



Santa Monica Family YMCA Installs New Officers and Advisory Board



Each January, the Santa Monica Family YMCA installs new officers to its Executive Committee and Advisory Board. Above, from left, outgoing President Sherri Lee-Lewis thanks the Executive Committee for their service and support. With her, Norm Lantz, Sharon Gavin-Perlmutter, Michael Peattie, Tully Watson, Don Cohen, and Alicia Cortrite. More on Page 11.

Celebrating Women's History Month

By Gigi Appelbaum-Schwartz
March is Women's History Month. It's a celebration designed to recognize the many accomplishments and contributions of women to the United States, and to society in general.

But, what does March being Women's History Month truly mean, and when did it all begin?

The first people to formally make an effort to celebrate women's history were the Education Task Force of Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, who in 1978, planned a "Women's History Week" to correspond with the already established Women's History Day on March 8.

The event was led by a local teacher from Santa Rosa, California, and it explored women's impacts on history, culture, and society through presentations and essay contests at dozens of schools throughout Sonoma County. Though this celebration was initially intended to be a one-time thing, it quickly caught on, and the following year, people across the country began to organize events of their own.

When Gerda Lerner, a well-respected historian and author, led a conference on women's history at Sarah Lawrence College that same year, it kicked off a surge of women's activist groups advocat-

ing for the reinstatement of an official Women's History Week.

And, they were successful. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter officially declared the week of March 8 as Women's History Week, and in 1987, after additional advocacy from activist groups, Congress finally proclaimed the entire month of March "Women's History Month," which we continue to celebrate today.

Gerda Lerner, once said that, "Women's history is women's right – an essential, indispensable heritage from which we can draw pride, comfort, courage, and long-range vision." And, she was right – by recognizing and celebrating all that women have accomplished and contributed to the world, we as a society continue to ensure that women maintain the respect and rights they have fought so hard for. So, how can you celebrate this month? How can you do your part to contribute to the fight for women's equality, through your celebrations?

The first step to activism and advocacy is always education, so one of the most important things that you can do this month is make an effort to educate yourself about women's history, as well as the fight for women's rights and equality. By watching documentaries, reading books, listening to podcasts, watching presentations (such as TED Talks), visiting museums, and doing everything in your power to become well-educated, you will be fulfilling the true purpose of this celebration, which is to spread awareness about women's struggles, accomplishments, and contributions throughout time.

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Do You Recognize This Neighborhood Celebrity?

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Top 10 Ideas for March Entertaining at Home



Bright Spring colors bring joy to your festive holiday table.

By Maureen Molé

March brings in St. Patrick's Day, and Easter. So, there are many reasons to plan a party. Here are some easy ideas to make your party festive and fun.

1. Plan an Easter egg hunt for children indoors or outdoors. Use colorful plastic eggs filled with chocolates and candy.
2. To add color to a holiday table, wrap jelly beans in cellophane and tie the packet with a pretty ribbon. Put one at each place setting.
3. For a St. Patrick's Day party, use miniature shamrock plants as a centerpiece for either a casual buffet or sit-down dinner. At the end of the party, each guest can take home a small plant as a memento.
4. If you're hosting Easter dinner for the family, ask the children to color Easter eggs and put the name of each guest on the egg in crayon. Then use the eggs as place cards on the table.
5. At a cocktail party, for better mixing, never have enough chairs for each person. You don't want

everyone sitting in a circle. Perhaps you can arrange groups of three or four chairs.

6. For a buffet-style party, tie flatware and a napkin with a pastel organza ribbon to make a handy space-saving and colorful addition to your table.
7. For better circulation at a large party, set up the bar in one area, and the food in another.
8. Add a festive and colorful look to your table with small bowls filled with jelly beans and other Easter candy on a bed of cellophane "Easter grass."
9. At a cocktail party, serve finger foods that can easily be managed without a dish and flatware.
10. For a fun-conversation starter, ask each guest to talk about a memorable St. Patrick's Day or Easter celebration or tradition.

Maureen Molé is a lecturer, product spokesperson, and the author of *The Book of Entertaining at Home*. Email her at MaureenMole@gmail.com.

Find Out About the Myths and Health Benefits of Yarrow

**By Bee Barba-Padilla
California Climate Action
Corps Fellow**

Humans have held a special relationship with plants for thousands of years. Our species' co-evolution and symbiotic relationship with plants is encapsulated in our origin stories, myths, artwork, culi-



Yarrow is one of the native plants growing in the City Hall East edible food courtyard.

nary uses, diets and even our DNA makeup.

Herbalist Layla Krysty Faghali in her forthcoming book: *The Land in Our Bones* uses the term 'plantcestor' to describe a plant that our human ancestors have shared a deep love for, and intimate knowledge of, for its many gifts such as food, clothing, medicine, and ceremonial tools.

However, for many of us today, the common uses and wisdom of plants may or may not have been passed down or present in our childhood, family traditions, or formal education. In America, it was once fairly common for families to grow their own vegetable patches, including small herb gardens. Not surprisingly, the Industrial Revolution and long modern

work schedule made it more difficult to tend to them.

One of our oldest plantcestors known to humans is *yarrow*, a flowering plant native to North America, Europe, and Asia, found nestled in between the teeth of a Neanderthal, once alive 60,000 years ago. Yarrow is one of native plants living in our Santa Monica City Hall East edible courtyard.

As part of the Living Building Challenge, our local City Hall East building's edible food courtyard of native plants and fruit trees offers us a unique opportunity for local residents, city workers, and the larger community to restore our interrelationship to nature.

Join us at City Hall East for our next free Herbal Tea & Meditation Power Hour on Wednesday,



Books about healing with plants will be on display at the tea on March 20.

March 20 from 12 p.m.-2 p.m. to learn more about the myths, origins, health benefits, and spirit medicine of yarrow.

Kindness is Free Program Developed by Boys & Girls Clubs of the West San Gabriel Valley and Eastside

By Josué Arias

Kindness is Free, powered by Boys & Girls Clubs, is a local initiative created in 2020 by the Boys & Girls Clubs of the West San Gabriel Valley and Eastside. This remarkable program, spearheaded by visionary Lori Milgard, and the Club's CEO, JR Dzubak, has since blossomed into a worldwide movement that resonates far beyond its origins in Southern California.

Most recently, Kindness is Free participated on New Year's Day in the 2024 Rose Parade with its inaugural Kindness float led by 40 youth kindness ambassadors from across ten different school districts and various Boys & Girls Clubs.

At its core, Kindness is Free aims to encourage a culture of compassion, inclusivity, and respect among the next generation of youth. It teaches the profound significance of treating others with fairness and compassion, both in



Kindness Ambassadors from across different school districts and various Boys & Girls Clubs across the Southland participated in the inaugural Kindness is Free float on New Year's Day at the Pasadena Rose Parade.



While focused on youth development, Kindness is Free also aims to empower individuals of all ages to make a positive impact, embracing kindness as a way of life, by taking the kindness pledge and joining the movement. The kindness pledge is at the heart of the program, and Kindness is Free invites everyone to take part. The pledge is short, universal, and intended to inspire all members of the community, from students and teens, to business professionals and celebrities alike.


You can take the kindness pledge, schedule a pop-up, download a kindness start-up guide, and donate to Kindness is Free by visiting their website www.kindnessisfree.org, or following them on Instagram @kindnessisfreeorg.

words and actions. The program is designed to encourage introspection and instill values that underscore the importance of showing respect, treating everyone equally, and practicing empathy. Through presentations, pop-ups, and special Kindness Pledge events, the movement is spreading the message of kindness and inspiring youth to take charge.



Happy March Birthday to
Kris Andresen,
Donna Byrd, Alan Glick,
Stan Fox, Larry Mortorff,
Carol Ann Emmitt,
Jeannie and Tebb Kusserow,
Mike Cortrite,
Pamela Lawrence,
Margaret Talai, Jerry Harris,
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Distribution: Paper Pushers LA
Special thanks to Rufus Baker and
Bernadette Lucier

The Real Estate Advisor

Unraveling the Perception Gap: Real Estate Agent Income vs Statistical Reality



By Richard Lombardi

There has been a growing controversy over real estate agents' commission structure. This article is part one of a multi-part series on real estate and professional compensation.

Over the last decade or so, the perception of lucrative incomes often surrounds the image of successful agents closing high-profile deals. This perception has been widely driven by reality television series focused on very successful real estate agents, who are often former models, actors, athletes, or descendants of multi-millionaires, selling high-end properties in the high-end markets of Beverly Hills, New York, and Miami.

However, a closer look at the statistical reality reveals a more nuanced and challenging landscape for many in the profession. Contrary to the widespread belief, statistical data suggests that real estate incomes vary significantly. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the median annual wage for real estate brokers and sales agents in May 2020

was \$50,730. However, this figure masks the wide spectrum of earnings within the industry, with top-performing agents earning substantially more than those in less dynamic markets struggling to achieve similar financial success.

It is important to keep in mind that these numbers are based on gross income. Real estate agents are nearly exclusively independent contractors who pay their own professional dues, education, health insurance, professional liability insurance, administrative and marketing expenses, so the average net income is significantly lower.

According to their website, the Combined Los Angeles Westside Multiple List System (CLAW) has approximately 15,000 dues-paying members that focus on business predominately on the Westside.

Also, according to CLAW, in 2023, just under 7,000 homes or condos were sold on the Westside. Even with each transaction potentially having a buyer agent and a selling agent, this averages out to less than one property sold per agent.

The perception gap arises from a focus on high-profile success

(Continued on Page 5)

Byte by Byte

Infrastructure and the Desert Deluge



By Dr. Miceala Shocklee

Having grown up in the middle of the U.S. in a place that regularly experienced the extremes of all seasons, I've found myself spending most of my adult life in some kind of desert.

While Los Angeles and San Diego climates are still a far cry from the high deserts found further inland, they do share certain features with where I live now in Abu Dhabi. I've been lucky that most of my desert existence has been coastal, mitigating some of the sear and scorch. Abu Dhabi certainly sees more extreme temperature swings than Southern California, but most of the year, weather hovers around the middle of the bell curve. Sunny, upper 70s to mid 80s, little to no wind except for occasional periods of gust – this is how I've experienced most (non-summer) days here in the UAE.

Which means, like in Southern California, when there is weather, it hits hard. Core memories from my undergraduate days in Pasadena include watching the roads and sidewalks flood on rainy days that, by Midwestern standards, would have been fairly ordinary. I remember being left with the impression that while the city engineering coped well with 98% of its weather year, it left that other 2% a time that felt – adventurous. I also remember realizing

that for most of the local Californians around me, weather beyond some clouds in the sky was a novelty.

Abu Dhabi has just had its first (and possibly last) big rainfall of the year, and the experience of it has been resonant. The gravel lot adjacent to my workplace has garnered a new lake I'm quite certain we could probably kayak on.

Sports bars open in the early morning to host Americans watching the Super Bowl at 4 a.m. were flooded, not just with sports (and Taylor Swift) fans, but also with ceiling leaks, as roofs not designed to handle that much moisture at once simply gave way.

While I grew up with school being canceled for snow days, we're on day two of rain day closure here. Across the country in Al Ain, a city usually hotter and crisper than Abu Dhabi, roads are currently covered in hail and ice. The experience was so unusual that out of safety concerns, the government had to issue a warning that drivers trying to film rain or hail while at the wheel were liable to receive a fine.

It seems that across the world, when it comes to weather, deserts certainly have a flair for drama.

Dr. Miceala Shocklee is a part-time freelance writer and editor and a full-time staff veterinarian with SeaWorld Abu Dhabi Yas Island in the United Arab Emirates. Miceala started her career in Santa Monica and West Los Angeles and now writes of her adventures from other shores.

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day With a Traditional Irish Stew

Family Features - If St. Patrick's Day inspires feelings of hearth and home, you can celebrate tradition with warm, filling meals that harken back to Irish heritage. Soups and stews are certain to conjure up some nostalgia.

This Irish Sláinte Stew offers a warm welcome to guests with your own way of toasting to the holiday – Sláinte is "cheers" in Gaelic. This hearty meal is perfect for a crowd with traditional stew meat slow-cooked in a Dutch oven with beef broth, spices, carrots, potatoes, herbs, and an Irish draught beer. To find more ways to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, visit Culi nary.net.

Irish Sláinte Stew

- Oil, for drizzling
- 1 pound stew meat
- 1-2 pinches salt, plus additional to taste, divided
- 1-2 pinches pepper
- 3 Tbsps. flour
- 48 ounces beef broth
- 1 cup carrots, diced
- 1 cup celery, diced
- 3 cups potatoes, diced
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 2 Tbsps. garlic pepper
- 1 Tbsp. dried thyme
- 1/2 Tbsp. dried rosemary
- 1 Tbsp. dried chives
- 1 bottle Irish draught beer of choice



A warm stew is perfect for a cold evening's dinner.

- In Dutch oven over medium heat, drizzle oil and brown stew meat with salt and pepper. Sprinkle flour over meat.
- Add beef broth, carrots, celery, potatoes, onion, garlic pepper, thyme, rosemary, and chives. Add Irish draught beer.
- Bring to boil, stirring for 5 minutes. Simmer 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Serve with crusty bread.

Perfect for a supper on a cold Spring night. Enjoy.

Other Irish foods to try include Irish Soda Bread, Colcannon, Corned Beef and Cabbage, and Potato Soup.

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Reflections From The East

Germs, Bacteria, and Viruses . . . Oh, My!



By Qin Sun Stubis

When I was a little girl and accidentally dropped my steamed bun on our concrete floor, my mother always stooped down and quickly rescued it. She then vigorously brushed it with her fingers and palm before handing it back to me.

“Getting rid of some dirt and germs,” she said, and smiled at me. “I don’t want you to get sick.” I also learned from her that germs, namely bacteria and viruses, could get people sick.

It was during the years of the Great Chinese Famine and the Cultural Revolution. Food, even if dirty or spoiled, could not be wasted. Every morsel helped keep us alive. Though I was little, I understood the pain of having an

empty stomach. I was also taught not to put soiled food straight into my eager mouth. I sensed that there were things out there to get me.

For a few years, I mimicked my mother’s simple and crude way of protecting my health. In my little mind, bacteria were just as bad as viruses, and I had to keep myself away from them. Then, one day in my elementary school, I learned something shocking in my health class. Imagine how my jaw dropped when I found out that not all bacteria were bad, and some even lived inside our bodies!

I can still recall that very uncomfortable, squeamish feeling inside of me, knowing my body was the host to other organisms. How did these creepy things get into me? I wondered. How can my body tell if it is letting in good or bad visitors? I prayed that my body was smarter than I was because I

could not even see the germs, let alone understand whether they would help or harm me.

My knowledge of biology was simple at the time. Now, being a grown woman, I feel that I should know better, but truthfully, I don’t feel that at all. I know that viruses and bacteria are the oldest forms of life here on Earth. They flourished and dominated our world long, long, before humankind emerged – by billions of years.

But, I don’t understand at all how these single-celled, brainless, primitive organisms could be so smart. Take the COVID virus for an example, I don’t understand how it decided when to invade the human race. It launched a sudden, worldwide pandemic before we even had time to realize it, react, and defend ourselves.

I don’t understand how it knew how to mutate every time our smart scientists created a new

vaccine to defend us.

Why can’t our vast army of scientists defeat and eliminate a tiny virus? Why can’t our intelligent bodies mount a better resistance in the face of a dangerous enemy? I wish I were a scientist myself. Though I understand little, I have come to a realization that their 3.5 billion years of life experience here on Earth may have given them the upper hand over us humans. I feel like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz as she walked through the enchanted forest . . . but instead of the lions, tigers, and bears to fear, I now worry about germs, bacteria and viruses – oh, my!

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.

Let’s Chase the Rainbow!



By Cheryl Thode

Have the stores started to look a little greener to you? Does the meat section of your grocery store have a bigger

selection of corned beef than normal? Are chocolate coins decorating the candy aisle? How’s the cabbage stash? Did the Chicago River turn green!

Well, if you’ve been watching the calendar, you have probably seen that smack dab in the middle of this month, on March 17, is St. Patrick’s Day. With it brings leprechauns, gold coins, the wearing of green, corned beef and cabbage, and, of course rainbows – maybe even with a pot o’ gold at the end!

So, what about rainbows? Have you seen one lately? One up high in our beautiful sky? This year has surely started out to be a wet one. With the historic rainfall, the chances for rainbow viewing has definitely improved. However, did

you know that there is a science to seeing a rainbow?

How can you see a rainbow in the sky? Well, you need direct sunlight and raindrops. While rain and sunshine are the necessary ingredients to make a rainbow, that’s not the whole story!

Just because it’s raining, and the sun is visible, doesn’t mean you will see a rainbow. To see the rainbow, you need to be standing with the sun to your back and the rain falling in front of you.

Also, the sun needs to be less than 42 degrees above the horizon. If the sun is any higher, its rays will not hit the raindrops at the right angle. According to the National Weather Service, a raindrop is circular, and as a result, its reflection from the light is also circular. We never see the full circular rainbow because the earth blocks it. As to the sun, the lower the sun is to the horizon, the more of the circle we are able to see.

At sunset, we get the maximum rainbow view, a full semicircle of

the rainbow with the top of the arch 42 degrees above the horizon. However, the higher the sun is in the sky, the smaller the rainbow’s arch above the horizon. If the sun is more than 42 degrees above the horizon, we won’t be able to see the rainbow.

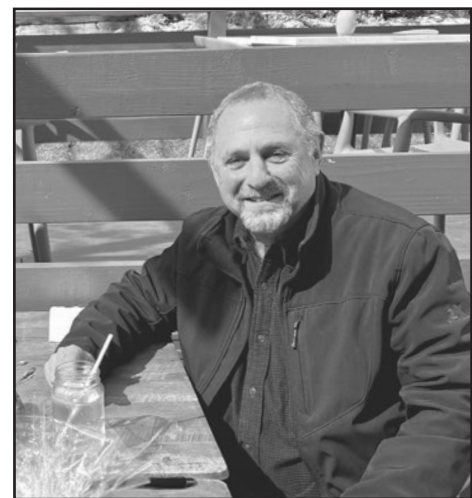
Is there a good way to determine the sun’s placement and degrees above the horizon, without bringing out your old geometry books and protractor? Yes! It seems a good rule of thumb (to see if the sun is low enough for you to see a rainbow while it’s raining) is to check your shadow. If you can see your shadow and it is longer than your height, there’s a pretty good chance that there will be a rainbow in front of you in the sky!

Now that you know how to find one, pray for some more rain and glorious sunshine, and go out rainbow hunting! Sláinte and God Bless!



Do You Recognize This Neighborhood Celebrity?

(Continued from Page 1)



Jeff Jarow is enjoying lunch on the spacious patio at Flapjax on Wilshire Blvd. An active community member, Jeff is president of the Santa Monica Sister Cities Association, on the boards of the Santa Monica Chamber and Pier. He is co-founder of the Ocean Park Association and the July 4th Parade on Main Street. He has been selling commercial real estate since 1983.

Mini Message Bulletin Board

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Plan to see a funny rendition of Cinderella which will be performed at the Santa Monica Playhouse this month. Above, the Stepsisters getting ready to attend the ball. From left, Isabel Lindley, Megan Wright, and Michala Peltz.

Photo by Cydne Moore

Discover What's Happening on the Westside

By Gigi Applebaum-Schwartz

- **Saturday, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Cinderella at Santa Monica Playhouse** - Enjoy this exciting and funny rendition of *Cinderella*, taking place every Saturday of the month! Plays will take place from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Santa Monica Playhouse - The Other Space, 1211 4th Street. For more information, visit santamonicaplayhouse.com.
- **Thursday, March 7 - National Geographic Live: T-Rex Rises** - Paleontologist Dr. Lindsey Zanno teaches about the evolution of T-Rex dinosaurs and their predecessors in a fun and interactive presentation. Event will take place from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Performing Arts Center - Music Building, 1310 11th St, Santa Monica. For more information, visit broadstage.org.
- **Saturday, March 9 - Venice Heritage Museum Grand Opening Celebration** - Speaking ceremony, ribbon cutting, and the opening of the inaugural exhibition. Will include live entertainment, food vendors, and beverage stands. Event will take place from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Main Street Design Center, 228 Main Street, Venice. For more information, veniceheritagemuseum.org.
- **Sunday, March 10 - Santa Monica Symphony Roman Holiday Concert** - Moving spring concert featuring music by Rossini, Mascagni, Mendelssohn, and more. Event will take place at John Adams Middle School Performing Arts Center, 1630 Pearl Street, Santa Monica. For more

information, visit smsymphony.org.

- **March 11-15 - Spotlight on Community Organizations in Santa Monica** - Learn about non-profits helping to improve Santa Monica, as well as ways that you can make a difference in your community. Event will take place from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Santa Monica Main Library lobby.
- **Wednesday, March 13 - Small Business Association (SBA) Resources for Women Entrepreneurs** - SBA representatives will go over free counseling and training. Noon to 1 p.m. Central Library, Downtown Los Angeles.
- **Saturday, March 16 - Women's History Month Author Talk: The Women Who Made Early Disneyland: Artists, Entertainers, and Guest Relations** - Cindy Mediavilla and Kelsey Knox, co-authors, share stories about women who contributed to early Disneyland. Includes a book sale and signing. Event will run from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Santa Monica Main Library multipurpose room, 601 Santa Monica Blvd.
- **Sunday, March 24 - Purim Carnival**, Beth Shir Shalom Temple. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. 310-453-3361.
- **Saturday, March 30 - Spring Egg Hunt Extravaganza** - Egg hunt, crafts, games, activities, face painting, bounce house, music, prizes, and more! For ages three to nine. Egg hunts are by age group, with three to four years at 12 p.m., five to six years at 12:30 p.m., and seven to nine years at 1 p.m. From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Roz Wyman Palms Park, 2950 Overland Ave., Los Angeles.

The Real Estate Advisor (Continued from Page 3)

stories and a lack of visibility into the daily challenges faced by many real estate professionals. While top producers enjoy substantial incomes, a substantial portion of agents experience a more modest financial reality. Factors such as market conditions, location, and an agent's experience all contribute to the disparities in earnings.

It's essential to acknowledge that success in real estate often comes with a significant investment of time, effort, and resources. Agents navigate a competitive landscape, where building a client base, adapting to market fluctuations, and weathering economic uncertainties are integral

to sustained success. Consumers should be mindful of the nuanced nature of the industry and temper their expectations with a realistic understanding of the challenges involved when considering agent compensation. Additionally, transparency about income disparities within the real estate profession can contribute to a more-informed client.

Richard Lombardi 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://lombarirealestatewealthadvisors.com/about>, email Richard@TheLombardiGroup.com, or call 310-903-6509.

Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood

What's in Store for Venice Family Clinic in 2024



By Stacy McClendon

Venice Family Clinic is a non-profit community health center that provides high-quality healthcare to more than 45,000 people annually, regardless of their income, insurance, or immigration status.

The Clinic has 17 sites located from Santa Monica to South Bay, plus three mobile clinics and an expansive street medicine program to reach people experiencing homelessness. The Clinic's comprehensive care also includes mental health services, dental care, vision services, substance use treatment, prescription medications, domestic violence counseling, HIV services, healthy food distributions, health education, health insurance enrollment, child development services and more.

In 2023, the Clinic completed a major renovation to their flagship clinic at 604 Rose Avenue in Venice, and renamed it the Chuck Lorre Rose Avenue Health and Wellness Center in honor of The Chuck Lorre Family Foundation's generous support for the remodel. They launched a same-day medical care program, as well as expanding other program offerings

and amenities.

The Clinic's insurance enrollment increased its outreach efforts this past year to ensure that people with Medi-Cal benefits retained their coverage, and are continuing to support the January 1 expansion that allows adults ages 26 to 49 to enroll in Medi-Cal regardless of their immigration status.

They also celebrated the launch of a new partnership with The Midnight Mission to help support families with young children experiencing homelessness in Inglewood. The Clinic built a new Early Head Start center onsite for families residing at HomeLight Family Living, a program of The Midnight Mission.

Their list of accomplishments and offerings is quite extensive as it is combatting current issues prevalent across many communities/cities in L.A. County.

Please visit www.VeniceFamilyClinic.org for a complete list of current program offerings, as well as expanded and new services/programs on the horizon.

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



MARCH at the PLAYHOUSE



CINDERELLA 2024
A special Rudie-DeCarlo Family Theatre Musical
"Enchanting!" LA Times
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Love Links

Mistaken Identity Turns Into a Blessing

By Gigi Appelbaum-Schwartz

When Stephanie Dupre first met her now husband, Sean Dookie, on an online dating site, he did not immediately strike her as being a good match for her. In fact, Stephanie didn't even intend to meet up with him!

Arriving at a first date with whom she thought was an entirely different person, she began to ask him questions about his online profile. When she was met with confusion, she quickly realized that she had mistaken Sean for somebody else. She was on a date with the wrong person!

The pair figured out that she had initially shown interest in Sean because of a picture he had posted of himself in a Green Bay Packers hat – her favorite team – and though the date wasn't necessarily planned for, she describes it as "such a happy mistake."

"On paper, Sean did not seem like a good match for me," she shared. "But in real life, he is the perfect man for me!"

Both Stephanie and Sean spent parts of their childhood in California, but Stephanie primarily grew up in the deep South, and Sean spent the majority of his adolescent years in Ireland. After studying journalism and English at the University of Alabama and receiving a Master's degree in Communication Disorders Sciences from Cal State Northridge, Stephanie now works as a pediatric speech language pathologist for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). She is also a member



Stephanie Dupre and Sean Dookie cutting their wedding cake last December.

of the Philanthropic Education Organization (PEO), a group providing scholarships and loans to women pursuing educational interests. Sean studied at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, and now owns his own company, RFP Energy Solutions.

Stephanie and Sean were enamored with each other from the first day. They said "I love you" within weeks of meeting, and originally planned to live together as an unmarried couple. But, Sean decided that he wanted to marry Stephanie. And, exactly ten months after their first meeting, he proposed on an average Wednesday night as the two were preparing dinner.

(Continued on Page 12)



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Traveling With Tanya

Mozambique: A Unique Adventure to Explore the Rich Biodiversity on Land and Sea

By Tanya Gilbert

Crystal-clear turquoise waters, white sandy beaches, and lush coastal vistas offer a backdrop to the serenity of riding a horse through the calm waters of the Indian Ocean. Mozambique Horse Safari offers this magical experience, allowing you to connect deeply with nature and culture. Journey through fishing villages, mangroves, red sand dunes, and stunning coastlines, whether for a few hours, or several blissful days.

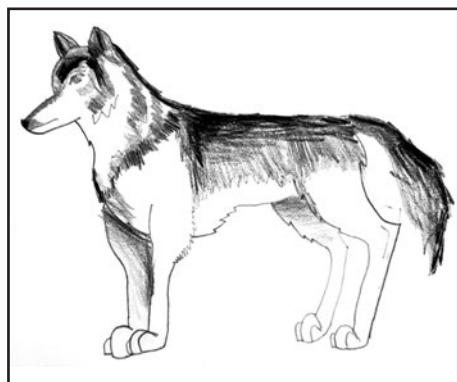
The country's extensive coastline is a paradise for adventurers and nature lovers. Bazaruto archipelago is among the world's most pristine marine habitats, home to over 2,000 fish species. Divers and snorkelers can explore vibrant coral reefs, swim alongside dolphins, whales, and the rare dugong, thanks to the region's dedication to marine conservation.

The Mozambique Horse Safari adds a unique dimension to this rich setting. When I first learned about it, I was beyond intrigued. My research led me down a path of history, politics, and its impact on one family. If you are interested in learning more, read *One Hundred and Four Horses*, a Memoir of Farm and Family, Africa and Exile, by Mandy Retzlaff.

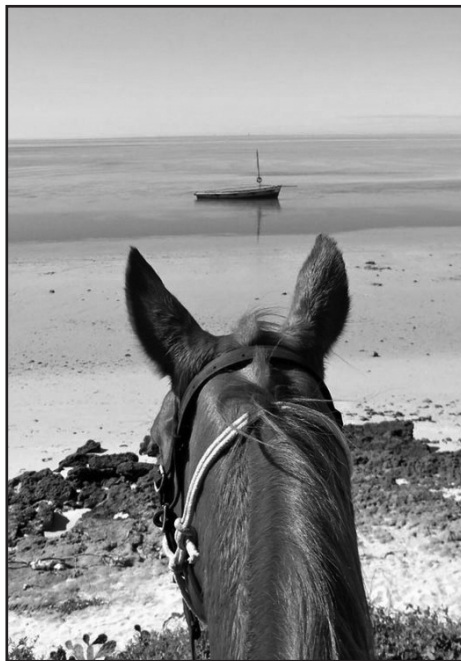
Pat and Mandy Retzlaff rescued hundreds of horses from Zimbabwean farms in the height of political turmoil ultimately finding refuge in Mozambique with 104 horses and the beginning of the Mozambique Horse Safari.

Easily accessible with an overnight in Johannesburg, Mozambique is an ideal destination for

Madison's Art Corner



Here's the latest drawing from Madison Kim, Age 7.



Imagine the feeling of riding a horse on sandy white beaches.

a safari in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, or Botswana. Beyond viewing spectacular wildlife, bonding with one of these magnificent horses might become the highlight of your trip.

One of the many joys of being a travel advisor is connecting clients with special people and places like this. Reach out to me at Tanya@MariposaTravelAdvisor.com to help you make Mozambique part of your next memorable travel adventure.



Remembering the Life of Dick Vasak

Richard (Dick) Vasak, 89, of Santa Monica, California passed away peacefully at home with his beloved wife, Helen, at his side on January 31, 2024.

He was born October 31, 1934, in Crete, Nebraska to parents Milton and Mary (Payer) Vasak. Dick had one sister, Florence Chleboun.

Dick graduated from Crete High School in Nebraska, where he lettered in sports. He then went on to Doane University where he majored in chemistry and math. While attending Doane, he met the love of his life, Helen, who would stand by his side for the next 67 years!

Dick and Helen moved to Calif-

Thoughts From a Second-Time Father

Dealing With the What-Ifs in Life



By Michael Margolin

In life, I experience plenty of things that I try to use in certain instances to teach my kids a lesson.

Not long ago, I was rear-ended when I was coming to a stoplight. I could see the fast approaching van in my rearview mirror and knew it was not going to stop. My attempts to get the driver's attention by blaring my horn, did not work. A collision happened that left both vehicles totaled.

We both walked away. Doing my best to collect myself, I did not ask the driver politely if he was simply not paying attention. His explanation was that he "just looked down for a second." It was probably more like four or five seconds. It does not matter now. Nor does the fact that the driver had a suspended license and struggled to produce proof of insurance.

Nevertheless, part of what bugs me is the "what-if?" factor. I was driving from one account to the next and had several routes to take. What if I had taken the other route that I decided not to because it "had more turns," like the maps app on your phone might tell you a particular route contains. That does not matter now either.

Alexa is ten and Jake is seven and both can learn something

from this sequence of events. It is not my favorite cliché, but what is done, is done. For this, it is useless for me to speculate how much smoother my afternoon would have been that day had I gone a different way, or simply been in another lane.

Things in life will happen, and you might as well look forward and deal with them, because looking back and hazarding a guess at what might have been, will probably only drive you crazy.

Another important lesson is simply reminding them to be aware. Had the driver behind me only been aware, which does not seem like too much to ask in this case, the whole headache could have been avoided.

I remind them often to always pay attention. Always be aware of yourself and your surroundings. This is because so many people do not exercise awareness which I tend to think of as a very underrated trait. Being able to let go of the what-ifs in life might be tougher in some cases.

One thing about having kids, sometimes it teaches you that you have to learn to take your own advice.

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.



Dick Vasak

the world. But, what he loved most was traveling with Helen.

Dick enjoyed going to Dodger games, cooking, watching Trojan and Cornhusker football, and attending his grandchildren's sporting events and activities.

Dick was a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, uncle, brother-in-law, and friend.

He is survived by his beloved

(Continued on Page 9)

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ornia in 1957 when he attended USC and gained an advanced degree in electrical engineering. He went on to work as a physicist for the Navy, at Honeywell, and then, at West Amp.

Later, he and Helen started their own electronics manufacturing company, Glentek Inc. Up until his passing, Dick could be found at work every day, often singing classic songs in the hallways.

Dick was involved in many service organizations in Santa Monica. They were the YMCA, Kiwanis, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America where he was also deeply involved in coaching.

Dick was also passionate about coaching his sons in baseball and football. He was a lifelong advocate of Doane University and served on the Doane University Board of Trustees in Crete for several years.

Dick was an avid golfer and won the Seniors Tournament at the Riviera Country Club. He enjoyed fishing and hunting, anywhere in



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Community Service on the Westside

Student Speaker Contest Winners



By Kingsley Fife

Everyone associates the Lions with collecting used glasses to help those in need, but we're also very active in developing our

youth to become successful, productive adult citizens.

To this end, the California Lions have an annual student speakers contest. High school students talk on a specific topic, the winner in each Club advances up the levels (zone, region, district, etc.) collecting money and scholarships as he or she goes. The final winner gets a \$21,000 scholarship to a college of his/her choosing.

Our Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Club just held our competition. It was a full house at the Santa Monica Elks Lodge for this 87th annual event. Two Palisades High School seniors, Luke

Schneeman and Carter Yean, competed, and the topic this year was, "For a Better World, What Would You Do?"

The three judges were Terry Green (Santa Monica College professor), Henry Walther (Santa Monica attorney) and Jill Kalbrosky (Los Angeles teacher).

The winner was Luke Schneeman. Both students gave excellent talks and the scoring was very close. Luke will advance to the Zone event in a few weeks, and most of our club members will be there to cheer him on!

We thank the Student Speaker Committee Lions, Gail Litvack and Rae Kameny, for making this such a successful, wonderful evening.

Are you curious about Lionism? Maybe joining us will fill that void in your life. Learn more by being our guest at one of our dinner meetings. Call Lion Kingsley Fife at 310-454-2960, or go online to jkfife88@yahoo.com.

Santa Monica Family YMCA Invites You to Discover All Their Facility Has to Offer



By Araceli Alejandre, COO

Our Santa Monica Family YMCA is excited to kick-off our strategic direction in 2024.

We will be focusing on several areas to deepen our services and relationships with the communities we serve. Our goal is to empower our leaders through professional development, engage with our community in new ways, create a safe space with facility improvements, and embrace inclusion and belonging for all.

In February, we partnered with the Santa Monica Black Lives Association to host their first inaugural Black History Month kick-off event in our community room.

We look forward to opening our doors to more community members and events in the near future.

Our goal is to create more ac-

cess and opportunities for our community to build new skills and confidence through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. We are only able to accomplish these goals through collaborative partnerships and resources, so we encourage you to get involved and make a difference!

As the new Chief Operating Officer, I look forward to connecting more with our community inside and outside of our walls. We invite you to check out our facility and see how our YMCA can help you reach your fullest potential. We welcome everyone to join us on Saturday, April 20, for our free Healthy Kids Day celebration in our gymnasium.

Since 1927, we are proud of our rich history of service and community support! To learn more, visit www.ymcasm.org.

Many Activities Keep Members Busy



By Patricia Webber

On the third of February, the Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club (SMBWC) hosted our Val-

entine Making and Music event for adults and kids. Everyone had a great time being creative and being entertained by the Samohi Jazz Band combos. This was the 15th year we have held this fun event with proceeds going to the Samohi Jazz Band.

The Club also donated matching funds to School on Wheels, our original and continuous beneficiary. And, we're happy to say that we exceeded our proceeds from that of last year! Many thanks to Susan Barry and Alicia Syres who coordinated this event, plus the many members who also volunteered.

February also saw the wonderful celebration of SMBWC Past-President Darlene Bahr's 95th birthday. She is considered our "savior" for her almost solitary efforts to bring the Club and our clubhouse into the 21st Century. In the early 2000s, the membership had fallen off dramatically and the clubhouse started to show its age. She cleaned and cajoled new members to join her to bring the building back to show its glory.

Our Book Club continues meeting on the fourth Tuesday at the Club. The March selection is *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams. For information, please email sbarry1015@sbcglobal.net.

Our new Writer's Group began on February 20 and will continue to meet on the first and third Tuesdays from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Club. The focus of this group is on creative fiction, including poetry, memoir, short story, and novel. For details, contact artistshirleycanon@gmail.com.



Darlene Bahr did an amazing job to bring our building to its former glory.



Remembering the Life (Continued from Page 8)

wife Helen, sons William, John, and Milton, daughter-in-law Nathalie, grandsons Richard and Brandon, granddaughters, Danielle, Nicole, Melissa, Briana, and Allison, great grandchildren, Ward, Wally, Colt, and Juniper.

A Celebration of Life will be planned in California at a later

date. The family extends their heartfelt thanks to all for your support and well-wishes at this difficult time.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America in memory of Dick Vasak.

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Planning Ahead

When Should Children Receive Their Inheritances?



By Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.

When planning for your child's inheritance, the question is always: When should the child receive the money? Certainly, a minor child cannot receive an inheritance until age 18. When the child reaches adulthood, what is the right age? 18? 25? 35? Never?

A parent may opt to leave their estate to the child in a continuing trust for the child's lifetime. The child could receive distributions for education, health, or support needs, but the inheritance would not come to the child at any age.

This may be for tax reasons – if the child has wealth of her own, adding to the child's wealth might just increase tax going to Uncle Sam. Or, even if there is no tax, the parent may want to intentionally skip over the child in favor of grandchildren. Other reasons include protection of the child's inheritance in case of divorce, or to protect a child who cannot manage money well.

If you are lucky enough to be the beneficiary of a trust created by your parent or grandparent,

your own estate planning should take the trust into account. You may not have any control over the assets of the trust, but the trust may give you a power to direct distribution of whatever is left in the trust at your death. Even if there is no such power, you may want to coordinate distributions to your children under your own trust with the distributions to your children under the other trust.

If the other trust will distribute to your children at age 25 or 30, maybe your trust will distribute at a later age, so your child does not receive inheritances from both trusts all at once.

There is no right age for distribution to children, or at least no one size fits all. The size of the estate is a factor, but at the end of the day, you are the one who knows your child best.

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Celebrating Women's History Month

(Continued from 1)

In addition to becoming educated, the best ways to celebrate Women's History Month are to go out of your way to support women, however that might look for you. By supporting women-owned businesses and donating to organizations that help women in need, you become a part of the greater movement which surrounds this celebration – that is, the quest for equality and justice.

As far as activism goes, Women's History Month is largely celebrated with the intention of inspiring people to take action in support of women's rights. That said, you can become a part of that movement by becoming an activist – voting, encouraging others to vote, or contacting your representatives, which allows you to become the change you wish to see.

Finally, the best ways that you can continue the celebrations of Women's History Month are to remember to keep celebrating! Our city has so many events and activities that you can attend, both to continue your education and activism efforts, and to enjoy the necessary celebration of women that this month allows for.

For example, on March 16, co-authors of a book about the many women who contributed to the success of early Disneyland will be discussing their book at the Santa Monica Main Library.

Ultimately, this month is about celebration, remembrance, and appreciation, so make sure to thank the women in your life for all they have done for you, and most importantly, continue to celebrate women as much as possible, throughout the year.



Santa Monica's first female Mayor, Clo Hoover, is shown dancing with popular entertainer Lawrence Welk in 1975. A long time council member, Clo became mayor in 1973. She was an advocate for conservation of historic and scenic areas in the Santa Monica Bay.

Santa Monica History Museum Outlook Collection (1998.1.69)



- Joe Analco

happy easter

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Paws and Claws

My Female Siamese Cat Has Issues



By Dr. Frank Lavac, MS, DVM
Q: My eight-year-old spayed female Siamese cat has recently started showing signs of being in heat (very affectionate and vocalizing excessively). What could be wrong?

A: That does sound very unusual. Siamese are often very vocal. If you are correct that she is in heat, the possibilities are a relatively short differential list.

It's possible that part of her ovaries were left behind during the spay procedure. That remnant ovary can still become hormonally active and lead to the heat signs that you describe.

Was she spayed at the typical age of six months? If so, and part of the ovary remained, then I would have expected her to show signs of heat many years prior to these symptoms.

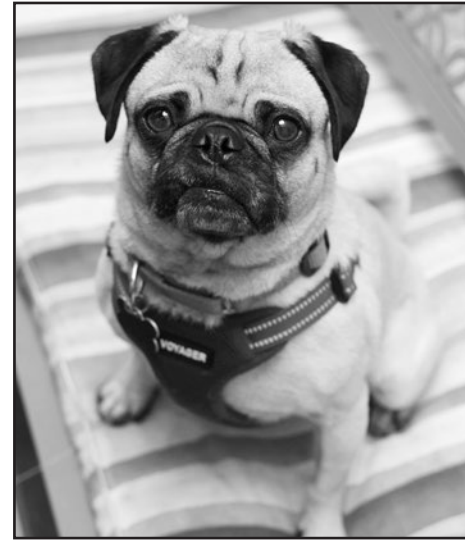
Talk to your veterinarian and get a thorough physical exam. The other possibility and, in my opinion, more likely, is that she was exposed to an outside source of estrogen. Physicians may prescribe estrogen creams to peri- and post-menopausal women. Some of these creams are applied to the arms. The pet then licks the cream from the owner leading to increased estrogen levels and signs of heat. I have seen this multiple times where cats or dogs lick the cream off the owner. In female cats, it leads to signs of heat. In

female dogs, it can cause marked enlargement of the vulva.

Once access to the estrogen creams have been removed the signs dissipate. This issue has now become a well-known problem in veterinary medicine. A thorough history is important to arrive at the diagnosis.

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

Adopt a Pet



"Chuck" is a very cute and very sweet boy who was intercepted at the South L.A. Shelter. He had an injury which required surgery. He is all healed now and doing so well! Their vet recently gave him a clean bill of health and they are having so much fun getting to know him. Contact www.LangeFoundation.org for more details.

From Me to You...



By Diane Margolin
 One of the exciting things to look for is when flowers blossom after a good rain. I have an orchid plant that

grows on my patio. I've probably had it for 10 years. It's had one stalk of orchids for all that time. All of a sudden, there are two new stalks which appeared on the opposite side of that one stalk. What made them appear all of a sudden?

There are annual bulbs hidden underneath the soil in a large pot. One day white blossoms appear. Or, small purple flowers appear in the base of that plant each year. Whatever blossom shows its head

is a welcome surprise.

The 73rd annual Stairway to the Stars Concert will be presented on Saturday, March 16 at 4 p.m. in the outdoors Greek Theater at Santa Monica High School. This event is one of the most popular of the year as nearly 90 students in all grades will be performing.

The district returned to the tradition of bringing choir, band, jazz band and orchestra students together in one big concert in 2022, so nearly 900 students can hear the music of their peers and share the gift of music with their friends and the communities of Santa Monica and Malibu. To get tickets, go to www.StairwayoftheStars.org.

Be sure to change your clocks on Saturday, March 9 before you go to bed. Enjoy more sunlight.

An Update From ERBA Markets

Important to Educate Teens



By Stephen Freedman
 We have discussed in this space on numerous occasions how the taboo surrounding cannabis culture

is waning. The public is learning about the benefits of cannabis, and with more celebrities entering the space with their branded products, demand has never been higher (no pun intended). However, a byproduct of this growth is the rising use among teens and adolescents.

According to the CDC, in 2019 37% of high schoolers reported using marijuana at least once, and 22% reported recent use. This is a massive jump from previous years, and marijuana vaping has been reported in students as young as 8th grade. These numbers are staggering, and present a very real issue in the development of our children.

The brain is actively developing in adolescence, and continues to do so until around 25 years of age. Marijuana use can harm this development and lead to many problems, both physical and psych-

ological. These include difficulty problem solving, coordination, memory and recall issues, short attention span, and social anxiety. Probably the most concerning is the link between early use and mental health issues. These include disillusionment and schizophrenia. This association is stronger in those who use marijuana earlier and more frequently.

However, there is promising research being conducted on CBD use in adolescents relating to epilepsy, PTSD, Tourette's syndrome, and other ailments. As of now, the only FDA-approved use of CBD in children is for certain forms of epilepsy. More research must still be conducted, but hopefully the medicinal benefits of cannabis can help the younger generation in due time.

Growing up is a difficult and confusing time. It's important that we stay vigilant and make sure our kids are educated and aware of all the pitfalls and dangers in our world, which now include cannabis.

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

Santa Monica Family YMCA

(Continued from Page 1)



Past-President Don Cohen, swears in the 2024 Directors and class of 2026 Board members. From left, President Norm Lantz, Secretary Aaron Ganz, Treasurer Michael Peattie; new Board members Richard Lombardi and Mark Sedlander; Second term Board members Laurie Kasper, Alicia Cortrite, Dick Lawrence; and Past-President Tully Watson. Not present, Vice-President Rhonda Tribble.

During January's board installation, Sherri Lee-Lewis celebrated the Y's achievements during her tenure as board president, including COVID recovery, CEO retirement and leading the CEO search and transition for the association.

She recognized Nat Trives for bringing her into the Y and all her fellow board and executive committee members for their support.

Norm Lantz shared his incoming board president remarks, "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." He shared his Y experiences as a kid at their Camp Big Bear location and how he met his

wife through the Y! Norm's Y story comes full circle in his new leadership role and will be very beneficial as our Y continues to grow.

Hodge Patterson, CEO, shared excitement as they kicked off the new year with their strategic plan to Rise & Thrive Together! Their facility continues to welcome and serve the community more, while their leadership team added Araceli Alejandre as new COO. The Y continues to provide more access and opportunity for all to reach their fullest potential.



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Mistaken Identity Turns Into a Blessing

(Continued from Page 6)

"It was spontaneous and sweet, just like him," Stephanie shared.

Their wedding took place last December in the penthouse at Le Meridien Delfina in Santa Monica, and was officiated by their close friend, Reverend Joe Marich. A fireworks display taking place outside in the night sky right as the reception began took them all by surprise. (It might have been coming from the Marina.) But, the

couple said that the fireworks were the perfect way to get their reception started.


"A highlight of the evening was having my children give us the most beautiful toast, and having so many friends from near and far join us," Stephanie said. "It was a magical weekend!" Her children are Savannah and Jackson, both graduates of Santa Monica High School.

We wish Stephanie and Sean the utmost happiness in their lives to come!




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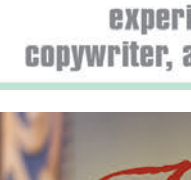
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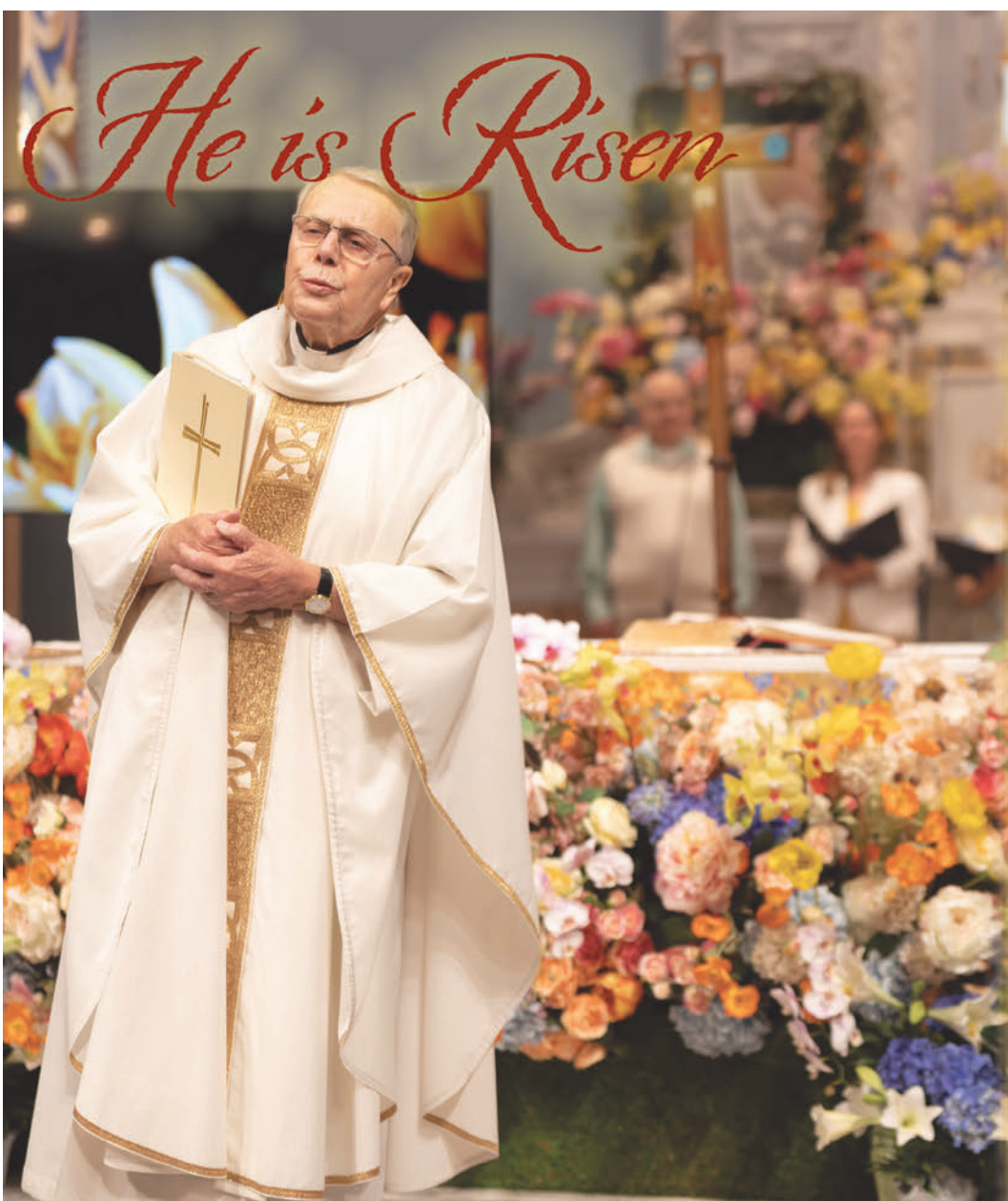
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7:00 p.m. · Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday: March 29

Noon & 7:00 p.m. · Solemn Liturgy

3:00 p.m. · Stations of the Cross with Taizé

Holy Saturday: March 30

7:00 p.m. · Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday: March 31

7:30 · 9:30 · 11:30 a.m. · 5:30 p.m.

OUTDOOR: 9:30 & 11:30 a.m.

LIVESTREAM: 9:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.

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