

Put Pop Into Your Halloween Celebrations!



Green Halloween Zombies



Popcorn Caramel Apples



Witchy Popcorn Balls

Family Features - From watching scary movies to dressing up as ghouls and goblins, the spooky season means it's time to pop up your favorite snacks for a ghostly good time. Throughout October, you can honor National Popcorn Poppin' Month with eerie, delicious eats like Green Halloween Zombies, Witchy Popcorn Balls, and Popcorn Caramel Apples that add festive fun to the Halloween excitement.

As a perfect ingredient in treats of all types, popcorn is beloved for its seed-to-snack simplicity as a non-GMO, vegan, gluten-free, sugar-free snack that's naturally low in fat and calories. Find more Halloween treats and amazing recipes at popcorn.org.

Witchy Popcorn Balls

Yield: 8 popcorn balls
16 chocolate wafer cookies
nonstick cooking spray
3 quarts popped popcorn
4 Tbsps. (1/2 stick) butter or margarine
3 cups miniature marshmallows
3 Tbsps. (1/2 of 3-ounce box) lime gelatin dessert mix
Green food color (optional)
3/4 cup chocolate chips
Licorice strings
8 chocolate ice cream cones
Orange sugar sprinkles, placed in small dish
Jelly beans and candy corn
• Spread sheet of waxed or parchment paper over work surface and place wafer cookies on it.
• Spray large mixing bowl with nonstick cooking spray and place

popcorn inside. In medium saucepan over low heat, melt butter. Stir in marshmallows and gelatin powder until marshmallows are melted and mixture is smooth. Adjust color with 1-2 drops food color, if desired. Pour mixture over popcorn and mix until coated.

- Spray hands with nonstick cooking spray and press firmly to form into eight balls. Place balls on eight wafer cookies. Press candy decorations into popcorn balls to form eyes, nose, and mouth.
- In a small, microwave-safe bowl, heat chocolate chips, covered, 10 seconds. Stir to aid melting. Repeat as needed until chocolate is melted and smooth.
- Spoon about 1/2 teaspoon melted chocolate on top of each popcorn ball. Press licorice strings into chocolate to form hair.
- Dip cone edges into melted chocolate, and then orange sugar sprinkles. Place on remaining wafer cookies to form witches' hats. Place hats on popcorn balls. Allow chocolate to set about 45 minutes before serving.
- Serve or seal individually in plastic wrap.

Green Halloween Zombies

Yield: about 7 pieces
2-1/2 quarts popped popcorn
6 Tbsps. butter or margarine
3 cups mini marshmallows
4 Tbsps. lime gelatin powder
Red gum balls, candy corn, flat green candy strips or fruit leather, Green sugar sprinkles
• Place popcorn in large bowl;
(Continued on Page 12)



Use this season to take your family to explore the mountains and forests around us. We encourage kids to make drawings of the wild birds they see and send them to be in our next issue. Details on Page 8 and 13.

Roosevelt Elementary School Welcomes New Principal Dr. Amy Onyendu

Dr. Amy Onyendu comes to the Santa Monica-Malibu School District (SMMUSD) with more than 14 years of experience, recently serving as the director of admissions and attendance, and assistant principal for Palisades Charter High School.

Dr. Onyendu is known as a visionary, servant leader dedicated to student achievement and success. She brings an innate ability to using communications skills to promote meaningful and effective relationships with students, staff, and parents. As an educational leader, her goal has always been to create equitable, academically engaging learning experiences through an environment that fosters curiosity, risk-taking, and collaboration.

Prior to her two-and-a-half years with Palisades High, she served in various positions at schools in Mesquite, Texas. These positions included middle school honors English language arts teacher, At-Risk Student Success Coordinator for a high school, and assistant principal/academic dean for a middle school.

Dr. Onyendu also served as lecturer for the College of Education at Western State Colorado University, where she prepared and delivered lectures and course materials to undergrad and grad

(Continued on Page 6)

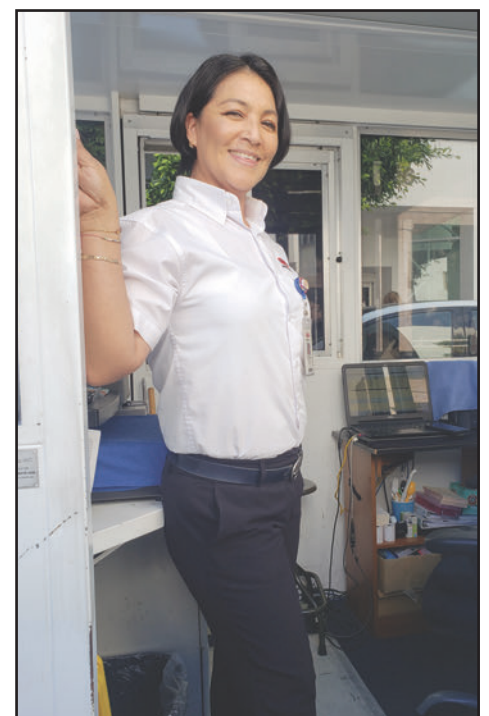


Dr. Amy Onyendu is now principal at Roosevelt Elementary School.

Photo by Lisa Tursi

Do You Recognize This Neighborhood Celebrity?

(Answer on Page 4)



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Preserve Your Brain Health

How Cognitive Reserve Protects You From Cognitive Decline



By Jennifer Bramen, PhD

Cognitive reserve is an important part of the brain's defense mechanism. It helps you stay mentally capable

by acting as a buffer between your functional abilities and biology.

This is important because as you age, your brain naturally goes through changes that can sometimes cause problems with memory, thinking, and problem-solving. Additionally, some people may develop neurodegenerative diseases, such as mild cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease, or related dementias.

Cognitive reserve protects you from losing your mental capacities through two general pathways. The first of these involves physically delaying the effects of brain aging and pathology. The second involves developing compensatory skills to preserve your outward abilities in the presence of biological changes.

By keeping your body healthy, brain active, and organizational systems maintained throughout

life, you can build up cognitive reserve and shield yourselves from cognitive decline.

How do you build cognitive reserve?

1. Intellectual Stimulation

Learning new things is essential. It's easy to stick to what you already do well, but the old saying holds true: Use it or lose it. Maintaining brain cells is energetically expensive, and your brain is efficient. It maintains the parts of the brain that you use. Don't know where to start? Try reading a book, playing a new game, or developing your organizational skills.

2. Physical Wellness

Consistent exercise, proper nutrition, and quality sleep are essential for preserving brain health. First, regular exercise, such as brisk walking, jogging, or cycling, has been linked to better cognitive function and a lower risk of cognitive decline. Aim for at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week, along with two sessions of strength training.

Secondly, maintain a well-balanced diet rich in fiber and healthy fats. This can help optimize brain health and manage

cardiovascular and diabetic risk factors, which are essential for your brain's well-being.

Lastly, ensure you get enough quality sleep. During sleep, your brain processes information, clears out waste, and restores energy. Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep per night to support optimal brain function.

3. Social Engagement

Social engagement plays a significant role in maintaining cognitive reserve. Examples include regular social interactions such as involvement in community organizations aligned with personal interests, and participating in group exercise classes. The key is in selecting activities that motivate you, and then integrating them into your daily life. Conversely, social isolation increases the risk of cognitive impairment.

4. Cognitive Education

To achieve optimal outcomes, consider professional support. A great way to gain intellectual stimulation, develop compensatory skills, adopt brain-healthy habits, and participate in a socially stimulating activity is through a cognitive education program. If you are

curious, consider contacting Dr. Karen Miller, Senior Director of the Brain Wellness & Lifestyle Program at Pacific Neuroscience Institute in Santa Monica. She can assess your cognitive concerns, create a custom plan to improve your brain health and to prevent further decline.

Understanding cognitive reserve empowers you to protect your mental abilities. Take small steps daily.

Jennifer Bramen, PhD, is a clinical neuroscientist with a specialization in neuroimaging. As a Senior Research Scientist at the Pacific Brain Health Center in the Pacific Neuroscience Institute, she is passionate about translating innovative research into real clinical practice. She is focused on lifestyle change interventions and developing innovative neuroimaging outcomes for dementia care and research. PacificBrainHealth.org/213-566-1270.

Santa Monica Breakfast Club Provides Dental Care to Local Students

Perhaps you have thought about becoming part of a club that provides a special service to children in our community? But, you have a fairly busy schedule so you wondered how often the meetings are held.

The Santa Monica Breakfast Club (SMBC) hosted a welcoming Coffee & Cookies meeting last month at a member's home in Santa Monica. Over 20 local women attended the event to learn more about the important mission of the Club.

The SMBC is dedicated to ensuring that children in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District receive necessary dental care when their guardians are unable to pay. The Club's motto is "Change lives – one child at a time."



Members work with students from the UCLA School of Dentistry to create fun presentations about dental care for first graders in Santa Monica schools. They also create kits for dental hygiene.

Once a year, the Club holds their Mad Hatter Tea Party fundraiser. Each member participates in this fun afternoon event.

(Continued on Page 6)



Leila Brown demonstrates how members show young children the proper way to brush their teeth.



Happy October Birthdays

Rudy Alvarez, Bill Buxton, Bret Carter, Martin Gottlieb, David Bohn, Micki Katz, Barbara Carson, Joseph Fitzsimmons, Liam Kane, Anne Megowan, George Collins, Char Lawrence, Gee Shin Lee, Janie Gates, Paul Leoni, Hal Quigley, Bill Wood, Allan Young, Cathy Davis, Howard Beckerman, Tom Loo, Harmon Sieff, Gerry Munck, Britani Flores, Claudia Wood, Carol David, Jonathan Weaver, John Klopping, Nate Foy, Kayleen Nightingale, Evie Harb, Bill Singley, Diane Margolin, Joe Analco, Bill Edwards, D'Lynn Waldron, Greg Hargrave, Arnie Levee, and Robert Powers



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From the Santa Monica History Museum



The Junior Chamber War Bond and Stamp Sales Rally - Members of the Santa Monica Junior Chamber of Commerce who participated in a July, 1942 Victory House war bond and stamp sale were those pictured above with Barbara Stanwyck and Patti McCarthy. Junior Chamber sales totaled \$222,832. Standing behind the microphone is Ed Thompson, master of ceremonies, and standing between Miss Stanwyck and Miss McCarthy is Frank Wire, president of the sponsoring organization. No.3.2.6582 Bill Beebe Collection, 1942. Contact the Santa Monica History Museum by calling 310-395-2290 for more information about their historic photo collection.

From Me to You...



By Diane Margolin

Recently, I decided to attend a Zoom meeting of the North of Montana Avenue (NOMA) residents.

I was interested in what the speakers would share. One was Lindsay Call, who is the Chief Resilience Officer in Santa Monica's Emergency Management Office. She shared so much valuable information. Many of you may remember the need to make an earthquake preparedness kit and to have plans with your family as what to do if you can't reach each other. Many of us are so busy, this task may be put aside until it is too late.

One point that people may not realize is that when one of those quakes seriously shakes us up again it could take three days or more for help to reach us. We have to learn to reach out to be sure our neighbors are okay and to help each other until first responders come to us.

When I was managing a 24-unit apartment building several years ago, I was also consulting in the

Crime Prevention unit of the Santa Monica Police Department.

We were often concerned with presenting emergency safety tips to our community members. We also worked with the Red Cross staff who would go into businesses to help people figure out what to do if they were in their offices when a quake hit.

The building I lived in was shaped like a U. We had a wonderful patio that was in the middle. So we got to know our neighbors more than you do in most apartment buildings. Many of us are still good friends.

Periodically, I would hold meetings with the adults who had special jobs to do in case something happened like turning off the gas, or the water, and the wonderful children who also had jobs. They were well-prepared. It was a comfort for me to know that. We were like a family.

Please see Cheryl Thode's column on Page 4. She happened to write about being prepared for emergencies in your home, and she has many suggestions that we all can use. But, if you live in an apartment, be sure to talk to your family and neighbors about having an emergency plan in place.

The Real Estate Advisor

Sellers Are Wise to Have Their Homes Inspected



By Richard Lombari

While it is customary for home buyers to order a home inspection, I also recommend homeowners get their home

inspected before putting it on the market to minimize buyer concerns and receive higher purchase offers that are more likely to get to the closing table.

The loss of a qualified buyer due to an issue that could have been resolved prior to putting the home on the market can cost time that could plant doubt in the minds of future buyers. In today's quickly moving market, a home that falls out of escrow and has days or weeks ticking away will encourage lower offers.

People crave certainty, especially when it comes to major expenditures. Sellers can ease fear and uncertainty by providing as much information up front as possible. When a faulty item is discovered versus disclosed, buyers start to wonder what else the seller is concealing.

Hiring a home inspector prior to raising the for sale sign allows home owners to properly disclose, repair, or mitigate issues before

seeds of doubt are planted in buyers' minds. I've witnessed buyers that saw a cracked floor tile spiral into thoughts of tens of thousands of dollars of foundation repairs. Buyers consistently estimate that repairs will be much higher than reality and even if moving forward, will justify a much lower offer, or enter post-inspection repair negotiations based on their inflated perceived repair costs.

Even a long list of very minor items can overwhelm and immobilize buyers. A few hours by a skilled handyperson can eliminate buyer distractions and price reduction justification. If the seller's inspection identifies larger items that they don't have time, finances, or desire to repair, repair estimates can help buyers with realistic repair cost expectations.

With a recently completed seller-provided home inspection, home buyers can move past their concerns and submit offers that get to the closing table.

Richard Lombari has been in real estate sales for over three decades. Richard is an author, speaker, coach, and trainer. To learn more about Richard visit <https://lombariestatewealthadvisors.com/about>, email Richard@TheLombariGroup.com, or call Richard at 310-903-6509.

Santa Monica Public Library Presents Horror Book Tasting

The Santa Monica Public Library invites the community to find their next favorite horror book. Select up to nine books curated from some of our favorite horror subgenres and find your next spooky read. The Library will host a Horror Book Tasting event at the Main Library, Multipurpose Room,

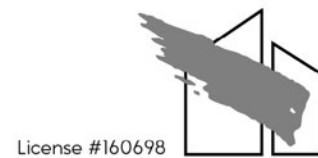
601 Santa Monica Blvd. on Thursday, October 12 from 6 p.m.-7 p.m.

The Library will provide five handcrafted menus with a curated selection of titles from some of horror's best subgenres. From gothic and gore, to cosmic and

(Continued on Page 11)

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Reflections From The East

Whimsical Thoughts Trigger Memories of Fall



By Qin Sun Stubis

Our world is challenging because it is full of things that constantly change, from the weather to the seasons,

and from governments to stock markets. Even our bodies and minds continue to progress and regress with time, touching us with uncertainty.

As we grow from childhood to adulthood, and then to what you might call elderhood, we witness the world around us transforming at the same time we ourselves are going through the stages of human morphism from helpless, babbling infants to full-grown, confident, sometimes overconfi-

dent, caretakers of ourselves and those around us.

In some ways, the success of our lives may very well depend on our adaptability to things and events happening mostly beyond our control. How we fight, embrace, and cope with the changes both inside and outside of us will either strengthen or destroy us.

People like me and those in my childhood family who went through a turbulent era, compounded by war, revolution, and natural disasters, have often found our lives pockmarked by starvation, persecution, shame, and abandonment. But, we also wear badges of love, tenacity, bravery, and determination.

As I grow older and stronger and am able to look back at that

difficult period of time in my life, I find myself seeking solace in happy memories to counter the pain, both being surprisingly bountiful.

I have realized how many of my memorable moments were anchored around the stable forces of my life: my mother, father, and three little sisters. The stronghold of my existence was no other than our small, bare house, for it was our refuge and sanctuary. And, I am thankful for the companionship of my many dear friends – the chickens my mother raised for food, which I fiercely defended as my confidants.

I was also surprised by how much Mother Nature helped me with her rhythmic cycles, instilling within me a sense of predictability

and hope. When life became too hard, I found myself wanting some hint of change, even if it were only the seasons turning from Spring to Summer, Autumn to Winter. As I witnessed time going by, I knew the world was moving forward, giving me hope for better days ahead.

The arrival of this Autumn season reminds me how much I loved the changing leaves of the sycamore trees lining the streets of the old French Quarter in Shanghai. During the Fall, they rustled when touched by cool gusts of wind – music to my ears – and displayed an explosive array of colors from green to yellow and mahogany brown, accompanying and comforting the lonely me to and from school every day.

(Continued on Page 6)

Is Your Family Prepared for a Quake?



By Cheryl Thode

Happy Fall! As the leaves change colors, the temperatures drop, and the days get shorter, we are fast approaching the start of our *holiday* season.

Now that I have children, holiday decorations have taken on a whole new meaning. As my family begins to dig through and put up the decorations for Halloween, then Thanksgiving, and ultimately Christmas, I have found that this lull before the holidays is also, believe it or not, a good time to review our emergency plans and kits.

This year, I am focusing on my family's preparedness for a possible earthquake. As a native Southern Californian, I am always thinking about the possibility of an earthquake. After living through the destructive 1994 earthquake, I know that earthquakes, while unpreventable, can be made less devastating with the right preparation. We all would benefit by having some plan in place should the *Big One* hit.

So, what are some good starting

points? First and foremost, families need to create an earthquake emergency plan. This plan should include an evacuation plan and common meeting location. To start, look around your house and locate safe spots within and outside of your home. Specifically, identify and discuss the safest place to go in your home during an earthquake.

According to the California Earthquake Authority (CEA), typically, the safest place is an interior room of your house without any windows, such as a bathroom or closet. If possible, during the event, you should plan to take cover under something sturdy, like a heavy table.

Second, if you have school-age children, learn about your child's school or daycare disaster plans, procedures for evacuation, notification protocol, and if there is an alternate pick-up location. Along with this, confirm that your children's caretaker has your current contact information.

Third, pick an out-of-area contact for your family to contact as a point person in the event of an emergency. Also, remind your family members that in an emer-

gency, text messages are more likely to get through than a voice call.

Fourth, confirm that your children know your family's basic contact information. They need to be able to identify themselves and get help should they ever get separated from you. Information like your home or cell phone number, how to dial 911, the family's meet up location, and any out-of-town family contact is critical to know. You may want to also create a go kit for them with their contact and medical information, a recent photo, comfort foods and treats, some toys or activities, and a comfort item or lovey.

Lastly, make an earthquake survival kit and tell your family where you are keeping it. There are lots of variations on what can be in a survival kit. However, the CEA recommends as a minimum that Californians keep three days' water supply for each member of your family (at least one gallon per person, per day), three days' supply of non-perishable food (plus a can opener), first-aid kits in your home and cars, three days' supply of food and water for your pets,

(Continued on Page 5)

Do You Recognize This Neighborhood Celebrity?

(Continued from Page 1)



Lorena has been a parking attendant for 15 years at a medical building on Santa Monica Boulevard. She always greets the people who drive up to her kiosk with a big smile.

Mini Message Bulletin Board

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Clergy Corner

Loyal in Labor-Celebrating Members of the Clergy



By Rev. Carolyn Baskin-Bell

The month of October is designated to celebrate those individuals who serve in the professional arena as clergy. The position of clergy ranges in a variety of vocations across faith traditions. Clergy serve as bishops, pastors, priests, rabbis, deacons, elders, chaplains, evangelists, ministers, counselors, educators, and coaches.

Women and men of the cloth, as they are sometimes referred, function as spiritual leaders who offer prayer, teaching, preaching, and support to individuals in their care. These loyal in labor are worthy and deserving of acknowl-

edgement and celebration. This loyalty in labor is characterized by compassion for people. Clergy members are spiritual gardeners as they offer guidance and advice to nurture individuals to grow personally, as well as in their relationship with God and humankind. This vocation is a calling to water the lives of individuals with encouragement to develop into their best authentic selves as they live life to the fullest.

The compassion of clergy in the role of spiritual gardener assists individuals to bloom in spite of weeds and extraneous factors interfering with their spiritual growth.

Clergy members promote peace in all aspects of the environment. **(Continued on Page 11)**

Is Your Family Prepared? *(Continued from Page 4)*

flashlights in every room with extra batteries, power packs for phones, prescription medications (or at least updated lists of your family's prescriptions), a whistle, a Swiss Army knife, copies of your personal documents (such as marriage license, birth certificates, driver's license), extra pair of glasses if needed, and cash in small bills.

Additionally, depending on the age of your children, have extra nursing supplies, formula, pre-packaged baby food, juice pouches, dry cereals, protein bars, vitamins, and any necessary medical supplies such as Tylenol located with your survival kit.

While we all hope to never experience an earthquake, when you live in Southern California, you need to always be prepared for the possibility. While not exhaustive, the above items will help you prepare for the *Big One*. Additionally,

they can be used to prepare for any emergency event.

We all know preparation is important, but finding the time to prepare is difficult. Do yourself and your family a favor, before the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, look at your emergency preparedness and make sure you have a family plan. Wishing you all a safe and healthy season. God Bless!



- Joe Analco

Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood

A Most Unlikely Necessary Friendship



By Stacy McClendon

A most unlikely connection occurred some 16 and a half years ago in my life. It all began when I was being texted in the middle of a church service to come to pick up my baby as he wouldn't stop crying. He was in the child care upstairs in the church.

I was super annoyed, as the service was my "me" time that I relished, as I didn't get it often. It was a time to refill my tank that continuously ran low, and to receive a positive word and some inspiring thoughts to take with me into my coming week.

At the time, my older son was seven and a half, and the younger, eight months old. I had moved away from my ex, two months prior to my eight-month-old being born. So, I was still learning how to be a single parent (something I never desired or intended to be in the first place). Those services were crucial for me at the time, as it helped me be a better person for myself and a better mother to my boys.

Needless to say, I was aggravated, but went upstairs anyway to get my son. I then headed back downstairs to watch the rest of the service from the lobby.

On my way down the stairs, I ran into a beautiful, slightly older woman with a very upbeat personality. She walked up to me and introduced herself and said, "You need to be in my group!" The first thing that came to my mind was, who is this woman? The second was, what type of group is she

inviting me to?

She said her name is Ana, everyone was welcome in her group, and that I could bring my sons with me. That was a blessing in itself, as I didn't have to think about securing a babysitter. I gave her my phone number, and she called me later with more details.

I ended up going to Ana's group with my boys. Everyone was indeed welcomed into her group. Whether single, married, older, disabled, children, and, even pets were welcomed. I began to look forward to this group and the connections my kids were receiving. We ate yummy food, prayed, and enjoyed one another's company.

Ana and I have continued to be friends to this day. We have done many wonderful things together over the years. She is a second mom, mentor, friend, and more to me and my sons. She always prays for me, lets me be me, encourages and uplifts me, and still checks up on me and my sons.

I have sometimes thought to myself what would have happened if I had said "no" to her that memorable day due to how aggravated and annoyed I was when she approached me. Knowing Ana as I do now, she wouldn't have allowed me to fall to the wayside, as that's not her personality. However, I could have missed out on a wonderful opportunity and necessary life connection that has helped me blossom, propelling me forward on my life's journey to become the better me that I am today.

So, glad I took the invitation!

Stacy McClendon is a longtime Pico Neighborhood resident and Santa Monica City staff member.

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Santa Monica Breakfast Club

(Continued from Page 2)



Potential members Esther Hickman and Janet McLaughlin.



Jeannie Kusserow helped Helen Vasak with hostess duties.



Kathy Whiting, left, whose mother was the Club's first president, visited with Susan Potter and Monika White.

Photos by Kathy Boole

To answer our earlier question, members meet once a month on the third Wednesday at the Riviera Country Club for a delicious breakfast. There are no meetings in July and August and a holiday party is held in December.

The Club's big Mad Hatter Tea Party fundraiser will be held on April 14, 2024 at the Elks Lodge in Santa Monica.

If you would like to attend a meeting, or want to explore joining this extraordinary volunteer organization, please contact Co-President Pam Brady at PTABrady@aol.com. —D.M.



Co-President Pam Brady led the Sunday meeting. She is always prepared to talk about dental care.

Eighth Annual Binge Free Festival (BFF)

Offers Five Weeks of Free Shows

Starting October 15

The Santa Monica Playhouse has been a cultural treasure in our seaside community for 63 years. Now, the Playhouse is giving love back with its Eighth Annual Binge Free Festival, five weeks of free performances, workshops, and music in Santa Monica's **only** Binge festival. The BFF's primary focus is on Santa Monica and Los Angeles-based artists, but there will be exciting international artists on view as well.

Santa Monica Playhouse is located at 1211 Fourth Street, just below Wilshire Boulevard. There is a municipal parking facility across the street. Most events in the Binge Free Festival will take place in the Playhouse's intimate performance space called The Other Space, with select events being performed on the Playhouse's Main Stage. All events are **free**, but reservations are **required**.

Some events are family-friendly. There will be something for everyone. To reserve your **free** tickets for an event, call 310-394-9779 ext.1, or email theatre@santamonica-playhouse.com. When making reservations, state the name of the show that you want to see, how many seats you wish to reserve, your full name, and your contact number. The Festival will run from October 15 to November 19.

The Binge Free Festival 2023 is presented through generous grants from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, the City of Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Arts Commission, and Playhouse PALS.

COVID safety protocol: Masks are recommended inside the Playhouse auditoriums.

Roosevelt Elementary School

(Continued from Page 1)

students and provided training and guidance to new teachers.

"I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve both the district of Santa Monica-Malibu Unified and community of Roosevelt Elementary," said Dr. Onyendu. "I look forward to immersing myself in the culture and collaboratively working with staff, parents, guardians, and the community to provide our students with an educational landscape that nurtures their talents, celebrates their boundless creativity, values their voices, and fosters their growth, all while instilling the power of education."

Dr. Onyendu earned a bache-

lor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from teaching and research college, Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas; a master's degree in educational administration from Lamar University in Texas, and a doctorate in educational administration from Texas A&M University, where she is also completing coursework for her superintendent certification.

Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton added, "I would like to welcome Dr. Onyendu to the SM-MUSD family. We are looking forward to Dr. Onyendu continuing the tradition of excellence at Roosevelt Elementary School."

Whimsical Thoughts (Continued from Page 4)

It was the darkest time in my life, which makes the memories of those trees and their leaves so much sweeter. At the time, my father was imprisoned in a place we did not know for a political crime he did not commit. We lived in fear and anxiety with no money even to buy food.

It could have stayed that way, but in the end, it was change that brought my father back to me, it was change that allowed me to go to college, and it was change that took me to America. Each made me stronger and brought me new opportunities. Change can be

frightening but, in each and every life, change can also mean hope.

You can always reach me at qstubis@gmail.com, or please visit me at www.QinSunStubis.com. You can find a copy of my book, *Once Our Lives*, online at www.Amazon.com.



-Joe Analco

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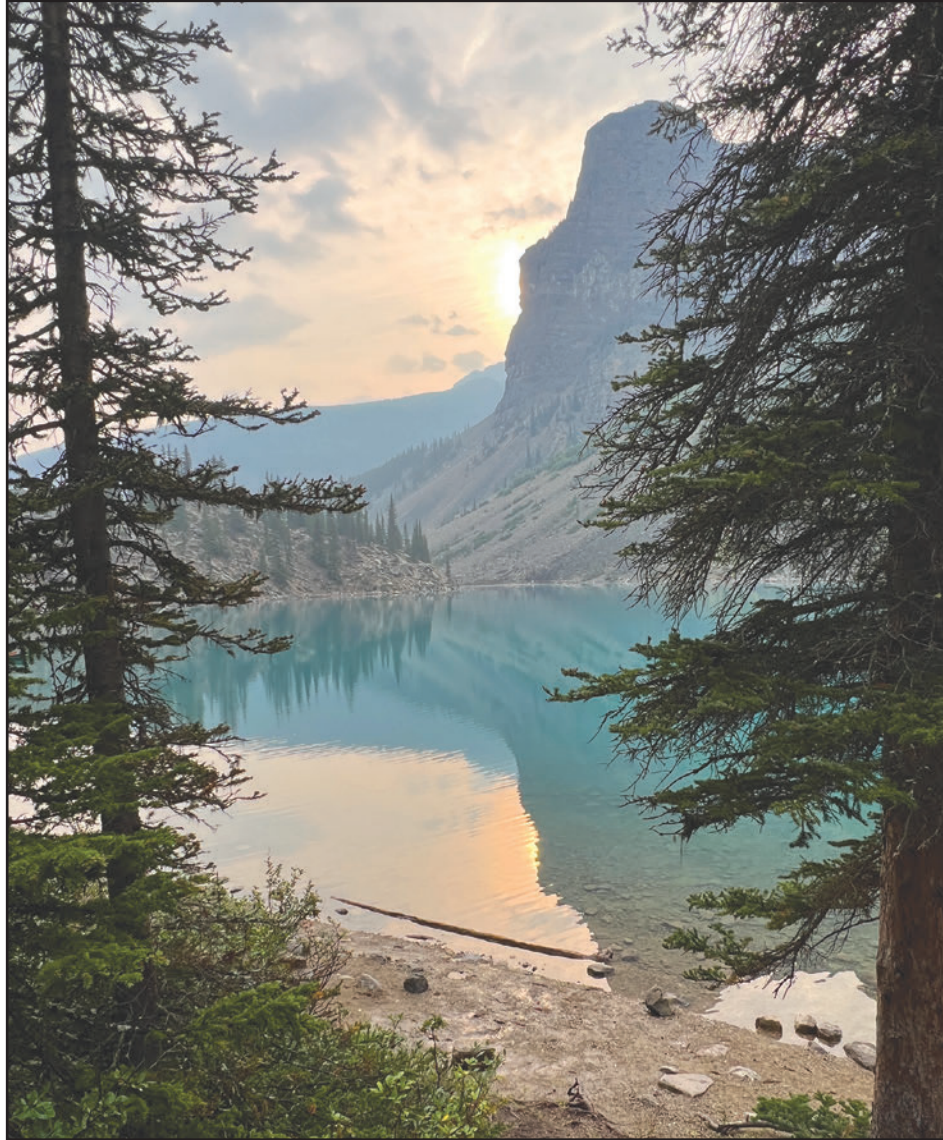
By Tanya Gilbert

The recent blue moon and this month's annular eclipse are a couple of spectacular reminders of the universe's magnificence.

Solar eclipses are awe-inspiring events where day preternaturally transcends into night.

The aurora borealis and aurora australis are nature's most spectacular light performances.

Dark sky destinations, such as Chile's Atacama Desert or Hawaii's Mauna Kea, offer clear skies for stargazing and astrophotography.



A photo of Lake Moraine in the Canadian Rockies which I took on a recent trip to Jasper National Park.

Having recently visited the Canadian Rockies, I learned that Jasper National Park is the second-largest dark sky preserve in the world and is worth a visit

day or night year-round. This month is an ideal time to celebrate dark skies with the annual Jasper Dark Sky Festival.

stars, one of the festival's many events. There is even a chance to see the Northern Lights this time of year.

Celestial tourism offers a unique blend of science and sheer aesthetic pleasure. It's a reminder that our planet is a small part of a vast universe filled with incredible wonders.

I always love to talk about travel, so feel free to email me at Tanya@MariposaTravelAdvisors.com.

Meeting the Sadehpours



It was such a wonderful surprise to meet Anne and Saeed when I was out delivering papers last month in their neighborhood.



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Mar Vista Seniors Club Celebrates 34 Years of Events, Lunches, Trips, Parties, and More



Linda Absher, Byron Stalcup, the group president, and Beth Rubenstein met at the event.



Byron Stalcup does an amazing job coordinating the group's events.



Barbara Payne and Carol Claus talked about club officers.



Members were treated to Hawaiian music.



The oldest guests were from left, Gloria Garacochea, Beverly Herschberger, and Mary Ann Malconian.



Rosemary Beringhele looks forward to the fun meetings.

President Byron Stalcup says there are about 150 members in his club that meets often at the Mar Vista Rec Center.

For more details on their events, call Byron at 310-351-9876.

Photos by Bernadette Lucier.

Mar Vista: Neighbor to Neighbor

Maxine's, Formerly Maxwell's, Celebrating 51 Years of Welcoming Customers



Owner Heidi Lemmon, is sixth from the left, in a white blouse. Her daughter, Philene, is on her right, holding her little girl. They are with their staff; many whom have worked there from ten to 20 years.



By Michael Byrne

In a city like ours, restaurants turn over every week. The National Restaurant Association says that 60% of all restaurants fail in their first year of operation, and 80% fail within their first five. What are the things that make or break success?

Allow me to rattle off several: quality of food, taste of food, price, service, ambiance, marketing, available parking...the list goes on. For a restaurant to last for

more than a couple of years, they need to have reached "excellence" in at least three of those categories. For a restaurant to last for 30 years – for a restaurant to become a "classic" – they'll need not only "excellence" in three of those categories, but also to deliver something intangible that keeps customers coming back.

For Maxine's (formerly Maxwell's) in Culver City – which has just celebrated its 51st year – it's the feeling of being served by family. Literally. Maxine's is operated by Heidi Lemmon and her

(Continued on Page 11)

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Meet Your Neighbors

Discovering Santa Monica's Treasures

By Stacy McClendon

Hello all! I am so excited to be writing and sharing a new column with the community where I travel organically throughout Santa Monica, unearthing treasures and discovering delights.

There are so many things that make Santa Monica unique, which is one of the reasons that it stays a world-wide tourist destination. Sometimes, I even feel like a tourist as a resident, as I'm always finding something new in this town. That is why I decided to write and share about it.

I have decided to share businesses, rather than compare, as each business has something that makes it unique.

My first stop is on Ocean Park Boulevard. I started my morning enjoying a Laika bagel and latte at Layla Bagels. Not only is the bagel gorgeous, but it's very tasty as well. Sergio, the head baker, shared that what makes the bagels unique is that they are sourdough-based, naturally fermented for 12-14 hours, and then baked the next morning. This gives them a different consistency, and sourdough naturally has good bacteria for our gut. Layla Bagels also sources all ingredients locally, and she offers monthly drink and food specials.

Next, I headed to Brooke Rodd's shop, where there are three stores on Ocean Park Blvd. and a store in Austin, Texas. One is a boutique that houses all things to make a women shine, from head to toe, a kids' store with clothing,



My favorite fresh, generously topped bagel from Layla Bagels on Ocean Park Boulevard.

books, and more to bring joy and share with the special child(ren) in your life, and a lifestyle store with uniquely curated items for your home and/or to gift to those in your life. I met Lily who has lived in Santa Monica her whole life. She had just returned from college and showed me around both the lifestyle and kids stores. Bella works in the women's boutique and she shared what makes it special. Both young women enjoy working at Brooke Rodd. Visit: www.brookerodd.com for more details.

Finally, I headed over to Bob's Market (to grab some items for dinner), which has been open in Santa Monica since 1965, and has a hometown feel. It is a mid-sized neighborhood market that has a lot of charm, offerings, and specialty items. They have a meat department, hot food bar, and also offer wonderful salads and other

(Continued on Page 13)

An Update From ERBA Markets

The Use of Cannabis by Athletes



By Stephen Freedman

Most of us have either heard of someone who has had to deal with opioid addiction, or we have had to deal with it ourselves.

This is a scary and heartbreaking epidemic that affects everyone, regardless of wealth or profession.

One profession where this is quite prevalent is professional sports. These athletes wreck their bodies and are expected to perform almost daily for an ever-hungry fanbase. NIH studies put the use of opioids by professional athletes at around 5%, with NFL players use at around 52%. This constant pressure causes these athletes to push away the long-term consequences for short term gain.

But, as more information has come out over the years regarding the nature of these opioids, an alternative has been gaining ground in this arena: cannabis.

A majority of players report using cannabis, and almost two-thirds of those report gaining some relief for pain, sleep, and anxiety. The use has become so

prevalent within the sporting community that it is no longer tested for in the NBA, MLB, or NHL, and NFL players are tested once in training camp. Thanks to player influence, these massive organizations are coming around to the medicinal benefits of cannabis, without the dangerous side effects and addiction that prescribed narcotics cause.

Not everyone has come around however. The US Anti-Doping Agency banned cannabis until 2018, when it allowed a trace amount of THC (0.3%, the amount in over-the-counter CBD oil). This has caused some controversy, as some athletes have been barred from competing in the Olympics because of positive cannabis tests. Most recently, sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson was prevented from competing in the Tokyo games due to a positive test.

There is still more research to be done regarding the athletic recovery benefits of cannabis use. But, the taboo nature is fading, and thankfully players now have an alternative to relief other than dangerous and addictive pills.

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

October Highlights

We can celebrate American Cheese Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, National Physical Therapy Month, Positive Attitude Month, National Roller Skating Month, and National Crime Prevention Month. Happy Birthday to Julie Andrews, Kelly Ripa, Jack Wagner, Dakota Johnson, Marie Osmond, and Neil deGrasse Tyson.

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Planning Ahead

What is Legacy Planning?



By Lisa Alexander, Esq.
When you think of creating a legacy, you might think only of a monetary inheritance. But, your legacy is so much more. Your

legacy might include passing on expressions of love for family and other important people in our lives. It might be a statement of your values and how you wish to be remembered. How you will be remembered could include directions for a funeral or memorial or even a big party to celebrate your life.

A running buddy described how she and other friends of a fellow runner got together to honor another runner who died suddenly. They knew the other runner was registered for a marathon. So, in his honor, they planned to complete the race as a relay with each friend, and even family members, carrying a baton for a segment of the race.

If you are active in your church or synagogue, a service club, or a group of friends pursuing a common hobby or interest, how would you like your friends to remember you? In turn, how would you plan to honor the contribution of your friends and organizations that have been significant in your life? Will there be a donation, small or large, but impactful in either event, made in your honor?

We think of estate planning as making a Will. But writing out your values, your thoughts for remembrance, your love and gratitude can also be a part of estate planning. This is sometimes referred to as an "ethical will."

There is no set structure for writing an ethical will. It can be anything you want to make of it. But a personal statement left behind would be a meaningful, even treasured, gift to your loved ones who survive you.

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Paws and Claws

How Can I Get Rid of Parasites in My Pet?



By Dr. Frank Lavac, MS, DVM
Q: My puppy was recently diagnosed with hookworms following unresolved gastrointestinal issues.

The parasite has persisted in spite of common treatment regimens. What can I do to get rid of these parasites?

A: Hookworms, which are intestinal parasites, are not a common parasite in SoCal. However, we are seeing them diagnosed more frequently. They can cause chronic diarrhea and anemia. Additionally, some of them have developed resistance to commonly used parasite medications includ-

ing Pyrantel and Fenbendazole. Similar to bacterial resistance to antibiotics, some hookworm resistance has made it challenging to rid dogs of these parasites.

Veterinarians and Veterinary Internal Medicine Specialists are using special monitoring and treatment protocols in attempting to treat these dangerous parasites. Hookworms can also cause skin problems in people and are considered zoonotic.

For more information, go to www.veterinarypartner.com, and search hookworms in dogs and cats. Another helpful site to search is www.CAPCvet.org.

For further questions, you can contact Dr. Lavac at 310-828-4587.

Adopt a Pet



Kimchi, is a female Australian Shepherd mix, approximately 11 months old. If you are interested in adoption, contact Best Friends at adoptla@bestfriends.org.

Santa Monica Public Library (Continued from Page 3)

comedy, everyone's taste for terror will be satisfied. From three menus, select up to three titles to read the first chapter to sink your teeth into. Any title you find a taste for can be checked out after the event.

This program is free and open to the public. Seating is limited and on a first-arrival basis. The Santa Monica Public Library is wheelchair accessible. For disability-related accommodations, email library@santamonica.gov at least one week prior to the event.



Loyal in Labor (Continued from Page 5)

The songwriter expressed, "Let there be peace and let it begin with me."

Spiritual leaders experience peace within their own being and are peaceful people. This peace is transmitted to those they encounter in the church, synagogue, mosque, or temple. Peacemaking efforts of clergy motivate communities and cities to combat violent acts of society. Facilitation of peace is imperative in resolving conflicts regarding race, equity, and social justice issues that

plague our nation and the world.

As we celebrate this Season of Harvest, remember the clergy who nurture and provide spiritual care for others and present themselves as productive persons in order to make a difference in this world.

Happy Clergy Appreciation Month!

Reverend Carolyn Baskin-Bell
Senior Pastor,
First AME Church, Santa Monica
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Maxine's, Formerly Maxwell's, Celebrating 51 Years (Continued from Page 9)

dedicated staff. Even the customers of Maxine's treat the place like it's their own. Heidi shared a story about a neighbor down the street offering his design services

pro bono for the rebrand to Maxine's. The new sign and logo on the front of the business is his work. The hostess that worked the summer? She's the great-grand-

child of a customer who has been coming to Maxine's for each of those 51 years.

"I can't think of another experience or restaurant or anything that has this kind of community to it," shared Heidi. Having recently visited for the first time, I can confirm that eating at Maxine's is like eating at home.

Heidi is proud of the variety of

delicious breakfast dishes such as omelettes and Belgian waffles, and lunch items such as their popular tuna melt and club sandwich.

Maxine's is open daily from 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. It is located on 13329 Washington Blvd, a little east of Costco. 310-437-0575. Dogs are welcome, too.

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Discover What's Happening on the Westside

By Pamela Lawrence

- **Ongoing until October 31 - Griffith Park LA Haunted Hayride** - 7 p.m. - 10 p.m./10:30 p.m./11 p.m./12 a.m. Griffith Park, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles. Tickets are on sale at losangeleshauntedhayride.com.
- **Sunday, October 1 - Breast Cancer Awareness Month begins**
- **Sunday, October 1 - Malibu Watershed Fair** - Step into the Malibu Watershed Fair while shopping for fresh produce, great artisan crafts, and yummy treats at the popular Malibu Farmers' Market. Discover the diverse and interconnected world of watersheds from over 12 organizations that will be sharing their work and how you can help protect our local watershed's beaches, creeks, aquatic and land habitats, and cultural history. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Legacy Park, 23500 Civic Center Way, Malibu. Free community event.
- **Hispanic Heritage Month Teen Take & Make Kit** - Ceramic Calaveras available beginning October 2. Learn about the cultural significance of calaveras and decorate one of your own, or registered teen volunteers can earn one hour of community service time decorating the calavera and bringing it to the Main Library to add to the library ofrenda for Dia de los Muertos. Pick up at the Main Library Youth Services desk and at all branch locations, while supplies last. For ages 11-18.
- **Wednesday, October 4 - National Walk and Bike to School Day**
- **Thursday, October 5 - World Teachers' Day**
- **Saturday, October 7 - Soundwaves New Music Concert** - Soundwaves celebrates L.A.'s diverse history of innovative underground music with free performances by world-class artists. This show features Anna Homler with Jorge Martin and Jeff Schwartz. 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd., Martin Luther King Jr. Auditorium.

- **Saturday, October 7 - Outdoor, Comedy Club Oktoberfest 2023: Venice** - 90-minute outdoor stand-up comedy show at an outdoor oasis in Venice Beach. Major headlining comedians from Netflix, Comedy Central, and movies. 8 p.m. PodShare Venice, 522 Venice Blvd. Tickets available on eventbrite.com.
- **Monday, October 9 - Indigenous Peoples' Day**
- **Saturday, October 14 - Cooking Demonstration** - Learn how to make vegan sushi and other vegetarian food with Vegan Chef Acooba Scott. 2 p.m. Kaufman Brentwood Branch Library, 11820 San Vicente Blvd.
- **Monday, October 16 - Boss's Day**
- **Saturday, October 21 through Sunday, October 22 - Open Main Street Festival** - Rocktober, celebrates Halloween with a pumpkin patch and outdoor movie screening. The street is transformed into a free community festival with all fresco dining, live music, local vendors, and activities for kids. 12 p.m.-7 p.m., along Main Street, from Strand Street to Pier Avenue.
- **Saturday, October 21 - Author Talk** - Join retired Santa Monica Dentist Teresa Yang as she discusses her newly released book, *Nothing But the Tooth*, a comprehensive guide about dental health, practices, and procedures. 2 p.m. Kaufman Brentwood Branch Library, 11820 San Vicente Blvd.
- **Saturday, October 21 - Out of the Darkness Greater Los Angeles Santa Monica Walk** - The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is hosting the annual event in Santa Monica. The Out of the Darkness Community Walk is a journey of remembrance, hope, and support. 9 a.m.-10 a.m. Santa Monica Pier. For more info, call 1-888-333-2377.
- **Friday, October 27 - Jon Mayer, Piano** - Santa Monica College Music Department is pleased to present the 2023 Fall Jazz Series. Live music source Inside Jazz.com describes Jon Mayer as "an emotive, playful, and



Kids love interacting with the cast of *Absolutely Halloween* after the show at the Santa Monica Playhouse.

Photo: Cydne Moore

superbly inventive bebop-based pianist who always delivers ear-pleasing improvisations." All concerts in the series are held at 7 p.m. in the Music Hall at the SMC Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th Street (at Santa Monica Boulevard). For details, call 310-434-4323.

- **Saturday, October 28 - National First Responders Day**
- **Saturday, October 28 - Volunteers Needed! Annual Community Halloween Event: Haunt-O-Palms Playground.** Set up: 8 a.m. Event: 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Clean-up: 3 p.m.-5 p.m. Teens: This counts for community service hours. Details: 310-838-3838.
- **Tuesday, October 31 - Halloween - Boo! Trick or Treat!**
- **Tuesday, October 31 - Montana Avenue Halloween Hop** - 3 p.m.-6 p.m.

Tell us about your upcoming November event.

Send details to smstarnewspaper@gmail.com by October 10.

Put Some Pop Into Your Halloween Celebrations! (Continued from Page 1)

set aside.

- In medium saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Stir marshmallows into butter until melted. Stir in gelatin powder until evenly colored.
- Pour melted mixture over popcorn and stir until evenly coated. With buttered hands, shape popcorn into seven ovals.
- Flatten one oval slightly, and squeeze one end to form skull shape. Place on parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with remaining ovals.
- To decorate: Press two gumballs into each skull to form eyes. Press candy corn into skull to form teeth. Use scissors to trim candy strips and press into top for hair. Sprinkle with sugar sprinkles.
- Allow zombies to set about 20 minutes before wrapping individually in plastic wrap or serve immediately.

Popcorn Caramel Apples

- Yield: 4 apples
- 1 quart freshly popped popcorn
 - 1 package (9-1/2 ounces, 35 total) caramels, unwrapped
 - 1/4 cup light cream
 - 4 lollipop sticks or wooden candy apple sticks
 - 4 apples
 - 1/2 cup chocolate chips
 - Sugar sprinkles
 - Place popcorn in large bowl; set aside. Place sheet of waxed paper

on work surface.

- In small saucepan over medium-low heat, heat caramels and cream. Stir frequently until caramels are melted and cream is blended into caramels.
- Push one stick into apple center and dip into caramel. Spoon caramel over apple to coat. Repeat with remaining apples.
- Place caramel-coated apple in bowl of popcorn and press popcorn onto caramel to cover. Place apple on waxed paper to set; repeat with remaining apples.
- In small, resealable plastic bag, microwave chocolate chips 10 seconds and press chips to aid melting. Repeat, heating at 10-second intervals, until chips are completely melted. Cut small corner off bag and squeeze chocolate onto each apple, allowing chocolate to drip down sides. Sprinkle with sugar sprinkles.



- Joe Analco

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Thoughts From a Second-Time Father

Highlights of Each Age My Children Experience



By Michael Margolin

So often when you tell somebody that has kids how old your own children are, they respond with something like, "That's a fun age!" And so far, I have not disagreed with anybody. I have thought for a long time that the older my kids get, the more fun they become.

And, it is more interesting to watch them grow and experience new things. Alexa just turned 10 and has started fifth grade. I think that of all the years she has been in school, this is the least anxious I have been for her. I think it is because she is in the grade that is at the top of the food chain for her school. I am very much a we'll cross that bridge when we get to it type of person.

So, when this school year ends and the beginning of middle school looms even larger, I will deal with my angst then. I have said before, the main thing that reminds me I am getting older, is that my kids are getting older. What I have found more and more interesting is that the older Alexa and Jake, seven, get is that I remember being their ages more clearly.

What I mean is that I remember a lot more things clearly about fifth grade than I do second, which is the grade Jake is in now. I recall how I dealt with good people and bad, and what my feelings on homework were.

Recently, I asked Alexa how much they talked about 9/11 on September 11th and it did not sound like they delved into it too much. It generated a conversation between me and Alexa. I tried to explain some of the dreadful details and circumstances surrounding that day, without being too graphic. I realized that the older she gets, and the more she learns and reads, the more opinions of her own she will start to form. Not necessarily on the topic of 9/11, but the world in general. I encouraged her to continue to share her thoughts and views with me and Enjoli.

Jake is much fuzzier on the topic of terrorism, a word he quite possibly has never heard, or at least paid attention to, and why people do the things they do. No matter what they are. That is fine with me now.

On one of their last days of summer, I took the day off of work to spend a day with Jake. It was a day we were supposed to spend together the month before. We did a number of things that included miniature golf, a park, fast food meals, and a movie. It was a blast! I wanted nothing more than to enjoy my son's company that day and I got all that I asked for. It turns out that seven, is indeed, a fun age, after all.

Mike Margolin has been writing for us since his daughter Alexa was born ten years ago. He is an avid sports fan. Mike is also a coach for both of his children's soccer teams.

Discovering Santa Monica's Treasures
(From Page 10)

packaged items to go, as well as specialty sodas and beers.

However, what makes Bob's especially unique is that they have over 3,000 wines and other specialty liquor items in stock. Each wine has been carefully selected, sampled and chosen, and the wine descriptions have been personally written by hand by either Rick or Michael. Michael used to be a chef for 30+ years, and has the expertise of assisting customers with finding the perfect wine for their meal. They normally help me choose the perfect bottle for the evening. Rick works more behind the scenes, but can offer his expertise as well, if on the floor. Visit www.bobsmtkt.com for more information.



Susan Potter sometimes finds it necessary to hire outside contractors for seasonal employment.

Kids, Let Nature Inspire You to Draw in October

By Julie Rensink Hanson

Many parents want their children to know more about wildlife and to feel closer to nature. But, it's not always easy. Busy schedules often can't accommodate long visits to national parks, or even hikes in local mountains.

Parents can take advantage of the wildlife right in their own neighborhoods – wild birds. One easy way to get started is to hang a bird feeder in a location where you and your kids can see it easily. It could be outside the kitchen window, or close to a patio. Invest in a guide with pictures, such as *Sibley Birds West*. Then, start watching and identifying birds with your kids.

Remember, your children will pick up on your enthusiasm. So, if you start watching or feeding birds, it's more likely that they will, too. The important thing is to do it together.

If you can add a water feature to your yard, such as a birdbath, a fountain, or a little pond. Not only will it attract even more birds, it will also amuse your kids. Also, if you add native plants to your garden or patio, such as those sold by the Theodore Payne Foundation, you can bring even more birds and butterflies for your kids to see.

You don't have to stick to your backyard. Take your bird guide and walk around the block with your kids, writing down the birds that you all see. Let kids use your phone (or their phones) to take pictures or record songs.

If you want to expand your bird

ID abilities, download the Merlin app from Cornell University's Ornithology Lab to your (or their) phone. It's free and can help you identify hundreds of birds by photo and sound.

If you do have time to take a hike, start easy. Kids have lots of energy, but they don't have your stamina. A short hike is best, letting the kids set the pace. Stop occasionally to listen for bird calls or look for birds in the area, and don't forget to use the Merlin app to identify them.

We invite children to get creative and show us what birds you see in our community this month. Please send us a drawing of birds you see in your yard, out the window, or on the schoolyard. October is a peak migration month for birds flying south for the winter, so it's a great time of year to spot a new bird.

Selected artwork will be published in the November edition of our newspaper. One young artist will be randomly selected to receive a \$50 gift card from Wild Birds Unlimited. It is good on anything in the store, including feeders, bird guides, and kids' games.

Submit your artwork (as a high resolution 300 dpi scan, or best quality digital file) by October 15 and email to wbusantamonica@gmail.com, or hand deliver a hard copy to the Wild Birds Unlimited store at 12433 Wilshire Blvd. Free parking in the back off Centinela Ave. (See Page 8 Bird Drawing Contest ad for more details.)

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Community Service on the Westside

Lions to Celebrate 100th Anniversary



By Kingsley Fife

We Lions started our Club in 1923, so we're very excited and looking forward to our 100th Anniversary celebration on

Sunday, October 29, at 6 p.m. at the Santa Monica Elks Lodge, 1040 Pico Blvd.

It's going to be a "Roaring Twenties Speakeasy Gala" featuring special cocktails at a full bar, jazz band and Jazz Age entertainment, delicious dinner, silent and live auctions, a gift basket raffle, and so much more. Kick up your heels and do the Charleston! Tickets are \$75 per person. For more details, check us out on Facebook or Instagram, see our ad on Page 10, or contact Lion Kathy Boole at kboole@gmail.com.

We live in a small world now and sometimes globalization and easy access can present some unique, embarrassing moments. I was working at home on some Lion

business and had a quick question for one of our co-presidents, Lion Kathy. I knew she was on vacation, but somehow thought she was back in the midwest or New England somewhere.

I felt the easiest, quickest way to get her was to call her because she's always really good about "picking up." I called her and sure enough, Kathy was right there. After asking my question, she said, "I can fill you in on the details when I get home, but right now I'm trying to get to sleep. It's after midnight and we're in Helsinki, Finland." Needless to say, after some sincere apologies I could have shrunk under my desk. When she got home a week later, we had a good laugh over the incident, but in this day and age, we have to be extra aware.

Want to know more about Lionism? We'd love to have you be our guest at one of our dinner meetings. Please contact Lion Kingsley Fife at jkfife88@yahoo.com, or call 310-454-2960.

Start Saving Socks to Bring to the SMBWC



By Susan Barry

Joining communities near and far, Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club (SMBWC) welcomes October with our annual "Socktober"

sock drive. After collecting more than 100 boxes of cereal for the Westside Food Bank, their number one requested food item, we continue supporting the neediest in our community with warm socks. They are the most requested clothing item for all ages.

SMBWC members bring new socks of every size and style to activities and events throughout the month for an abundant donation on November 1. You're welcome to drop a donation to our beautiful historic clubhouse at 1210 Fourth Street between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday, and we will add it to our growing collection!

Our Book Group continues to

grow with new community members joining us each month on the fourth Tuesday at 6 p.m. The selection for October 24 is *Hello Beautiful*, by Anne Napolitano.

Canasta and Bridge players meet every Monday at 11 a.m. Crafts and Conversation meets every Tuesday morning from 10 a.m. to noon.

For further information about membership, or renting our facility for your next event or special occasion, visit our website at SMBWC.org, email us at info@SMBWC.org, or call 310-395-1308. We especially encourage other non-profit organizations to host their events at SMBWC. Everyone is welcome to participate in our activities.



Santa Monica Family YMCA: Strengthening Our Community with Extended Hours, Exciting Programs, and Engagement Initiatives



By Eduardo Lowe

Since its establishment in 1927, the Santa Monica Family YMCA has played a pivotal role in our community, evolving beyond a typical fitness center into a vibrant hub that binds Santa Monica's residents together. With extended operating hours, an array of dynamic programs, and a steadfast commitment to nurturing community bonds, the YMCA continues to be the heart of Santa Monica.

• Extended Operating Hours for Everyone's Convenience - To cater to the diverse needs of our lively community, we are thrilled to announce our extended operating hours. The YMCA now welcomes early birds and night owls alike, opening at 5 a.m. on weekdays, and closing at 10 p.m. Fridays offer extended hours until 9 p.m. In comparison, weekends remain accessible with Saturday hours from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday hours from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• Fostering Friendships and Skills with Youth Basketball League - Our commitment to

strengthening community bonds is exemplified through initiatives like the Youth Basketball League. Co-ed teams aged five to 14 are encouraged to participate, where they refine their athletic skills and forge lasting friendships, nurturing a sense of belonging.

• Celebrating Community Unity Through Engagement - Community engagement is the bedrock of our mission.

• Child Watch Service: A Haven for Parents and Children - We understand the delicate balance of parenthood and personal well-being. That's why we're excited to announce the return of our beloved Child Watch service. Included with your YMCA membership, this service offers professional oversight, engaging activities, and flexible hours, alleviating

parental concerns.

• Enriching Minds and Skills - Our commitment to community well-being extends beyond physical fitness. We host monthly seminars on various topics of significance to our members.

• Join Us in Shaping the Future of Our Community - As we prepare to introduce Child Watch and embark on facility enhancements, we invite you to be part of this journey.

• Learn more about the Santa Monica Family YMCA and how to get involved at YMCASM.org. - Together, we can continue strengthening the bonds that continue to make Santa Monica an exceptional place to live.



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People 'n' Pets



Laura Holt is waiting for her dog, Jefferson aka Jeffie, to be blessed.



Maddie is with Carmello who is a ten month old, mini half-pomeranian and half-Australian Shepherd.



Monique, and her husband Pastor John Nunes, are with Zach Perez and his mom, Pamela Lawrence. They brought photos of their pets to be blessed.



Sisters Dania and Isabella Romano brought Summer to be blessed.

The highly-anticipated Blessing of the Pets took place last month at Pilgrim Lutheran Church on Wilshire Boulevard and 18th Street in Santa Monica. Kudos to Pilgrim's Super Woman Kathy Fjermedal for coordinating the successful event.

Photos by Pamela Lawrence



Melissa Toomin brought her dog, Lilly, to be blessed by Pastor John.

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Love Links

They Say That Timing is Everything

Stephanie Sarmiento recalls that in 2014 when she first met Jesse Chestnutt-Linn, she was just finding her passion for home organizing and staging. He was busy traveling with his job as a mechanical engineer in research and development for Mercedes-Benz.

She was living with a roommate named Brittany in Redondo Beach who was also friends with Jesse. Brittany introduced the two and they went out casually, but the timing was not right for a serious relationship.

Stephanie grew up in Cheyenne, Wyoming before making her way to Southern California after stops

in New York and Australia. Jesse was born and raised outside of Auburn in Northern California.

During COVID, Jesse remembered Stephanie and reached out to her through Facebook. She was living at her family home in Big Bear for four months to stay away from crowds. Jesse mentioned that part of his job was to test drive one of his Mercedes cars in the high altitude.

Stephanie hadn't had much experience riding in the luxurious Mercedes-Maybach sedan that Jesse had driven up to Big Bear to "test." So, she agreed.

Eventually, they began dating as they went back and forth from Big Bear to Redondo Beach.

Stephanie said being so close to someone during COVID was much more personal. "I got to know him quickly and felt very comfortable. He's the nicest guy ever! And, a true gentleman," she described. They kept dating from August through June, 2021 when they moved in together.

They eventually purchased a house in June, 2022, and got engaged. Stephanie had been expecting to celebrate Jesse's birthday with some good friends in Paso Robles. She was completely surprised, with some help from family and friends, when the gathering at Cass Winery turned into a proposal. Thanks to their friend, Sterling, the winemaker at Cass, they had a delicious VIP lunch, and a wonderful weekend of celebration.

The actual wedding ceremony was held in June 2023 at MJM Chandler Ranch, just outside of Paso Robles. Almost every one of the 50 guests stayed on the property for the whole weekend. There were horses and some guests went fishing. It was more personal and intimate than a big hotel might feel, Stephanie related.

Also, Stephanie and Jesse's dog, Koda, a Brittany Spaniel was the flower "dog," and their friend's dog, Benson, an Australian Shepherd, was the ring bearer. Their good friend Kristin Manoogian was the wedding officiant.

Stephanie's parents, Tomas and Connie Sarmiento, and Jesse's parents, Jon Linn and Barbara Ann Chestnutt commented about the event, "The couple accomplished their goal of having a weekend-long celebration full of quality time with friends and family, including Jesse's 97-year-old



Stephanie's mother made her life-like unique bouquet and Jesse's boutonniere out of special paper.

grandfather who drove down from Sacramento. He had a wonderful time at the wedding."

There were plenty of opportunities for the two families to become acquainted with each other. As it turned out, one of Jesse's sisters did Stephanie's makeup and Laura, his best friend since he was a toddler, did Stephanie's hair. The weekend was one which provided many special memories for all who attended.

We wish Stephanie and Jesse much happiness and good health in the years to come.

If you would like to share your wedding memories with our readers, please email smstarnewspaper@gmail.com with your name and phone number, and we will send you our Love Links form to fill in.



Stephanie and Jesse



Grandfather Samuel Linn held the bouquet while the bride was being photographed.

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