

## Public Service Workers Honored by Rotary Club of Santa Monica



SMPD Captain Rudy Flores presented an award to Christopher Camp. Dan Buchanan, the other honoree, was unable to attend.



Dr. Mark Kelly, left, received the award from Santa Monica-Malibu USD Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton. He was honored for nearly 25 years of exceptional service in various leadership positions.



Jabryan Donald presented a plaque to Norman Colomer for his skill and service. (Ed King, who has attended this event for years, was unable to attend because his first grandchild had been born that morning.)

The annual meeting when Santa Monica Rotarians present awards to our public service workers is one of our most eagerly anticipated. We all know how hard these people work on their jobs. It is our chance to pay tribute to them.

And, we also get to learn a little more about them personally when their supervisors introduce them.

For example, Big Blue Bus driver Norman Colomer has driven over 1,620,000 miles with no accidents for 27 years. He has served roughly 3,317,000 passengers during his tenure. Many customers submit compliments to thank him for his service.

Often the honorees bring their families to the luncheon. Donna Byrd has been coordinating this event for the past several years. It takes a lot of patience and skill. She has to call each department and be sure her contacts turn in the names of the honorees in time so she can get their plaques engraved.

Then, she has the fun job of



SMFD Chief Danny Alvarez was describing his chosen honoree, Evan McManus, who was not present. This month, Danny will be returning to his former department in Burbank to become fire chief.



Kudos to Rotarian Donna Byrd for always making this awards luncheon so special.

decorating the room to reflect the themes of the honorees who are coming. Models of the Big Blue Buses, red fire hats, apples and pencils have been centerpieces in the past.

This year Dee Menzies assisted Donna with the event. Event photos were taken by member Richard Lombardi.

—D.M.

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The Santa Monica PONY Baseball 16U Colt National Team posed on the field in Marion, Illinois where the International World Series championship games were held in July.

## What Was it Like for the Santa Monica PONY Baseball 16U Team to Play in the International World Series?

By Michael Margolin

There is a Tao expression that tells us, "The journey is the reward." The journey for the Santa Monica PONY Baseball 16U National Team took a brief break after an unlikely come-from-behind win that propelled them into the PONY International World Series in July.

It picked back up just several days later in the wee hours of the morning at LAX. This is where head coach Wes Terry and his young men would gather to board a plane that would take them to southern Illinois. If they needed any wake up call, Southwest would do so by calling out the players names as they boarded the plane, as if they were introducing a starting lineup. That would be just a taste of what was to come.

The Pony International World Series in Marion, IL included domestic teams from Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas. Internationally, the representation was from Germany, Japan, and Mexico. The opening ceremonies showcased the colors of all of these nations. And, made a loud entrance in doing so. The flags were brought into the stadium via riders on Harley Davidson motorcycles. Not a bad way to get a team

fired up for what the days to come would bring. These opening ceremonies have now been viewed more than 2,000 times on the Santa Monica baseball team's combined Instagram and Facebook accounts. If you read last month's story, you could surmise that some of those views came from detracting or even envious eyes. But I digress.

From what Wes Terry said, the ceremonies and the way the boys

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## Do You Recognize This Neighborhood Celebrity?

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# Discover What's Happening on the Westside

By Pamela Lawrence

• **Ongoing - You can sign up to take a walk through history at our popular Santa Monica Pier.** Weekends at 10 a.m. Tickets can be booked online at [www.santamonica.org/walk-through-pier-history-tour](http://www.santamonica.org/walk-through-pier-history-tour). \$25. Children under 12, free. Questions: [info@santamonica.org](mailto:info@santamonica.org).

• **Fridays in September (1, 8, 15, 22, 29) - Pilates Movement** - Develop strength, flexibility, and balance through the fusion of a Pilates mat and various movement styles. 11 a.m., in person. Venice - Abbot Kinney Memorial Branch Library. All levels are welcome. For adults.

• **Monday, September 4 - Labor Day**

• **Starting Tuesday, September 5 - Take and Make Kit: Hispanic Heritage Month** - This kit includes supplies to create a quetzal - a bird that lives in the tropical forests of Central America that was sacred to the ancient Maya and Aztec peoples. Pick up at the Santa Monica Main Library Youth Services desk, or at the Pico, Montana, Ocean Park, or Fairview Branches. Available while supplies last. For ages two and up.

• **Saturday, September 9 - Second Saturdays** - Soprano Julia Maria Johnson leads you on a musical journey through

Cabaret Tunes: Old and New. Includes a premiere by pianist and composer John-Micah Braswell who will accompany Ms. Johnson on piano. 3 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Westwood Library reading room. For adults.

• **Saturday, September 9 - Pacific Palisades Woman's Club's (PPWC) Art Show and Fundraiser** - Art show with silent auction, wine, and tequila tasting to raise funds for charities that PPWC supports. 6 p.m.-9 p.m. at the Bruce Lurie Gallery, 873 Via De La Paz, Pacific Palisades. For tickets, visit: [www.eventbrite.com/e/pacific-palisades-womans-club-fundraiser-tickets-682461419477](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/pacific-palisades-womans-club-fundraiser-tickets-682461419477).

• **Sunday, September 10 - Grandparents Day**

• **Wednesday, September 13 - Red Cross Blood Drive** - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Santa Monica Main Library Multipurpose Room. To make an appointment, visit: [redcrossblood.org/make-donation](http://redcrossblood.org/make-donation) and enter sponsor code: SantaMonicaLibrary.

• **Wednesday, September 13 - Computer Class: Intro to Chromebooks** - Gain the skills to start using a Chromebook computer at home, work, or school. You can check out one of these simple laptops from the library. 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Santa Monica

Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. For beginners.

• **Thursday, September 14 - Fraud and Identity Theft Awareness** - Antonia Villaseñor, from the California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation, discusses how to protect yourself and your loved ones from financial fraud, and steps to take if your identity is stolen. 4 p.m.-5 p.m. Santa Monica Main Library, Multipurpose Room.

• **Friday, September 15 - Rosh Hashanah - Happy New Year!**

• **Saturday, September 16 - Join classical guitarist Andre Giraldo** for a solo performance of Spanish composers through the ages. 2 p.m. Kaufman Brentwood Branch Library, 11820 San Vicente Blvd. 310-575-8273.

• **Sunday, September 17 - The City of Santa Monica presents two event series highlighting world traditions, the roots of Americana music, and Santa Monica's talented youth.** Opening act: folk/pop singalong with McCabe's Hootenanny Collective, and headlining act: East L.A. ska with The Delirians. 4 p.m.-7 p.m. Gandara Park, 1819 Stewart St. To find out more about the free programs at Tongva Park and Gandara Park, visit [santamonica.gov](http://santamonica.gov).

• **Sunday, September 17 - Days of Awesomeness Carnival for Rosh Hashanah** - A fun afternoon of High Holiday activities for kids of all ages. Beth Shir Shalom, 1827 California Ave. at 19th St. Details: 310-453-3361.

• **Wednesday, September 20 - Dementia 101 An Educational Series (Topic: Navigating Difficult Behaviors)** - Belmont Village Senior Living will host a virtual educational series for caregivers, care partners, and friends. New approaches and techniques will be taught to effectively care for a loved one in difficult times. Joyce Mahoney, CTRS, APRS, Regional Vice President of Memory Care and Programming at Belmont Village Senior Living, will lead and provide valuable insight to each engaging topic. 12 p.m. PT. RSVP: [belmontvillage.com/webinar](http://belmontvillage.com/webinar).

• **Saturday, September 20 - First Day of Autumn!**

• **Thursday, September 21 - World Gratitude Day**

• **Sunday, September 24 - Yom Kippur**

**Tell us about your upcoming October event. Send details to [smstarnewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:smstarnewspaper@gmail.com) by September 10.**

## Samaritan's Purse Project Operation Christmas Child — Will Celebrate its 30th Year of Ministry



As the school year begins, families on the Westside are transforming empty shoeboxes into gifts of hope by filling them with supplies like

pencils, crayons, and notebooks, alongside personal care items and fun toys. Operation Christmas Child will deliver the gift-filled shoeboxes worldwide to boys and girls in need. In 2023, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect enough shoeboxes to reach another 11 million children in more than 100 countries.

For more information, visit [samaritanpurse.org/occ](http://samaritanpurse.org/occ). National

Collection Week is November 13-20. Participants can donate \$10 per shoebox gift online through "Follow Your Box" and receive a tracking label to discover its destination. Those who prefer the convenience of online shopping can browse [samaritanpurse.org/buildonline](http://samaritanpurse.org/buildonline) to select gifts matched to a child's specific age and gender, then finish packing the virtual shoebox by adding a photo and personal note of encouragement.

Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 209 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories. This year, Operation Christmas Child will celebrate its 30th year of ministry.

To find out how to participate locally, you can contact Malibu Pacific Church, 3324 Malibu Canyon Road, Malibu. Call 310-456-1611 for details. Or, please call Lynn Salanga at 657-478-9855 for more general information.



### Making the Best of Chemo

When cancer got in the way of Celia Bonaduce's traveling for her day job as a field producer on the hit HGTV show, *House Hunters*, she did not let it stop her creativity. While the road to her first nonfiction book, *SMOOTH*, was anything but, it was a path that Celia felt compelled to explore. This collection of life hacks comes from Celia's own experiences living through chemo.

"As soon as I found out I was to  
(Continued on Page 11)



**Happy September Birthdays**  
**Lisa Alexander, Steve Eorio, Carol Follette, Mark Stubis, Avo Guerboian, Len Lanzi, Joe Metoyer, Kurtis Magee, Hodge Patterson IV, Nora Bohn, Vince Muselli, Valerie Brown, George Pickell, Bill Werner, Tanya Gilbert, Patrick Potter, Bruce Gelvin, Becky Mejia, Msgr. Lloyd Torgerson, Enjoli Margolin, and Steven J. Navin, VI**

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— Julia B.



**The Real Estate Advisor**

**Real Estate Questions for Seniors**



**By Richard Lombardi**  
Seniors often find themselves in homes that are functionally obsolescent for their needs. While keeping the dream of passing along the home to heirs, they hold on to their home beyond its peak usefulness to themselves.

Many, though empty nesters, keep their four or five bedroom home for holiday gatherings with children and grandchildren. The two or three story home's stairs start becoming challenging, or unsurmountable. Financially, the home's costs cause depletion of savings and other investments. Maintenance costs grow as the home also ages, and repairs they could do before now require paid help. Even if the home has no mortgage, taxes and insurance costs grow faster than fixed incomes.

Beyond the primary residence, many seniors have invested in real estate. These holdings may include single family homes, but also include multifamily properties, and other commercial real estate. The hassle of the three Ts of investment real estate, (toilets, trash, and taxes) become overwhelming.

As one ages while holding real

estate assets, one should begin searching for answers to the following questions. These are also great questions for ANYONE holding real estate assets.

- If I were to pass today what would happen? Is that exactly what I want?
- Are my intentions specifically laid out in legal documents?
- How much of the value of the property(ies) would actually pass to heirs after taxes and other costs?
- Have I minimized inheritance and capital gains taxes for heirs?
- Do the heirs have the desire, knowledge, and skillset to manage the properties?
- Would receiving this (these) property(ies) cause joy or animosity amongst the heirs as each has differing financial needs?

The answers to these questions may be unsettling, yet with the help of your financial and real estate wealth advisor teams, solutions can be crafted to preserve your wealth while preparing to transition assets to your next generations.

**Richard has been in real estate sales for over three decades and is a real estate broker, author, speaker, and coach. To learn more about Richard, visit <https://lombardirealestatewealthadvisors.com/about>, email [Richard@TheLombardiGroup.com](mailto:Richard@TheLombardiGroup.com), or call 310-903-6509.**

**From the Santa Monica History Museum**



*Sheriff Biscailuz on Horseback - Sheriff Eugene Biscailuz (1883-1969) is shown riding a horse in a local parade. He was the 27th sheriff of Los Angeles County, and he organized the California Highway Patrol. SMHM Collection, circa 1955. #36.2.210. Call 310-395-2270 for information on the fascinating collection of images in the museum collection.*

**Unleash Potential With Boys & Girls Clubs Santa Monica Youth Sports Leagues**



*These photos show the energy exhibited in the exciting basketball games played at the Boys & Girls Clubs.*

**By Brandon LaBrie**

In the heart of Santa Monica, dreams come alive through the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica Youth Sports Leagues.

Offering Co-ed Flag Football and Co-ed Volleyball at schools like Grant, Will Rogers, SMASH, Roosevelt, Franklin, McKinley, Edison, St. Anne's, Main Branch, and Mar Vista Gardens – it's a platform to ignite team spirit.

For grades two through five - **Co-ed Flag Football** is where the field transforms into a learning ground where strategy and friendships bloom. From touchdowns to life skills, this league nurtures inclusivity and growth, led by dedicated coaches.

Grades two through five – **Co-ed Volleyball:** Co-ed Volleyball thrives with soaring serves and powerful spikes. Whether novice or seasoned, children from various schools unite, honing skills, self-confidence, and sportsmanship.

**Co-ed Basketball:** At middle schools such as JAMS, Lincoln, SMASH, Main Branch, St. Anne's, and Mar Vista Gardens, Co-ed

Basketball is more than just a game. It's an avenue to learn skills, teamwork, and respect.

At the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica, we believe that sports go beyond the court, field, or gymnasium. Our Youth Sports Leagues are about instilling life lessons that will resonate with your child long after the final whistle. From fostering friendships that stand the test of time to nurturing a passion for healthy lifestyles, our programs are designed to create well-rounded individuals ready to conquer any challenge. Enroll today to witness your children develop into confident athletes and team players.

Join us at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica's Youth Sports Leagues. Visit [www.smbgc.org/sports](http://www.smbgc.org/sports) or email me, Director of Wellness & Athletics, Brandon LaBrie, at [BLaBrie@smbgc.org](mailto:BLaBrie@smbgc.org) for registrations, and more.

Don't miss the chance to be part of the extraordinary!

**From Me to You..**



**By Diane Margolin**  
Thanks to our roving photographer, Clara Wright, who covered the crowds that turned out to greet hometown

hero Tony Todd at Virginia Park last month on Family Movie Night.

*Little Big League* starred Tony, longtime Santa Monica resident, **(Continued on Page 5)**



*This couple enjoyed dinner before the film.*



*Tony Todd was happy to greet his fans at the park.*



*These ladies were ready for a relaxing evening.*



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Reflections From The East

# A Love Letter to Handwritten Letters



**By Qin Sun Stubis**

How long has it been since you last received a handwritten letter, note, or post card, or wrote one yourself? If you have to search your mind for an answer, it has probably been a while. Then again, how many people these days still regularly practice this traditional method of correspondence?

In our new Internet and computer age, we can call, text, email, and Facetime if we have the need, or urge to communicate with one another. We can even send a bouquet of flowers across the ocean with a click of our keyboard.

As our world changes, beautiful stationery and fountain pens

have quietly retreated to the backs of drawers and the corners of shelves, all but forgotten by their owners. Penmanship and letter-writing skills seem to have vanished.

For those of us who grew up before the computer era, however, the nostalgic memories of writing, sending, or receiving a letter are still very real. Sometimes, a letter served as the only connection between faraway family members. In turbulent times, a letter – or its absence – could signify life or death.

During the days of the Cultural Revolution, my father was often jailed in unknown locations. For weeks and months, we were not allowed to see him, and we were worried to death about his life. Helpless and anxious, we waited

for his sporadic postcards, the only signs that he was still alive.

To this day, I have kept this precious correspondence from my father, a stark reminder of the hardships our family went through. Now that he is long gone, I feel his presence through the aging, yellowing paper and faded words he inscribed. You can find one of his messages in my historical family saga, *Once Our Lives*.

In the 1980s, I left China for America. For the first six and a half years, the only physical connections I had with my family were letters. To save postage and pack in as much information as we could, they were written on very thin paper, densely packed with tiny words – each written in a loving, familiar hand. I kept them neatly in a pile by my bedside.

When I missed my family, I reread their letters, one by one, to feel their presence.

My own life experience tells me that handwritten notes can carry tremendous personal and even historical significance. The letters we write today may mean the world to future generations tomorrow. September 1 is World Letter Writing Day – a perfect time to dig out our beautiful old stationery, connect in a uniquely intimate way with friends and family, and renew our age-old love affair with pen and paper.

**You can always reach me at [qstubis@gmail.com](mailto:qstubis@gmail.com), or please visit me at [www.qinsunstubis.com](http://www.qinsunstubis.com). You can find a copy of my book, *Once Our Lives*, online at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).**

## Conversing on the Car Ride Home From School



**By Cheryl Thode**

By now, most if not all, of your children have returned to school. Like me, you are probably enjoying going about your day

while your children are at school.

However, you also miss them. In fact, even though my son is only in preschool, I often wonder throughout the day about how his own day is going.

By the time I pick him up from school, I have millions of questions I want to ask as soon as he gets into the car. However, getting him to answer the question “How was your day?” beyond “It was fun,” “I like trees,” or the dreaded, “I don’t know,” was at first unsuccessful.

From my failed attempts, I have learned that the trick to getting a more specific answer is by being more specific in my question. While it took me a while to come to this realization, it makes sense.

When I’m asked an open-ended question, like “What did you do today?” My first response is “A lot. Why?” Not a very helpful answer,

right? Rather, when asked, “What was the best part of your day?” I am more willing and able to get a specific answer.

Now, when I pick my son up, I ask questions like **1)** What was the hardest thing you had to do today? **2)** Who did you play with today? **3)** What was your favorite part of your lunch? **4)** Did you ask any questions today? **5)** Did any of your friends say something funny today? And, **6)** Can you tell me about something you learned today? (For the last question, I also encourage him to show it to me when we get home, too.)

Another realization, about our after-school car discussions, was that my son needed time to form his response. If I wanted him to reflect and respond with more specificity, he needed time to do that.

I know I have a hard time answering coherently and completely when I am asked a question on the spot. How could I expect a different response from my son, when I bombard him with questions the moment he gets into the car? With this awareness in mind, I also started to wait longer

between questions. Amazingly, giving those extra minutes of silence allowed him time to think and respond with more conversation than we have ever had following a school day. Success!

You may be thinking, why is she focusing on this topic? Well, in all honesty, for children, discussing their day with their parents on the ride home from school is a true rite of passage for all children (no matter the age).

This conversation is a tried-and-true start to encouraging reflection (an important practice for all of us). Reflecting on one’s day and events that took place is a life skill needed in all walks of life. When we reflect, we are building and using skills like remembering, questioning, explaining, sharing, and revisiting.

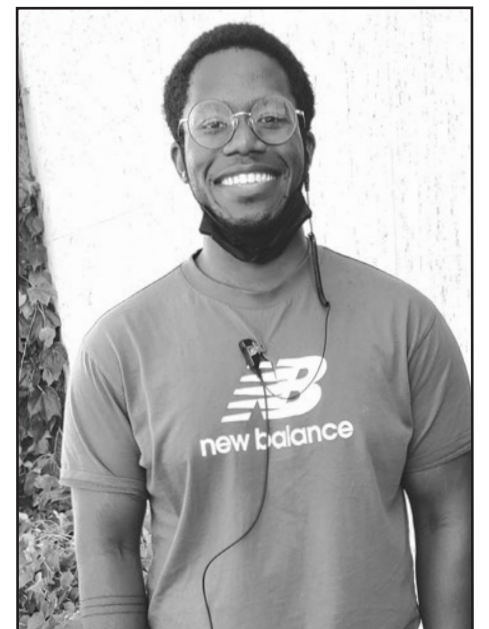
*(Continued on Page 5)*



- Joe Analco

## Do You Recognize This Neighborhood Celebrity?

*(Continued from Page 1)*



“Wil” Wilensky Narcisse is a manager at the New Balance store on Wilshire Boulevard and 26th Street. He has been working there for two years and enjoys connecting with customers of all ages. He definitely knows about providing good customer service.

# Mini Message Bulletin Board

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**Clergy Corner**

**The More Ties People Have in Their Community, the Less Fearful They Are**



**By Rev. John Arthur Nunes**

Even though violent crime statistics are reported to be heading down, feelings, like fear, often aren't aligned with the data. Too many of us sense that we are less safe. Of course, various news media (certainly not this one!) feed the fear cycle in order to raise their viewership or readership. But, I try not to engage in either handwringing or mudslinging. Our culture seems too often to play the blame game and to pass the buck.

There is, in fact, something each of us, can do. We are not helpless. A recent article in *The New York Times* prompted me to think about practical, everyday solutions. It was titled, *Does Fear of Crime Fuel More Crime* by Neil Gross (Sunday, August 6, 2023).

After reading, I was led to ask myself and to ask my congregation to ask themselves: What activities might fortify the social infrastructure of my community, my block, my apartment complex? Which of my neighbors should I check in on, one who appears vulnerable? Do I dare to greet passersby

while dog-walking? Seemingly small gestures can make a formidable impact. "Studies show that the more ties people have to one another in their communities, the less fearful they are of becoming crime victims, perhaps because they know they can count on others," according to Gross.

Though my wife, Monique and I, are relatively new to Santa Monica – officially beginning at Pilgrim in October 2022 – we have already been cheered by some the neighbors we've met so far who embody this emboldening trait.

We look forward to meeting others because the more collegial we all can be towards one another civically, the more confident we together will become psychologically, irrespective of anything like crime statistics or negative news. An early Jewish follower of Jesus phrased it succinctly: "Perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18).

**"Pastor John" aka Rev. John Arthur Nunes, PhD Pastor, Pilgrim Lutheran Church 17th Street and Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica**

**From Me to You**

(Continued from Page 3)

who was happy to meet his fans and sign autographs.

Clara commented on the ambience at the event. She related that the fellowship displayed with so many people from the neighborhood sitting in the park reflected a wonderful camaraderie among the moviegoers. It was the perfect image of community.



Waiting for the movie to start.

**Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood**

**Congratulations to Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch Gold Teams**



The Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch High School All Stars joined the 8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U teams in advancing to the State level this past season. Their 10U team advanced to Nationals for the first time in the history of the league. The High School team, above, came in third place in the State level.

The Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch (SMGF) is a nonprofit youth softball league. Girls from any community, ages five to 15, can join with any skill level. They are a 100% volunteer based organization. They have multiple seasons (Fall, Spring, and All Stars). Each session offers something a little different. They follow the USA Softball Southern California guidelines.

Their Fall season, which begins September 16, runs through November, offers girls a chance to play with other softball leagues who are in the L.A./South Bay district. They play a double-header (two games) each Saturday. They have a Select team for Fall which plays on Sundays. The Select team is formed from girls in each division who would like to play at a more competitive level and one extra day.

Their Spring season starts in late February and goes through

the end of April. During Spring season, girls play against their teams in their own league at Memorial Park and Clover Park in Santa Monica.

They also have a Spring Select team that is formed the same way as Fall Select. These teams play on Sundays. Their league is very fortunate because they are one of the few leagues in the nation to have a JR Ump program. Players in their second year of 12U have the opportunity to take part in the JR Ump training. Once training is complete, they get to ump the Spring games and get compensated. This is a very unique opportunity for the softball players especially as a first job.

All-Star teams are formed at the end of the Spring season. Depending on the amount of girls, the league tries to hold a Silver and Gold team in each division. The youngest All-Star team is 6U and

(Continued on Page 10)

**Montana Avenue and Main Street Events**

On Saturday, September 9, the free Day of the Dog Festival will be held on Main Street between Ocean Park and Strand. There are many fun events planned for dog lovers and pet enthusiasts at the event from noon to 5 p.m.

Don't miss Montana Avenue's signature Art Walk on Saturday,

September 30 from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. For the first time, the street will be closed to cars. There will be 150+ visual artists and local vendors, a thoughtfully-curated wine garden, fun activities for children, live music, and much more.

**Conversing on the Car Ride Home**

(Continued from Page 4)

Daily reflection can give you perspective, provide insight, help you to respond more effectively in the future, and allow us to better understand ourselves.

Using the car ride home to work on this skill is just another way we can help prepare our kids for the future. It is truly fascinating what they tell you. As an added bonus, these conversations in the car will inevitably inspire further dialogue later in the day. Perhaps, even at dinner or bedtime! God Bless.

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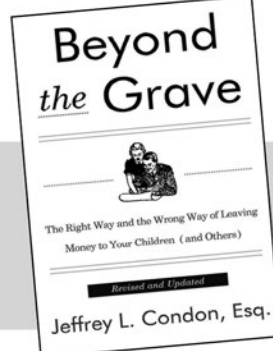
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**Kay Roberts: Shining as the Santa Monica Family YMCA Player of the Year**



**By Eduardo Lowe**

In a historical moment that resonates with empowerment, Kay Roberts has emerged as the epitome of excellence by clinching the title of the Santa Monica

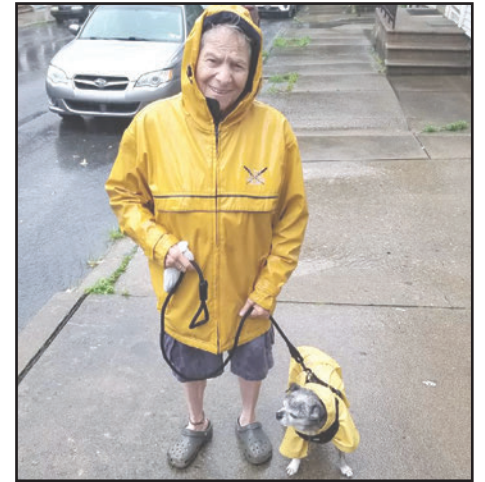
*(Continued on Page 8)*

# People 'n' Pets



Heidi Chianta poses with her Maltese mix, Alfredo. She and her husband Kevin rescued him in 2019. Alfredo is a bundle of energy. He has lots of dog friends in the neighborhood.

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Include your name and phone number also.



Micki Katz was reluctantly pulled out onto a rainy Pennsylvania street by her dog, Ed. She recently adopted Ed from a local shelter.



Martin Hendlish goes hiking with his Labrador retriever, India, who is now six and a half years old.



Our cats are Posie and Abbie. They are sisters that we adopted from a shelter. My husband and I feel like they are our children and we adore them. —Sara Cannon

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**Traveling With Tanya**

**Malta: Remarkable, Intriguing, and Beautiful**

By Tanya Gilbert

For travelers interested in history, architecture, and gastronomy, Malta should be on your list. You will be able to visit ancient fortified cities, megalithic temples, and UNESCO World Heritage sites. Enjoy year-round water sports in the turquoise Mediterranean Sea and experience fabulous cuisine and native wine varieties.

Over its 7,000-year history, Malta has been ruled by the Greeks, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Knights of St. John, Napoleon, and the British Empire. Throughout history, Malta was recognized as having immense strategic importance as a trade route, part of the Ottoman long-term plan to conquer Europe, as well as being critical in WWII.

Malta during WWII was imperative and in over 154 days, sustained in excess of 6,700 tons of bombs, forcing inhabitants to live in underground tunnels. All of this extraordinary history is woven into its architecture, food, language, religion, and culture. The Maltese people are warm, friendly, and very proud.

There is no shortage of things to see and do on land or sea. Valletta has hundreds of historical sites making it one of the most historically concentrated places in the world. Depending on the amount of time you have to visit, consider these highlights:

- Maraxlokk is a must! Go early and take a water taxi to St. Peter's pool for a swim. A couple of great local dining options are Tartarun and La Nostra Padrona.



Tanya standing on the shores of Malta.

- Three Cities is an easy five-minute ferry from Valletta. Visit the Inquisitor's Palace, the megalithic temple Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, and dine at Il-Hnejja or one of the many restaurants along the marina with views of Valletta and Fort St. Angelo.
- Escape the bustling capital and head to Mdina, a great day trip, or stay a couple of nights at Xara Palace within the walled city, taking in the neighboring Rabat.

My mom and I recently enjoyed a week in Malta and quickly realized it was not enough time. I guess we will just have to go back!

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

**Thoughts From a Second-Time Father**

**What Will My Children Enjoy as They Get Older?**



By Michael Margolin

Like we have many times before, my wife Enjoli and I were watching old videos of Alexa. The most recent one was when she was about two. The video showed her exploring her new playhouse. Her pint-sized house was about 10-square feet and featured a sink with no water and a grill with no heat.

Like many projects that I have put together for my kids, I tightened everything as if it was going to be checked by the city inspector. And, other than having a little trouble figuring out which way her waist-high door would swing, she very much enjoyed her new outdoor structure.

Often when children are about that age, and many other ages, you wonder what they will be like when they get older, and what hobbies they will enjoy.

Fast-forward to present day, with our 10-year-old Alexa, and some of those questions are beginning to get answered. For one thing, soccer is a huge part of her life, and something she enjoys very much.

Watching her succeed and get better has been so much fun. After a recent private training session she went to, a new trainer spoke

to Enjoli and me. She was impressed by Alexa's positive attitude, coachability, and her overall demeanor. If she scorched a net when scoring a goal, I do not think I would be as proud as I am when I hear somebody else, who has only known my daughter for an hour, make such complimentary statements about her. So, as I wonder what type of person she will be, some of the pieces to that puzzle are falling more into place.

This growing up stage continues to keep building momentum. Though it is not groundbreaking, Alexa has begun to ride her bike alone several blocks around our house. When I was 10, I rode around a lot where my parents could not see me. Mostly it was to go to a friend's house, and I was in a safe neighborhood. Even though we live in what I would consider to be a safe neighborhood, knowing that Alexa was out of view around another block felt as if she was the Apollo 8 briefly losing contact with mission control as it went around the moon. Of course, you understand, this is because she is a person who means the world to me, and that analogy does not feel like too much of an exaggeration.

**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.**

**Kay Roberts** (Continued from Page 6)

Family YMCA Youth Basketball Player of the Year. This milestone marks her achievement and is a testament to the program's commitment to nurturing young talent.

Breaking barriers and defying norms, Kay Roberts takes her place as the first female recipient of this esteemed award in the program's annals. Her dedication, skill, and unwavering passion for the game have paved the way for a new chapter in the program's history, inspiring young girls and boys alike to dream big and reach for the stars.

The significance of this achievement is underlined by the collaborative efforts that have made it possible. The Los Angeles Lakers Youth Foundation and UCLA Health have played instrumental roles in supporting and amplifying the impact of the Santa Monica Family YMCA's basketball program. Their partnership reflects a shared commitment to fostering

youth sportsmanship, skill development, and personal growth.

Paul Drew, the Santa Monica Y Basketball Coordinator, expresses profound gratitude towards the partners who have fueled this accomplishment. However, at the heart of this achievement is Kay Roberts herself. Her remarkable embodiment of the core values of the YMCA's youth basketball program is what truly makes her shine.

In the ever-evolving landscape of youth sports, Kay Roberts' achievement is a beacon of inspiration, a reminder that dedication and passion know no boundaries.

To learn more about the transformative impact of the Santa Monica Family YMCA's youth sports leagues, feel free to contact them at ysports@ymcasm.org. As we applaud Kay Roberts, we also salute the program for fostering a space where dreams are turned into reality, one dribble at a time.

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# Community Service on the Westside

## Nancy Bender, SMPL Branch Manager Addressed Lions Club



**By J. Kingsley Fife**  
We Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions always look forward to our dinner meetings, held on the second Wednesday of

every month. We enjoy the camaraderie of our fellow Lions, and always have an interesting program.

Last month, our speaker was Nancy Bender, Branch Manager of the Santa Monica Library. She gave a very informative slide program on their recent history and all the programs they offer. They were hit hard when the COVID pandemic occurred. The libraries lost half their staff and they closed down, offering only curbside service.

Gradually, they opened everything up during 2021 and 2022. Now, they have new expanded hours. It's amazing all the programs they offer: computer classes, family story times, reading programs, writing resumés, tutoring, plus the Arts and Literacy Festival at Virginia Avenue Park. For all the details, email [library@santamonica.gov](mailto:library@santamonica.gov), or call 310-458-8600.

Our Lions Club recently participated in the annual "Back to

School" event put on by the Police Activities League (PAL). They gave out school supplies to the members who also got free dental exams and haircuts. Many groups participated, including the police and fire departments. At our Lions table, we gave out Target Gift Certificates to help them purchase their supplies. It's these outreach programs that make our membership in the Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions Club so satisfying.

Save the date for our once-in-a-hundred-years celebration! Our Roaring Twenties Speakeasy Centennial Gala will be on Sunday, October 29, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Santa Monica Elks Lodge, 1040 Pico Blvd. Enjoy a delicious dinner, silent and live auctions, gift basket raffle, full Speakeasy Bar, and Jazz Age entertainment. Do the Charleston! Tickets are \$75 per person and will be available soon through EventBrite, or at the door. To RSVP and/or buy tickets, email Lion Kathy at [kboole@gmail.com](mailto:kboole@gmail.com).

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](mailto:jkfife88@yahoo.com), or call 310-454-2960.

## SMBWC Presents Scholarships



**By Pat Webber**

The Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club's (SMBWC) Elmira T. Stephens Scholarships for 2023 were awarded to three

Santa Monica High School seniors this past May. We are pleased to introduce them to you here.

**Wongiel Gebeyehu** attended Samohi for three years. She graduated with a 3.7 GPA. Wongiel plans to attend USC and major in psychology with the goal of becoming a social worker. She was the founder and president of End Period Poverty, a member of the Jewelry Club, the Black Student Union, and the AVID Club. Outside of school, Wongiel volunteered with the Santa Monica Police Activities League (PAL) and the Ethiopian Christian Fellowship Church. Her career goal as a social worker is to focus on mental health and address issues such as poverty, homelessness, and discrimination.

**Kelly Larios** also attended Samohi for three years and graduated with a 3.0 GPA. Her choice of college is open to several UC and CSU campuses, but she plans to

major in nursing or Psychobiology. In high school, she was a member of AVID, and outside of school she was a volunteer tutor for elementary school students. During the COVID epidemic, she worked as a nanny. She wants to make a difference in her community after college.

Our final scholar this year is **Elizabeth Skarsten**. She, too, attended Samohi for three years and graduated with a 3.69 GPA. Going to the East Coast, Elizabeth plans to attend Fordham University and major in psychology. Elizabeth was active in the Sexual Harassment Awareness Club and the Mental Health Awareness Club. Outside of school she volunteered with Meals on Wheels, Hope Lutheran Church, and Los Angeles Family Housing. She is planning to become a licensed psychologist with her own practice that focuses on domestic violence survivors.

Club members donate funds to the Elmira T. Stephens Scholarship Fund through card playing and social activities. Anyone interested in joining the Club is invited to call 310-395-1308, or go to our website at [smbwc.org](http://smbwc.org).

## What Was It Like (Continued from Page 1)

were treated from beginning to end was done with class and was, "A1."

The results on the field did not go the way the team would have hoped. Wes's team fell to a team from Texas, and was just short against the German team. And, from what I know about this skipper and his troops, they did not go quietly.

The results inside the lines were not what they desired, but there was winning done outside of those lines, and beyond the dugouts. This was exemplified by social media posts of these players with their arms around their counterparts from around the globe. How far can that go? The German team told Wes that they would like to host them in Germany. A corresponding invite to Santa Monica is said to be in the works, too.

I asked Coach Terry what he thinks he and his team learned about this experience. He told me, firmly, that they are, "Good enough." Good enough to compete against such a high level of competition. Certainly good enough to ignore the outside noise and negativity that was levied at him and his staff when they were initially putting this team together. And, good enough to compete at a level of competition that Wes referred to as, "revealing."

It turns out that teams from non-baseball-dominant countries like Germany, can be pretty darn good. This team has the backbone that Terry instills in his players. From instrumenting that 9-2 comeback to get to the World

Series, to taking groundballs in a parking lot before one of their World Series games because there was nowhere else to do it.

The scoreboard might not have reflected it, but there was winning done in Illinois by the boys from Santa Monica, and their city should be proud.

They returned home for more tournaments and showcases for them to display their skillsets. Back at practice, and eager and ready to get back to work, the attitude of the boys and the willingness to having had to prepare for a game in a parking lot reassures Wes he has "baseball players."

The skill of experience is one they can return armed with for the next World Series. It's a ride they all hope they get to take again. This ride was so important that Tim Leary, who is one of the coaches, and also a member of the 1988 World Series-winning Dodgers, skipped Orel Hershiser's enshrinement into the Legends of Dodgers Baseball. Leary did not want to miss out. And, who could blame him? Side note: Hershiser did not.

These baseball players from Santa Monica have been rewarded with an incredible journey. And, as long as they continue to listen and remember what Coach Terry is trying to instill in them as players, and much more importantly, as young men, the fruits of their journeys are just beginning to be recognized.

**Michael Margolin is a longtime staff columnist.**

## Public Service Workers Honored (Continued from Page 1)



Santa Monica Rotarians, from left, Matt Williams, Mike Kallhoff, and James Fleming welcomed guest Christie Lopez to the special meeting.

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### Right at Home Will Send the Right Caregiver When You Need Help

Have you ever had a parent in the hospital waiting to go home after a procedure? In the morning, the nurse tells you that your parent needs a caregiver and you have until 11 a.m. to find someone to help you. The social worker may have given you a choice of agencies to call, but how do you know which one is the best?

You can feel assured when you contact Tim Petlin of Right at Home that you will be working with someone who listens to your concerns. He has made it his goal to be sure the caregiver and patient are a good fit. He continually works to be sure his staff has the latest training and his patients are happy with their service. If there is a problem, his goal is to solve it.

How did Tim get into this business? Growing up in the San Fernando Valley and L.A.'s Westside, Tim was one of ten children. His mother, an older sister, and brother were nurses. Tim worked in the administrative side of the health care field.

Twelve years ago, Tim decided to go out on his own. He became part of the franchise, Right at Home. In 2017, the state required licensing for health care agencies. Tim has completed the marketing program and recently hired a director of community relations to "reach out to the community to strengthen



Tim Petlin, right, with his wife, Annie, left, and daughter Audrey.

their relationships."

Tim is always looking for qualified caregivers. To become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), the person needs special training. To be part of his agency, the employees must have annual training of five hours a year, for which they are paid.

Tim has always focused on staying healthy through running. He used to do triathlons and even participated in four Iron Man races several years ago. His wife, Annie, has been a vet at the Santa Monica Pet Medical Center for 24 years. They have one daughter, Audrey, who is in the fourth grade.

To find out more about the services of Right at Home, call 310-313-0600.

## An Update From ERBA Markets

### Enjoy Cannabis in a Consumption Lounge



By **Stephen Freedman**

Cannabis has been legal in California since 2016. Dispensaries are seemingly everywhere, and purchasing cannabis has never been easier. However, one of the main issues facing cannabis consumers is where to actually smoke.

Most rental properties and businesses restrict all smoking, and the consumption of cannabis in public places is still illegal. This makes actually smoking cannabis extremely difficult. What is filling this space and giving relief to these patients is the consumption lounge.

Consumption spaces are licensed areas for cannabis consumption. Only those aged 21 or older are allowed to enter, regardless of doctor recommendation. Only products purchased on the premises are permitted within the lounge, and no outside product, alcohol, or tobacco is allowed. Outside food and beverages (non-medicated) are now permitted within these lounges, and they cannot operate between 2 a.m. to 6 a.m.

These lounges not only provide the public with a space to consume their cannabis, but also aid in breaking down taboos and

misconceptions of cannabis. Having a physical establishment where adults can use in a free, inviting, and safe space helps in normalizing and removing any negative stigma associated with the plant and its use.

Like all things cannabis, regulations vary by city and jurisdiction. While most have not permitted consumption yet, one city that has embraced this new normal is West Hollywood. Branded the "Emerald Village," WeHo is becoming an epicenter for cannabis culture. Already boasting a number of dispensaries, they've been at the forefront of consumption lounge permits.

One such lounge is the Ganja Giggle Garden at the WOODS WeHo. Here, guests are welcomed into an oasis in the heart of the city. Cabañas are available to rent on an hourly basis, or one can come and relax in our outdoor smoking space, surrounded by over 300 species of plants and four resident exotic birds. You can also enjoy a cannabis-infused beverage at our cannabis bar, all while relaxing by our magical koi pond.

However and wherever you choose to consume, always do so safely.

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

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## Congratulations to Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch Teams

(Continued from Page 5)

the oldest is High School.

Each All-Star team is entered into tournaments that are run by other All-Star Leagues to practice before the L.A./South Bay district tournament. If a team makes a certain place in their division bracket, they are given the opportunity to advance to States.

According to Jessica Reynoso, who sent this story to us, "The League is so proud that all our gold teams advanced to States, which is a first time in Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch (SMGF) history to have all the teams in every division advance together."

"Our teams did great at the Southern California B State Tournament held in Lancaster from 7/6-7/9. Our 10U team advanced to Nationals, which is the first

time a 10U team at SMGF advanced to Nationals. Our 14U and High school teams also advanced to Nationals.

"USA Softball Southern California region has some of the toughest softball competition and to make it to Nationals is indeed an honor. Each of these All-Star teams put in a lot of work and battles through each tournament to make it on top. We are so very proud of each of these teams and are happy to have them represent SMGF. Now, ours is on the map as a recreational and competitive league."

**Jessica Reynoso is a parent and board member for Santa Monica Fastpitch.**

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**Planning Ahead**

**Trust Accounting - Why and When**



**By Lisa Alexander, Esq.**  
The Trustee of an Irrevocable Trust has a legal duty to account to the beneficiaries of the Trust. This makes sense. How else

will a beneficiary know if the Trustee is acting in the best interests of the Trust, according to the Trust terms? A Trustee is required to provide accountings at least annually. If the Trustee doesn't account, after a proper request, the beneficiary can bring the Trustee to Court to compel an accounting.

Apart from the legal duty, there are benefits to accountings, especially when there is a difficult or litigious beneficiary.

If a beneficiary wants to sue the Trustee for breach of trust, the beneficiary has four years to do so. This is referred to as a "statute of limitation" meaning after four years, it's too late to sue.

However, if the Trustee accounts to the beneficiary, the time for the beneficiary to sue for breach of trust is shortened to three years. The three-year statute of limitation starts to run on the date the beneficiary receives an accounting that contains sufficient information so the beneficiary knows she has a claim against the Trustee,

or reasonably should have inquired into the existence of a claim against the Trustee.

The Trustee is required to account to all beneficiaries who are entitled to receive distributions from the Trust. The Trustee is not generally required to account to future beneficiaries. But, the Trustee may want to take advantage of the three-year statute of limitation by accounting to future beneficiaries, even though not required to do so. This will limit how far back a beneficiary can go in challenging the Trustee's actions.

For ultimate protection, the Trustee can submit her accounting to the Court for approval. So long as the beneficiary receives proper notice, once the accounting is approved by order of the Court and the time to file an appeal has ended, the beneficiary can no longer challenge anything disclosed in the accounting.

Of course, any Trustee or beneficiary of a Trust who has concerns about Trust accountings should get advice from her own attorney.

**Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.  
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**Making the Best of Chemo (Continued from Page 2)**

go through chemo, I went into full-on producer/director mode.

"My job had always been to anticipate problems and solve them before they even happened," Celia said. "I was surprised to find how little helpful information about the day-to-day challenges of chemo was out there. I decided to keep myself busy by remedying that."

Celia's professional skills as a podcast writer, and television producer all came into play researching *SMOOTH*. Her TV credits, besides *House Hunters*, include ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, and HGTV's *Tiny House Hunters*. As a novelist with Kens-

ington Publishing, Celia has written three trilogies: the *Venice Beach Romances*, the *Fat Chance, Texas* series, and the *Tiny House* novels. Celia is also a co-author of *A Texas Kind of Christmas*, released by Kensington.

*SMOOTH* is available online at Amazon.com.



- Joe Analco

**Paws and Claws**

**My New Lab Barks a Lot After I Leave Home**



**By Dr. Frank Lavac, MS, DVM**  
**Q: I recently adopted a five-year-old Labrador Retriever from the shelter. My neighbor tells me**

**that he barks a lot after I leave for work. He also has damaged the door and door jamb by scratching, and maybe biting those areas. Could he have separation anxiety?**

**A:** That's very astute! You may very well be correct. There is a higher incidence of separation anxiety among shelter dogs. The typical symptoms associated with separation anxiety are vocalization, destruction, and inappropriate elimination. Board Certified Behaviorists like Dr. Debra

Horwitz label the disorder "separation-related syndrome" or "home-alone behaviors."

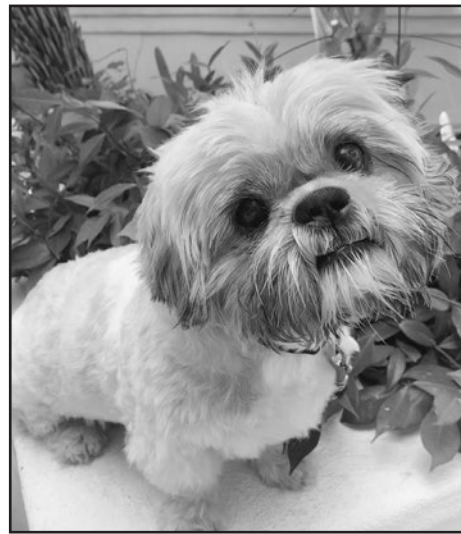
Speak with your veterinarian or make an appointment with a Board Certified Veterinary Behaviorist to make sure that an accurate diagnosis is made.

The best way to confirm the diagnosis is to film your dog while he is home alone after you have left the home for at least 30 minutes. Underlying root causes include fear, panic, anxiety, and frustration.

Medications like fluoxetine, clomipramine, benzodiazepines, and trazodone can be helpful. A pheromone product called Adaptil may be useful in reducing anxiety. Medications without a behavioral modification plan are often unsuccessful.

**Dr. Frank Lavac can be reached by calling 310-828-4587.**

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*S'mores* is a 22 lb., seven to eight-year-old "teddy bear cuddler." Although sight-impaired, he has love overflowing and gets along with everyone. For information, go to [www.LhasaHappyHomes.org](http://www.LhasaHappyHomes.org). Contact Randee Goldman.

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**Love Links**

**Julia Hirt and Joseph DeFazio to Celebrate First Wedding Anniversary**

Julia Hirt said she and her husband, Joseph DeFazio, had the opportunity to "grow up together," as they didn't officially start dating until after college. Joe was the youngest of three boys, and Julia noticed that "he was the kindest person I've ever known. There was such a warmth about him. If his friends were having a bad day, they would go to talk to Joe."

Julia, who grew up in Long Beach, had met her husband, Joe through a mutual friend, Megan Watne, when Julia was 20. Joe had grown up with Megan in Pasadena and Julia met Megan at Santa Clara University.

After college, she and Joe lived in Santa Monica separately for almost six years. "I have spent the last ten years working in the television industry," she explained. "Joe works in business development for a gaming company."

"We love the community," she shared. "We enjoy walking around our neighborhood, spending time at local restaurants and our favorite coffee shop, Caffe Luxxe. Joe plays in the local Santa Monica softball league and has been on the same team, the Jacuzzi Boys, for the past eight years."

In October, 2020, Julia recalls,



Family friend Bill Poulsen officiated at their wedding. The families are longtime neighbors who always celebrate holidays together.



Julia Hirt and Joseph DeFazio at their memorable wedding in Ojai.

"Joe planned a belated birthday weekend for me at our favorite hotel, the Ojai Valley Inn. He proposed over breakfast on the balcony of our hotel room. We spent the rest of the day riding our bikes around Ojai." The town has always been a special place for them.

Their wedding was planned for September 24, 2022 at a private home in Ojai. Their wedding planner was Erica España of Twine Events, and the photography was done by Via Imagery. The couple was so happy that they could have their family and best friends together for the weekend celebration. Another highlight of their wedding was that they read the vows they had written in front of their 125 guests. If there was any doubt that Julia and Joe had made the right choice, hearing their vows would have assured them that the couple did.

In Joe's vows, he said that Julia makes things more beautiful, that she is one of the most thoughtful people he has known, the most thoughtful gift giver, she really loves to cook, and that he would always be the Jeffrey to her Ina. (He was referring to cookbook author, Ina Garten, who loves to cook for her husband, Jeffrey.) Joe also said she makes him want to be the best version of himself that he could be.

When Julia thought back to her wedding, she recalled that everyone was on the dance floor the entire time. Their two-year-old niece, Ella, was the most adorable flower girl. As she was walking down the aisle with her mom and dad, she suddenly tripped. But, she immediately picked herself up and kept walking all the way down the aisle.

As Julia and Joe prepare to celebrate their first anniversary, we wish them continued happiness and good health for many years to come.

—D.M.

**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.**