, and has spent 30 years in the field. His passion for ensuring the best care aligns perfectly with Right at Home's important mission.



The staff from Right at Home poses for a photo. From left, Tiffany Butler, Wiley Alexander, Tanika Robinson, Myrene Gomez, and Tim Petlin.

"If we can't place a caregiver that works for us with our own family member, we wouldn't put them with one of our clients," Tim said.

The caregivers at Right at Home are hard-working individuals who put their patients first. They understand the importance of ensuring the best care, which comes easily to them given their drive

to make a difference in their clients' lives.

Currently, Right at Home has 70-80 active caregivers, all from diverse backgrounds, but united by their passion for helping those in need. Tim and his team carefully select each caregiver to ensure they meet the company's high standards.

"Both my wife and I work in



Santa Monica. My daughter goes to school in Santa Monica. There are very few home care companies in Santa Monica," Tim explained. "I could choose to put my office elsewhere, but I chose Santa Monica because I want to be close to our clients. We're really focused on this community and serving it well," he added.

Right at Home offers 24/7 phone support to ensure clients' needs are always met. The tight-knit team at Right at Home is dedicated to creating personalized care experiences for each individual. To learn more, call 310-313-0600, or see the ad below for the best caregivers Santa Monica has to offer.

Urban Environments as Insect Refuges

By Sarah Caso, California Climate Actions Corps Fellow
Though you may not think cities could be oases to insects, they can serve as important biological conservation areas. For invertebrates like bees, the growth of urban environments has led to a diversity of responses. Some bees benefit from increased cavities to nest in, while others become scarce with decreasing soil to nest in.

All, however, benefit from urban gardening and farming. With more than half of the world's population already living in urban environments and bee populations declining worldwide, it has become important to support urban pollinator populations.

Urban gardens are particularly beneficial for bees because they provide a diversity of pollen and nectar resources. There are over 25,000 species of bees in the world, and California hosts 1,600 of them thanks to the variety of



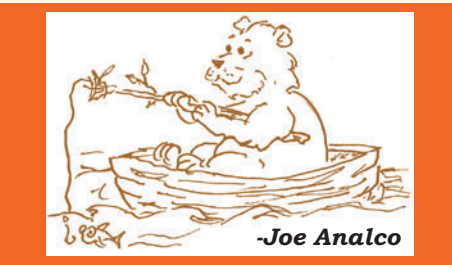
Can you see the bee in this photo?

ecosystems making the state a global biodiversity hotspot.

Santa Monica, like the rest of Southern California, benefits from year-round floral resources which allow bee species to survive almost all year. Urban gardens make floral resources available in the winter for honey bees and bumble bees, which are active for a longer time than other wild bees. Some bumble bee species have queens active as early as February, and as late as November.

Even areas that historically have lacked green space can benefit from adding gardens, if only in balcony flower pots. Studies in Berkeley researching the impact of adding floral resources to cities have found that within one year of planting, a diverse population of bees will have already established itself in the area.

Santa Monica has five community gardens with another at 19th Street in the works. In addition to providing a composting co-op and edible food, these gardens serve as a refuge for urban insects. Information about urban agriculture efforts can be found at SantaMonica.gov.



Happy November Birthdays

to
Monty McCormick, Ron Call, Tammy Andrews, Mike Kallhoff, Patricia Farris, Melissa Dagodag, Andrew Lucier, Andrea Gressinger, Dyllen Andrews, Greg Abrams, Gary Hollander, Wei Chen, Ashli Mason-Johns Shapiro, Frances Bilak, Jay Trisler, Renee Kontos, Brenda Maher, Sydney Croskery, Bill Bubar, Linda Dubow Eifer, Richard Lombari, Tyrone Merriweather, and Kelly Reynolds



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From the Santa Monica Pier Guy

November Sunsets at the Pier



By Jim Harris
The sunsets in November happen early, even before the workday ends for many of us. But this month, they are undeniably the most spectacular sunsets of the entire year, so rich and full of colorful splendor. And, the Pier is one of the best places in the world to enjoy them! If you haven't yet experienced a November sunset at the Pier, I invite you to do so this month. You won't be disappointed.

Speaking of November beauty at the Pier, we kick off this great Autumn month with our fourth annual Dia de los Muertos celebration, and this year's two-day celebration will be bigger and better than ever! Everyone is invited to visit the merry-go-round building to enjoy the captivating traditional ofrendas beginning on November 1st, (but insiders know that they can get a sneak preview while the altars are being built during the days leading up to the first).

Then, on the evening of Friday the First, we celebrate the niños (children) with activities specific to their age group from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. On Saturday, November 2, the bigger celebration takes place beginning with a 5 p.m. blessing at the West end of the Pier and a subsequent parade to the merry-go-round building led by extraordinary Aztec Dancers. Festivities

continue inside and outside of the merry-go-round building for the rest of the night featuring mariachis, Ballet Folklorico performance, a live band, and an artisan market.

I always look forward to these first two days of November at the Pier, and anyone who has ever experienced this incredible event will surely understand why.

But, the November fun and spectacle doesn't end there! I'm sure you're already aware that Cirque du Soleil is in town, right next to the Pier. This year marks the 37th anniversary of their first show here in Santa Monica, and to commemorate that, the Cirque du Soleil team will unveil a retrospective art display on November 11 inside the merry-go-round building, presented in a way that no other art show has been presented before. This will certainly be a "must see!"

Ah, November – known to be a time of harvest, of offering thanks, and of wonderful color. Come experience this wonderful month at the Pier with us.

For more details about all of the Pier's great programming, please visit santamonicapier.org.

Jim Harris is the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Pier Corporation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Pier visitor experience, as well as an accomplished author and playwright.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Incredible YMCA Community



By Araceli Alejandre
As we come up to the close of the year and the season of thankfulness, it is important to pause, reflect, and appreciate the amazing year and key players that have helped us along the way.

Here at the Santa Monica Family YMCA, we are deeply grateful for the countless volunteers who donate their time and talent to support our mission. As a non-profit, charitable organization, the YMCA thrives thanks to the dedication of individuals who offer their unique skills and passions to make a positive impact on our community.

From leading Group Exercise and Water Fitness Classes, to sharing their love for a specific craft or activity, our volunteers' contributions enrich the lives of so many. Volunteers play a critical role in ensuring that our programs continue to support health and well-being goals, foster relationships, and nurture healthy spirits, minds, and bodies.

We also want to acknowledge the generosity of our Board members, who not only guide our vision, but also give generously of their resources to help the Santa Monica Family YMCA.

As we continue to grow, we are always in need of more volunteers. If you're passionate about leading Group Exercise, helping with fundraising efforts, sharing your

passion for art and crafts, supporting Youth Basketball (through scorekeeping or coaching), or leading camp activities at our Overnight Big Bear Camp, we invite you to join our volunteer team.

For those interested in volunteering, please contact Pam Andrews at pam1@ymcasm.org.

Last, but certainly not least – a big thank you to our hard-working staff, to our members and participants for being a vibrant part of our YMCA family. Together, we continue to make a difference in our community. Thank you for helping us drive our mission forward! Stop by for a tour of our Y on 6th St. between Arizona Ave. and Santa Monica Blvd.

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Byte by Byte

Looking Backwards, Forwards, and Outwards: Technology and Gratitude



By Dr. Miceala Shocklee

Over the years, my day to day professional life has narrowed in what kinds of technology I am routinely exposed to. While my undergraduate education at Caltech gave me the privilege of being taught about and utilizing technology across different scientific fields, from geology and physics,

to bioengineering and organic chemistry, my current engagement with technology is increasingly more exclusive to the medical field.

That said, one of the values from my undergraduate education that has resonated with me over the years is the worth of rigorous scientific literacy. Caltech put us through such a broad scientific education in the hopes that we as

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Reflections From The East

When an Iron Lung Boy Met a Quadriplegic Girl



By Qin Sun Stubis

His name is Sandy Golden. He was just nine years old when he got polio, became an iron-lung boy, and almost died. It was the year before Dr. Jonas Salk invented a critical vaccine and changed the world. At the time, the only way to save the gravely ill Sandy was to place his entire little body, with the exception of his head, inside a metal box called an “iron lung,” a negative pressure ventilator, to help him to breathe and to fight for his own life. Under the tender care of his medical team, or perhaps through his own sheer will to live, Sandy survived. For the rest of his life, he would always remember how as a little boy, he spent months in a hospital, lying stiff and paralyzed

inside a metal case, fighting for his tortured breaths, not knowing if he would still be alive the next hour, or the next day. Sandy knew his life was a miracle and wanted to dedicate it to helping people. Eventually, he found his dream job of being an investigative reporter in the Washington, D.C. area. Little did he know that he would soon encounter another life-altering moment through his news reporting. He met her in her hospital room at the Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore right before she was discharged. She was as small and perfect as a baby doll. Her name was Laura Lamb. Only nine months old, she had spent more than half of her life in the hospital. Being a victim of a repeat drunk driving offender, she was now a quadriplegic, paralyzed from her neck down. She would never be able to walk a step in



Sandy Golden went all the way to the White House to start his non-profit, ConcernedAngels.org. her life. It was 1980, and America had yet to wake up to begin the fight against drunk driving. It was an extremely emotional meeting. Sandy saw himself in Laura, unable to move, except that he had been able to recover while she never would. Her mother’s ordinary grocery shopping trip had doomed her for the rest of her life,

simply because someone had too many drinks and happened to be on the road at the same time. Sandy realized it was the moment when he found his calling. His life was spared by polio so he could now use it to fight for children like Laura. Then and there, as he looked at her angelic, innocent face, he made her a promise that he would spend the rest of his life getting drunk drivers off the road so people like her could have a life. He kept his solemn promise. Less than two years after he met Laura, Sandy’s tireless, heroic efforts pushed awareness of this deadly problem to the highest level of our government, resulting in the appointment of the first Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving. For the next 40 some years, he organized grassroot level

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This November, Spread Some Gratitude (Continued from Page 1)

grateful, like a ball rolling downhill, you pick up momentum. Before you know it, you are exuding the spirit of thankfulness! We as a world have been and continue to go through a lot. Rather than taking on this weight, take action to be grateful. Give yourself a break from the inundation of outside events and pervasive negativity. Instead, let’s take part in spreading gratitude. How do you get the gratitude ball rolling? Well, first, make it your goal this month to spend quality time together with your

loved ones, and share family traditions and stories. Whether at a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, or when you are out partaking in daily chores, be present with your loved ones. Second, put aside your differences and instead focus on what you are grateful for in each person you encounter. Third, be thankful. Turn your focus away from the negatives and towards the positives. When you sit down for a meal with your loved ones, ask everyone to share what they are thankful for. Fourth, get out and

volunteer! There are plenty of people who could use your help, time, talent, and treasure. From soup kitchens to donation centers, go out and help. Our city offers so many wonderful opportunities to give to and serve others. If you want a worthy and amazing Thanksgiving cause to participate in, go check out St. Monica Catholic Community’s 45th Thanksgiving Feast. Finally, work together. Whether you’re cooking with your children, decorating your home, watching a football game, celebrating with a

Thanksgiving potluck, working on a project with a coworker, or standing in the checkout line at the grocery store, be present and engage in a positive way with those you encounter. In the end, no matter how you choose to celebrate and enjoy this month, remember that we are all in this together, and that being grateful for one another (especially your family and our community) is an action that we cannot take for granted. God Bless!

Music Mends Minds Celebrates 10th Year (Continued from Page 1)

place of belonging, where music transcends health barriers and brings people together. “They’re lost in space, and the music gives them a common thread to jump on and have fun, knowing that nobody is judging. They can let their hair down,” said Carol. “Many find new identities, and some even find new love,” she added.

Music Mends Minds continues to grow. Carol, along with Executive Director John Kander II, is working to expand the organization and share the healing power of music worldwide. “Music as medicine is not a new concept. It is a proven one. Music Mends Minds, however, is the only organization dedicated to taking it to scale. We are now collaborating

with public sector aging, arts, parks, and health agencies to democratize the medicine of music to establish new groups throughout the community,” explained John. Join the 5th Dementia for their free holiday concert, December 7 at 2 p.m., located at the Brentwood Presbyterian Church on the corner of Bundy and San Vicente Blvd. Experience, firsthand, the

moving impact music has on individuals across the community. Music Mends Minds holds weekly rehearsals, offers virtual Zoom sessions, and hosts a podcast series called Music is Medicine. To learn more, join the organization, or make a donation, visit musicmendsminds.org.

Mini Message

Santa Monica History Museum Presents
Hands-On History • Saturday, December 7, 2-4 p.m.
Bring the family to a free, interactive workshop where creativity and city-building come to life. Participants will design their ideal version of Santa Monica by working with a 14-block model of Santa Monica, featured in the museum’s current exhibition, UnHoused: A History of Housing in Santa Monica. Space limited - RSVP today.
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Clergy Corner

The Opposite of What We Might Expect



By Pastor Lew Upchurch
We know what’s going on in our country and all around the world with natural disasters, wars, and political division, just to name a few.

We read about it. We see it. We stress about it. We pray about it. And, even if we’re not directly in the middle of such things, life can be challenging for us all, to say the least.

That’s why a national day of Thanksgiving is so important. Because it should be a time to pause and thank God for all the ways he has blessed this country of ours, including the freedom we have to worship. Our celebrations should be rather simple. A prayer of thanks with food, family, and friends, maybe even a football game. It should be a day to kind of take a break and reflect on our many blessings, instead of dwelling on what we lack.

But for so many of us, the challenges of life can overshadow what this day should be all about. The

travel and the traffic. The marketing machine that continues to encourage us to use the day to get a head-start on our Christmas shopping. The petty fights and disagreements that can happen when we finally get together.

Before we know it, this day that should be a day to give thanks to God almighty for his providential care becomes the opposite of what we might expect.

But you know what? The opposite of what we might expect is usually God’s way, and that’s actually the greatest blessing we could ever receive. Because even when we fail to acknowledge God’s work in our nation, or in our lives, because we are so focused on ourselves and our problems, he never fails to acknowledge us with his gifts of mercy and love.

This Thanksgiving may we pause, and “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” (Psalm 106).

Pastor Lew Upchurch is the interim minister at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Santa Monica.

Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood

Kim Watson Presents His Book, Trespass



By Stacy McClendon
A former colleague suggested I contact Kim Watson to write an article on his new book, *Trespass*.

Prior to our meeting, I perused Kim’s website. It features many projects that he’s created as a writer, director, photographer, and author, with his new book, *Trespass* being at the forefront. I saw the correlation instantly between what was shared on the site and what I witness in Santa Monica and neighboring communities daily with concern about homelessness.

Upon interviewing Kim, the thought of ‘I am my brother’s keeper came to mind,’ as he shared how this project came to fruition. Kim has always had a heart to help others.

However, COVID provided a unique opportunity for him to do this in a creative way. Studio projects came to a halt, causing Kim to grapple with what he would focus his time on. Then a very unique idea came to mind!

For many years, Kim has always given his time and money to people dealing with the effects of food insecurity and homelessness. He knew these individuals by name, their unique stories, and they knew him.

Whether he met these individuals through organizations, or on the street, it made no difference to him, as the call was the same. They needed assistance. So, he took the time to stop his life and offer what he could.

He then started sharing these stories on his social media account. One of his prior colleagues who had started a boutique literary agency, reached out after reading many of these stories. She told



Author Kim Watson

him she believed he had a book that needed to be published.

Kim never shared these stories with the intention of creating a book. He was just using his gifts to spotlight real issues and stories. He delved deeper, decided to act, and *Trespass* was born!

Kim continued to take poignant and captivating photographs of each unhoused person, while crafting pieces highlighting their stories.

The photograph on the cover of the book seizes your attention, immediately making you want to know more of what’s hidden inside the book’s pages.

Kim is also working on turning this book into a documentary as I type. He also has held numerous book signings and photo exhibitions, and now speaks at universities and businesses to raise awareness.

Kim has shown that he ‘is indeed his brother’s keeper,’ by doing his part to help rectify and change trajectories through his writings and actions. To learn more about *Trespass* and upcoming events, please visit kimwatsonart.net.

Discover What’s Happening on the Westside

By Gigi Appelbaum-Schwartz
• **Sunday, November 3 - Refractions: Contemporary Indigenous Art Opening** - Enjoy the grand opening of this moving collection of contemporary artworks by Native and Indigenous artists connected to Los Angeles, running through May of 2025. Event will take place from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Highway.
• **Wednesday, November 6 - Furoshiki Gift Wrapping Workshop** - Immerse yourself in a hands-on workshop on the Japanese art of sustainable gift wrapping with fabric! Event will take place from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at the Santa Monica Main Library Multipurpose Room, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. Email library@santamonica.gov to register.
• **Saturday, November 9 - Indigenous Culinary Traditions Interactive Lecture** - Join Dr. Claudia Serrato for an interactive lecture exploring indigenous cultural food history, cultural nutrition, and contemporary food movements. Event will take place from 2 p.m.-3 p.m. at the Santa Monica Main Library Multipurpose Room, 601 Santa Monica Blvd.
• **Saturday, November 9 - Weaving Worlds: Artist Trunk Show** - Immerse yourself in a curated showcase of handcrafted goods, textiles, jewelry, and artworks by indigenous artisans and artists. Event will take place from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. at the Fowler Museum at UCLA, 308 Charles E Young Dr N.
• **Saturday, November 9 - Beauty and the Beast Musical Comedy** - Enjoy the 30th anniversary production of this famous musical, suitable for all ages! Event will take place from 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

at the Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 4th Street. Details: santamonicaplayhouse.com.
• **Monday, November 11 - Happy Veterans Day.**
• **Monday, November 11 - National Sundae Day. Yummy!**
• **Wednesday, November 13 - Panel on Self-Publishing** - Learn about the advantages of self-publishing and how to get started from a panel of self-published authors! Event will take place from 6 p.m.-7 p.m. at the Santa Monica Library Pico Branch Annex, 2201 Pico Blvd.
• **Wednesday, November 20 - Thanksgiving Table Centerpiece Workshop** - Learn to create a beautiful floral arrangement using seasonal blooms to elevate your Thanksgiving table! Event will take place from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at XO Bloom, 966 South Westlake Boulevard. Register at bloombackflow.com.
• **Thursday, November 21 - Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony** - Watch Santa light up Santa Monica’s official holiday tree on Third Street Promenade. Enjoy live entertainment, holiday arts and crafts, and more! Event will take place from 6 p.m.- 8 p.m. at 1300 block Third Street Promenade.
• **Sunday, November 24 - Santa Monica Airport Antique Market** - Every 1st and 4th Sunday of the month - an outdoors and dog-friendly antique market with furniture, art, collectibles, vintage clothes, and more. Event will run from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Santa Monica Airport, 2800-3200 Airport Ave. Details:santamonicaairportantiquemarket.com.
• **National Sardines Day**
• **Thursday, November 28 - Have a blessed Thanksgiving Holiday.**

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A Native's View of Santa Monica History

Seen the Totem Pole on Ocean Avenue?



By David Blundell
A totem is a representation of a spirit being, signifying a family crest or emblem of a clan or lineage. Totems occur worldwide to commemorate ancestors and recount familiar legends. In terms of architecture, totems on a post could be used to support a house or lodge, or as an elaborate entrance portal.

From Vancouver Island to Northern California along the coast, totems were carved on poles of red cedar trees. Ranging from two to eighteen meters tall, the carved poles were brightly painted in black, red, blue, blue-green, white, and sometimes included yellow wood. Large totem poles were commissioned for an important person as a memorial to announce a 'pot latch' festival of communal sharing provided by a chief to distribute his possessions to the community.

Totem poles were not worshiped or part of spiritual practice, yet conveyed important meaning. In contrast, a totem pole could be ironically used to shame and ridicule a person deviating from the social norm by depicting frogs sitting on a horizontal post on the top of the pole as a way to publicly observe a person's wrong doings and encourage amends to be made. Once that was done, the shame post would be removed and avoid possible conflict with reconciliation, and to welcome the person back to the social order.

People of the totem lived in peace and perpetuated a memory system. These cultural attributes also could be found among the Tongva people living among us in Southern California.

Today I am writing about a



In Palisades Park on Ocean Avenue, the totem pole depicts a mythical ancestor.

totem pole you could visit in Santa Monica. In 1926, a totem pole was donated to the city by J. Walter. This totem pole is located in Palisades Park at a place known as Inspiration Point where Ocean Avenue begins. It's in a peaceful setting of pine trees and where you can hear the ocean waves crashing on the beach far below the bluff.

When visiting the totem pole, what figures could you find? Is there an eagle, killer whale known as orca, a black bear, or a supernatural human ancestor represented? Or others? Explore unique and ancient meanings in the totem pole of Santa Monica and enjoy with appreciation and gratitude for the diversity of cultures around us.

David Blundell is a native of Santa Monica and an anthropologist active in the field of environmental sustainability in programs at Santa Monica College and UCLA. He offers his courses through the UCLA Extension Program.

When an Iron Lung Boy (Continued from Page 4)

campaigns around the country, becoming a nationally-known speaker, writer, and expert on drunk driving.

Now, Sandy is the president of ConcernedAngels.org, a nonprofit group fighting drunk driving, as well as a sea captain in Southern California. If our world is an unpredictable sea, Sandy wants to be the captain steering his own boat.

As this holiday season approaches, we can all help Captain Sandy fulfill his promise to Laura by not drinking and driving. We can also volunteer to be a designated driver after a holiday party and educate our young people about how to drink responsibly.

For more details, check out the website for ConcernedAngels.org to find out more about this important organization.

You can always reach me at qstubis@gmail.com.



-Joe Analco

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Hosting With Heart

Making an Easy Thanksgiving Dinner



By Maureen Molé
In November, as a host, I start to plan the entertaining components like the guests, menu, and the table setting. One of my favorite

styles for the holiday is to host a potluck dinner by asking the guests to each bring a dish so that all the shopping, cooking, and expense is not all on me.

If you decide to do a potluck dinner, be sure to tell the guests first about bringing a dish before they accept the invitation. You might say that you will make the turkey or main dish, and ask guests to bring an appetizer, vegetable, salad, or dessert. Let them select what they want to bring.

As a guest, I once told a host that I would bring a vegetable dish, and she proceeded to tell me how she wanted it prepared and cooked – not a good idea for hosts to say. Certainly, at a potluck dinner, the host should ask if anyone has special dietary needs, such as being a vegetarian. Then, the host can ask that guest to bring a vegetarian dish.

When planning your menu, another factor to consider is how many dishes will need to be cooked or reheated in your oven. Obviously, you can't realistically have six dishes in your oven at the same time. This also applies to stovetop cooking. If you only have four burners, you can't simultaneously cook six dishes.

So, plan accordingly when discussing the menu with guests. Ask who will be bringing a dish that may need to be heated in the oven or stovetop. Also, please remember to ask the guest beforehand if they will be bringing a serving plate and utensils for their dish or not. It's best if they do which will be less work for you.

At a potluck holiday dinner, since the guests are bringing most of the dishes, you can spend the time setting the table in advance.

Q: What is the most important component that will make your table attractive? **A:** Color. The more color you use, the prettier the table will be. If you use a seasonal centerpiece, please keep it below eye-level, so guests can see each other when talking. Or, you may use tapered or votive candles, always unscented, at the table.

Perhaps use an Autumn-colored wreath as a centerpiece. Also, colorful napkins, mini pumpkins,



The more color on your table, the more appealing the table will be.

gourds, or colorful artificial Autumn leaves will add a nice touch.

I like to use place cards at a sit-down Thanksgiving dinner. It may sound too formal, but then I have more control of who sits next to whom, and that may greatly improve the conversations.

A fun project that I do with my grandchildren is to decorate the place cards with crayons, markers, and glued-on leaves. To make Thanksgiving truly about gratitude, we write another guest's name behind each place card. At dinner, we go around the table and the person on the front of the place card says why they are thankful for the person on the back of the card.

Also, decide in advance where the drinks will be displayed, and have both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Remember, the guests will usually gather where the bar is located, so be sure that area can accommodate the number of guests. Do not display the beverages in the kitchen because it will interfere with the heating and serving of the food.

I always like to be ready 30 minutes before the guests arrive, so I don't feel rushed and I'm ready to welcome them at the door. Then, I will be ready to host a very festive Thanksgiving dinner from the heart.

Maureen Molé is a lecturer, product spokesperson, and the author of The Book of Entertaining at Home. Email any questions or comments to MaureenMole@gmail.com.



-Joe Analco

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Love Links

The Music Will Always Keep Playing for Savi and Josh

By Gigi Appelbaum-Schwartz
Music is unique in its power to connect – bringing people together from all reaches of the world and providing a common ground in which relationships of all kinds can be forged. For Savi and Josh Levy, music forms the foundations of their individual lives, and is the driving force behind their heartfelt, longstanding romance.

The pair met in 2017 while working on a cabaret show together, and their relationship took a turn for the romantic after a year and a half of friendship. The producer of the cabaret now calls himself “cupid” – a testament to the strength of the community that surrounds them, and the joyful support it provides.

The music community is one that both Savi and Josh have been a part of for the majority of their lives. Both grew up in California – Savi in Mt. Shasta and Josh in Pasadena – before pursuing music in college at Cal State Northridge and USC, respectively. Now, jazz has become an integral part of each of their professional careers.

Josh, working as a pianist, arranger, and music director, has toured with the swing band Big Bad Voodoo Daddy for 28 years. Savi, similarly, leads her own jazz and swing band, Savi & the Hot Toddies. For the past 25 years, she has been performing and



Savi and Josh are about to exchange their wedding vows at the celebration in their home.

recording as a professional vocalist specializing in jazz, pop, and classical music.

When on a vacation from their musical professions in Hawaii, Josh and Savi’s relationship took another significant turn. Hiking down through the rainforest of the Kilauea volcano, the pair stopped to rest at the edge of its caldera. As she watched Josh reach into his bag, Savi was expecting to be handed water and a snack, but was taken by surprise when instead, he gave her a ring box and an incredibly romantic speech.

On June 29, 2024, the pair were married back home in Glendale. The beautiful ceremony was heightened by a special tree watering, carried out by the couple and Josh’s two sons to symbolize the roots and branches of their family. Confetti cannons, delicious food, and heartfelt speeches abounded, and the significance of the music community in their lives came into play once more as talented friends and family members gave personalized musical performances.

Savi and Josh’s love is beyond inspirational, and we wish them the absolute best as they venture into the rest of their lives together. We know that whatever they do, music will always surround them and form a soundtrack to their lasting love.



Josh and Savi getting ready to celebrate their nuptials.

Photos by Richard Williams

The Magic of Travel With Tanya

New Zealand: Worth the Detour



Enjoy breathtaking views along the Abel Tasman Coastal Walk. Soak in the golden beaches, turquoise waters, and lush forests of New Zealand’s famed trail.



By Tanya Gilbert

If you feel like I do, that Summer slipped by too quickly, it’s time to hit the reset button and head to

New Zealand, where Spring is in full bloom. Ideal for solo travelers, couples, friends, or families, New Zealand offers a perfect blend of food, wine, culture, and adventure. And, don’t let the 13-hour flight from Los Angeles deter you – this journey is well worth it.

While New Zealand’s natural beauty is renowned, its wine and food scene are equally impressive. Introduced by Croatian immigrants in the 19th century, New Zealand wines now rival the world’s finest. Here are a few must-visit spots that will make your trip unforgettable.

Start with a scenic sail from Auckland to Waiheke Island, where wine meets ocean views. Man O’ War winery, a hidden gem, offers the perfect spot for a relaxed lunch. In the North Island,

be sure to visit the geothermal wonders and rainforests of the Central Plateau. Stay at the iconic Huka Lodge or immerse yourself in Maori traditions with a unique culinary journey at Kai Waho, where wilderness and culture blend beautifully.

Hawke’s Bay offers the ultimate vineyard cycling experience. The Mata Estate is an ideal spot for a long, leisurely lunch, where you can enjoy world-class wines in a laid-back setting under the sun.

On the South Island, Split Apple offers a luxurious retreat, restaurant, and cooking school. Central Otago’s rugged beauty pairs perfectly with its award-winning wines, such as those from Valli and Amisfield wineries.

Whether you’re hiking, paddling, or indulging in wine and food, New Zealand is more than a destination – it’s a sensory experience that will leave you rejuvenated and hungry for more.

Contact me at Tanya@MariposaTravelAdvisors.com to curate a seamless personalized journey.

Looking Backwards (Continued from Page 3)

future professionals would be able to continue to have conversations with folks throughout the scientific landscape, no matter their specialty.

While the medical field I’ve chosen is one that demands a fairly broad base of knowledge itself, I strive to continue incorporating at least microdoses of novel science into my life. While social media is very much a double-edged sword, I greatly value the ability it gives me to follow and learn from sources of new (to me) science like astronaut Kellie Gerardi, science educator Dr. Harini Bhat, and, of course, research behemoths themselves like NASA.

I value even more the opportunities I have to see science from my own friends and colleagues make it to the public stage, such as Dr. Brett Gardner’s conservation medicine and The H.O.P.E. Research

Lab’s environmental pollutant studies. I’m also grateful to see institutional monoliths taking a step forward towards more general accessibility, such as the New England Journal of Medicine’s recent collaboration with Dr. “DocGlauc” Glaucomfleckin to turn what can be incredibly esoteric research papers accessible into comedy skits.

It gives me hope that rather than falling further behind paywalls and the often literal walls of academia, the technology that more and more people around the globe carry with them in their pocket will make the full breadth of science available on an everyday, easily at hand basis.

Dr. Miceala Shocklee is a part-time freelance writer and editor and a full-time staff veterinarian with SeaWorld Abu Dhabi Yas Island in the United Arab Emirates.

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Community Service on the Westside

Learning About Local Trees



By Kingsley Fife
We Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions enjoy some very enjoyable, informative programs every month at our dinner meetings.

Our recent program was especially interesting. We had Robert Castaneda and Madeline Rauhe from the Santa Monica City Urban Forest Department, officially known as the Public Landscape Department. Their efforts are why Santa Monica is such a beautiful city with landmark trees and colorful landscaping.

But, it takes a lot of work and concentrated effort to accomplish this. At our meeting, we learned what all this entails. One of the most popular trees in Santa Monica is the ficus. This is because it has a dense canopy, its ability to thrive in many soils, and minimal maintenance. Recently, however, an outbreak has started to occur

in the ficus caused by a fungus called Branch Dieback.

It starts with leaf thinning and browning, and then the death of the branch. The treatment is quickly cutting the affected branch before it spreads, and treatment with a special fungicide.

Another popular tree in the city is the eucalyptus with its massive height and spectacular grandeur. Here again, the Department is being challenged. Recently an Australian Leaf Beetle has invaded the area and is raising havoc. The beetles feed on the leaves, completely consuming them, leading to significant defoliation and tree death. The treatment is a quick diagnosis and a specific insecticide.

When you're driving around the city enjoying the beautiful trees and foliage, remember all the effort it takes to keep our city beautiful.

Learn more about Lionism by being our guest at one of our dinner meetings. Call me at 310-454-2960, or try jkfife88@yahoo.com.



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An Update From the SMBWC



By Patricia Webber
As a part of the Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club (SMBWC), members of the Club, in conjunction with the

Santa Monica Travel & Tourism Bureau, collect new socks during the month of October. The project is known as "Socktober." These are to be distributed to various homeless shelters. Last year, our members donated 442 pairs of socks! By the time this issue of *The Santa Monica Star* is printed, we hope to surpass that goal.

Another of our ongoing projects is "Pennies for Pines." Members are encouraged to donate cash at our monthly Pass-the-Dish events, or when they stop by the Club. Our goal for this year is to collect

enough to plant 20 acres of new trees in the Northern California burn areas.

Throughout our history, the SMBWC has committed to supporting issues pertaining to, and of importance to women. We are proud to build on that through the GFWC (General Federation of Woman's Clubs) through their signature program of supporting women and victims of sexual and domestic violence. Members of the GFWC attended an event at the White House to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act.

Participation in ongoing SMBWC activities continues to grow. We play Canasta, Bridge, and Mah Jong every Monday afternoon. Every Tuesday morning there is Arts, Crafts and Conversation. Interest has been expressed to

(Continued on Page 11)

Do You Recognize These Neighborhood Celebrities?

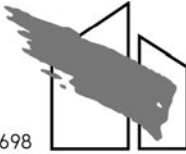
(Continued from Page 1)



At the popular Bob's Market in Ocean Park, you will most likely greet Store Manager Juana Meyer, left; Bob's grandson Kevin Milkis in the parking lot; or Assistant Manager Luis Cavez. You can also take a ride on Frisky, the mechanical horse, or enjoy your freshly-made sandwich sitting on one of the welcoming benches on the parking lot.

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Paws and Claws

Keep Pets Away From Chocolate



By Dr. Frank Lavac, MS, DVM
Q: My Lab loves sweets. I am concerned that he might access chocolate during the holiday season. What do I do if he eats chocolate?

A: Chocolate ingestion can be very serious, leading to vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, seizures, heart abnormalities or, in rare circumstances, death.

Adopt a Pet



Abby is a four-year-old bull terrier (like the Target dog). She's deaf, but it doesn't slow her down. She is a medium-energy dog who would love a family with other calm dogs. Please contact jill@outtathecage.org.

Dark chocolate can cause more serious signs than milk chocolate. In some cases, no treatment is indicated, but you should take guidance from your veterinarian. One of the main concerns is identifying that your dog actually ate chocolate. Try to determine the approximate time of ingestion, the kind of chocolate, and the volume of chocolate. Collect all wrappers, boxes, etc, that helps identify the kind of chocolate and an estimate of the amount ingested. Call your local veterinary hospital or ER. You can also contact the ASPCA National Animal Poison Control at 888-426-4435, 24/7. If necessary, induction of vomiting, and/or using activated charcoal to help neutralize the chocolate is indicated. Further treatment may be indicated, depending on the signs and the kind of chocolate eaten. Treatments include IV catheter, fluids, sedation, and close monitoring of the heart. Of course, store chocolate in cabinets far away from your dog's access. You can also get a general idea about the potential for toxicity from the website vetcalculator.com. Additionally, VeterinaryPartner.com has an excellent treatise on chocolate toxicity.

If you have any questions, you can contact Dr. Lavac at 310-828-4587.

Thoughts From a Second-Time Father

The Fun of Going to an All-Inclusive Resort



By Michael Margolin
Making memories is certainly a big part of growing up, as well as something parents strive to do for their children. Encouraging your children to try new things and to go to new places is a special part of being a parent. Recently, Enojli and I had the opportunity to take Alexa and Jake to Cancun, Mexico.


A friend of mine was getting married there and invited the four of us to join in the festivities. The wedding took place at an enormous resort there which was, of course, all-inclusive. In case you are not familiar with the all-inclusive resorts, it is pretty much as the name implies. At least when it comes to food and drink. Aside from the other fun things we did, we ordered room service...a lot. Alexa is 11 and Jake is eight. They are well-behaved, good students, and are good to their parents.

I really had no issue with them having whatever they wanted and however much they wanted of it, for any meal of the day. There was at least one morning where Jake had an ice cream cone as an appetizer before breakfast. Because...it was our vacation! Of course, the belly stuffing and room service ordering simply because we could was not all we enjoyed. We were able to take the kids to an Italian restaurant on site which was a little fancier than what they are used to. The first day we were there, we enjoyed hanging out by the pool with some other wedding-goers until light rain turned into a monsoon, and more or less blew

us all off the pool deck. The weather never really fully cooperated the whole time we were there, but we had a marvelous time, nonetheless. As a parent, I have tried never to promise anything that might not come to fruition. When Alexa was much younger, I told her we were going to see a snow leopard at the Santa Barbara Zoo, and boy, was she excited! But, sometimes exhibits are closed at zoos when you arrive. So, when I told the kids we were going to swim with dolphins in Mexico, I tried to emphasize it was something we were hoping to do. Thankfully, we were able to swim with the always-smiling mammals. It was a great experience to be able to watch the kids get pulled along in the water by the dolphin and to have it rest in their arms to feel its muscles, and to listen to it breathe. After a trip to a water park that was on the resort property as well as multiple trips to the arcade – still all-inclusive – it was time for the wedding. The wedding was planned to take place on the beach, until Mother Nature got more involved. Instead of what would feel like sitting in a shower, the wedding was moved inside, out of the rain, thunder, and lightning. My kids always look for an excuse to dance, and a wedding is definitely a great place to do that. So for us, happily and thankfully, more wonderful memories were made as well as for the bride and groom, y felicidades a Mary y Ralph!

Mike Margolin has been writing for us since his daughter Alexa was born 11 years ago. He is an avid sports fan.

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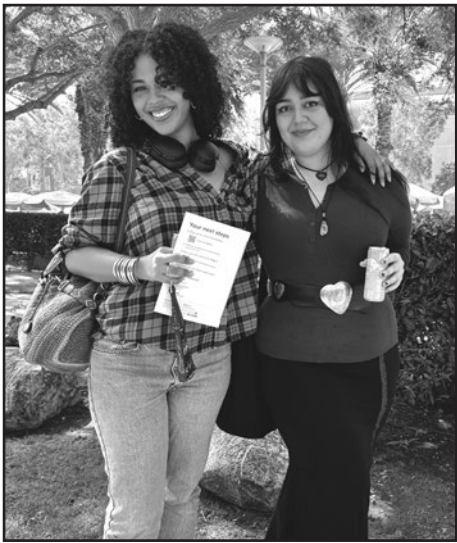
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Following Autumn Fashion Trends

By Angelina Galvan
The colors of the leaves are changing, and so can our wardrobes. With Fall fashion, you can experiment with something new. While it may not feel like Fall yet, there is fashionable attire available that is versatile year round. Some of the colors worn this season are within the confines of a neutral warm palette. This Fall, chocolate brown is the trending color. Here are some Fall trends seen at a recent Santa Monica College fair.

Rayvn McCarter was wearing a cool blue flannel. Her friend Gianna Gasparyan, chose a chocolate brown top with a long black skirt and white boots. "We have been seeing a lot of sportswear year round, especially for the heat. I also have seen knee-high boots and funky tights," described Rayvn. "I have also seen a lot of sportswear being worn frequently," added Gianna. This year has been a time for patterns to make a comeback. We have seen cheetah and leopard prints have their moment to shine, but as the seasons change, so do trends. Moving from patterns to fabric, the use of suede has been produced in bags, shoes, and



SMC students Rayvn McCarter, left, and Gianna Gasparyan

coats. This fabric is perfect for Fall as it embodies a cozy, yet luxurious feel. How to wear it: When it comes to the occasion, Fall fashion is versatile. It can be dressed up for a formal event or dressed down for a casual outing. To stay sustainable this Fall, invest in timeless pieces. As trends have come and gone, a few staples seem never to go away. Coats, cardigans, and a staple black boot all become part of Fall fashion. What are you looking forward to wearing this season?

Planning Ahead

Reporting Law May Apply to You



By Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.

The Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) requires federal reporting of ownership interests in small companies. Companies that must report are all entities formed by registration with the Secretary of State (or similar state office in another state.) This includes Limited Partnerships, Limited Liability Partnerships, Corporations, including “S Corps,” and Limited Liability Companies. It does not include sole proprietorships. Large operating companies with more than 20 full-time U.S. employees and other large companies are exempt.

CTA is intended to make it harder for bad actors to hide money using shell companies. But, the law is so broad that many owners of small businesses or income-producing properties, just like you, will also have to report.

If you own an apartment building in a Limited Partnership or LLC, or own a business as an S-Corp, or have partners in a professional practice that is a Limited Liability Partnership, CTA reporting probably applies to you. If CTA

applies, the company’s “beneficial owners” are required to submit their names, dates of birth, street address, and a form of identity that can be a U.S. Passport, Driver’s License, or other government-issued ID Card. Beneficial owners are defined as individuals who directly or indirectly own or control at least 25% of the ownership interests of the company, or any individual who exercises substantial control over the company.

CTA was signed into law in 2021. The reporting requirements started to kick in this year in 2024 for new entities. For all affected companies formed before 2024, the initial reporting is due on January 1, 2025, just two months away. Unfortunately, many people are not aware of this sweeping law.

Required information must be reported to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). For more information, FinCEN has a Small Entity Compliance Guide available at www.fincen.gov/boi/small-business-resources.

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An Update From ERBA Markets

New Hemp Regulations Need to Show More Concern for Those With Medical Conditions



By Stephen Freedman

On September 6, Governor Newsom and the California Department of Public Health issued an emergency order banning all hemp products with any “detectable quantity of THC” after a bill to regulate the hemp industry failed in the state legislature. This means that retailers can no longer sell products made with hemp THC, which includes nonpsychoactive CBD products, to California customers. This decision, which is in effect from September 23, 2024 through March 25, 2025, has caused a great deal of controversy as well as a pending lawsuit.

Governor Newsom’s impetus for this order is a response to numerous nefarious players in an unregulated industry – those who target young children with THC products like drinks and gummies. These hemp products are widely available at liquor stores, gas stations, and smoke shops. While the intentions are genuine, the ramifications may be detrimental.

While most will agree some

regulation of the hemp market is needed, this order is extremely broad, and cuts off a lifeline to individuals suffering from a litany of medical conditions, including California’s large veteran population, and those children who depend on CBD to manage pain, inflammation, and seizures. It also throws the CBD industry, which is made up of mostly small business owners, into an unknown future in this state.

What is also troubling is there is a precedent for regulation – the recreational/medical cannabis space. This industry is heavily regulated, both in terms of testing and tracking, but also regarding who can enter a shop and purchase. To ignore a standard that is already in place and pass an order with no nuance is troubling and dangerous. Hopefully, the massive blowback from this knee-jerk order will force Sacramento into some beneficial regulation that will protect the vulnerable while helping those who rely on these products.

Stephen Freedman is the Regional Manager of the ERBA Markets, the WOODS, West LA, Venice, Culver City, and WeHo.

Making Holiday Memories



Gina from the Assistance League invites you to do your holiday shopping at their thrift shop.



Hodge is showing us what he was thankful for at age three with the turkey on the wall in his home.

An Update (Continued from Page 9)

initiate a walking group, and monthly Pass-the-Dish get-togethers remain hugely popular. Anyone wanting to join, or to rent the Club for holiday parties,

or just to visit, go to our website SMBWC.org, or call the Club during weekday mornings at 310-395-1308.



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