

The Holiday Season Begins!



Join the Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalow staff from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, December 11 to kick off the holiday season.

The Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows management is excited to announce the return of their annual, beloved *Meet Me Under the Fig Tree* event on December 11 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Moreton Bay Circle in front of the hotel at 101 Wilshire Blvd. The community is invited to share an afternoon of festive events. Enjoy photos with Santa, a bouncy house, arts and crafts for the kids, and a snow machine.

There will be divinely delicious

bites from FIG and some of the Hotel's favorite local partners including Emporium Thai, 1212 Santa Monica, Fia Restaurant, Michael's Santa Monica, desserts from the Vanilla Bake Shop, and more.

And, the Santa Monica Police Department will have horses on hand. Additional featured partners include Wags & Walks for a puppy therapy station and the Santa Monica Fire Department.

Enjoy a live raffle throughout
(Continued on Page 2)



Santa Monica resident, Jonathan Fong, has been a JoyCatchers volunteer since 2006. The group decorates mini trees for veterans, people in hospice care, cancer programs, convalescent homes, and many more. More about JoyCatchers on Page 16.

The Best Gift You Can Give to Others is Your Time

By Deborah Gray

'Tis the season. You know, the winter holidays, the ones that by January can often leave us feeling like we are running on empty. If you think you may be heading for a burnout this year, here's a chance to experience more of what the holidays are really all about: Helping others feel good. And, helping others, feels good. We are re-energized and hopeful again, and things that were once so bothersome can suddenly shrink in importance.

Donating your time, money, skills, or needed supplies can make a world of difference to

someone. And, to you.

My special holiday-giving story began in my early 20s. During a brief time when I was separated from family and close friends, I ended up in the hospital one Easter weekend, feeling pretty much alone. Some months later, as Christmas approached, I remembered my Easter experience and, having a soft spot for kids, was inspired to drop off a few presents to the Children's Hospital. After that, wherever I was living, it became my Christmas Eve tradition to deliver presents to kids who were spending the holiday in a hospital. At every visit, the nursing staff was always happy to see me delivering a bundle of new toys and stuffed animals for the kids. It felt great.

And, I will never forget that December day when those imagined smiles came to life. While visiting a friend in another town, I was able to locate a nearby hospital with a children's ward. Arriving with a full bag of presents, I was greeted by the station nurse who thanked me as she gathered up the goods. Then, an odd thing happened; The nurse asked: "Do you want to give them out to the kids?"

"Me?" I replied, stunned. Yep. I'd heard her right.

The next minute, she was escorting me to the children's rooms, where the fun was about to begin. Beaming, I invited each child to choose what they wanted from the Santa bag. Honestly, until that day, there was no way I could have known how good it would feel to

(Continued on Page 2)

Senior Snapshot

Maurice Jordan Has Had Many Careers in His Blessed Lifetime

By Deborah Gray

Earlier this year, native Bostonian and current West Los Angeles resident, Maurice J. Jordan, was inducted into *Marquis Who's Who*. You've got to have some pretty hefty credentials to do that.

Unquestionably energetic and versatile, Maurice's multiple career paths have led him to reside in states from Florida to Hawaii. And, apart from his eclectic work life, he's been very active in Toastmasters, USA Dance, and several charity fundraisers, including 5k and 10k runs.



Maurice Jordan has been a chef, model, and real estate broker.

Currently, he is a local real estate broker engaging with buyers and sellers while also managing six buildings, (a total of 70 units). Impressive, yes, but Maurice's eclectic journey (including a successful stint as a model), began in quite a different arena. Happily, he has agreed to share his story with our readers.

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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 until May 15, 2023 - Project 562: Changing the Way We See Native America** - Enjoy The Santa Monica College exhibition by photographer, writer, and podcaster Matika Wilbur from the Tulalip and Swinomish Tribes. This is a multi-year national photography project dedicated to photographing over 562 federally recognized Tribes, urban Native communities, Tribes fighting for federal recognition, and Indigenous role models. At the Pete and Susan Barrett Art Gallery, 1310 11th St. Call 310-434-3434 for hours and more information.
• **Saturday, December 10 - Conscious Holiday Market** - Shop 40 plus local vendors with a focus on elevated and sustainable brands on the Third Street Promenade.
• **Saturday, December 10 - Marina del Rey Holiday Boat Parade** - Featuring boats adorned with lights and decorations to celebrate the holiday season, festive drinks and food options to delight your palate. Entertainment planned for the whole family. Fireworks from 5:55 p.m. to 6 p.m. Parade from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the main channel of Marina del Rey harbor. Viewing locations: Burton Chace Park, 13650 Mindanao Way, and Fish-

erman’s Village, 13755 Fiji Way.
• **Saturday, December 10 - Annual Holiday Book Sale** - To be held in the Community Room of the Kaufman Brentwood Branch Library, 11820 San Vicente Blvd. Featuring a large selection of wonderful books in a variety of categories at bargain prices. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Santa Monica Playhouse Winter Break Theater camp for ages six to 14. Call 310-394-9779 for details.

• **Sunday, December 11 - Beach Walk & Sketch** - For a peaceful morning on the beach, bring your sense of wonder and take to the sands to sketch nature’s offerings on our beautiful coastline. Binoculars, drawing boards, pencils, and newsprint are provided, or bring your own easy-to-carry sketching tools. Free, offered in partnership with the Nature Nexus

Institute and LA Audubon. 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Highway. Registration is requested. 310-458-4904.
• **Thursday, December 15 - Baby Winter Ball** - Main Santa Monica Library, Youth Activity Room. Bounce, crawl, and dance until naptime! Little ones are invited to dress up and have a ball (and play with some, too). 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. For ages 0-2.
• **Thursday, December 15 - ‘Appy Hour’ Device Workshop** - Main Santa Monica Library Tutoring Center - Bring in your smartphone, laptop or tablet for help with using your device. 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
• **Sunday, December 18 - Happy Hanukkah!**
• **Sunday, December 18 through Sunday, December 25 - Menorah Lightings at Third Street Promenade** - Nightly menorah lightings will take place on the 1400 block of Third Street Promenade. 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
• **Sunday, December 18 - Polar Bear Swim** - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The youngest Polar Bears plunge first, followed by the rest of the crowd. Intrepid Polar Bears can do the 300-yard swim around a buoy. After the ocean swim, warm up in the heated pool, enjoy a hot chocolate, and grab a photo with

the polar bear mascot. Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Highway. Call 310-458-4904 to register.
• **Wednesday, December 21 - Winter Solstice Light-Up Card Workshop** - Celebrate the shortest day of the year and the start of winter by creating a light-up card for the holidays. Drop in. For all ages. 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Main Library, Central Courtyard.
• **Sunday, December 25 – Merry Christmas!**
• **Monday, December 26 – Happy Kwanzaa!**
• **Saturday, December 31 – Happy New Year’s Eve!**



The Santa Monica Playhouse New Year’s Eve Company: Front row, from left, Tianna Cohen, Noree Victoria, and Mira Baum. Back row, from left, Chris DeCarlo, Evelyn Rudie, Raeva Vasisht, Elena Rust, and Berkeley Sanjay.
Photo by George J. Vennes II

The Best Gift You Can Give (Continued from Page 1)

see the joy on those surprised little faces. It was truly magical.
Below are just a few of the non-profits that can offer you an opportunity to let your best self

shine, any day of year. Sometimes, all anyone needs is a helping hand.
Contact information for each organization is provided for more

details about their volunteer opportunities: **Westside Food Bank** provides food to social service agencies, often enabling low-income people to stay in their homes. **(310-828-6016).** **New Directions for Veterans** empower men and women who served in the military, and their families. **(310-914-4045).** **Meals on Wheels West** delivers more than a meal to people of all ages. **(310-394-5133).** **The People Concern** provides integrated services to the most vulnerable members of the community. **(310-450-4050).** **Chrysalis** provides the resources and support needed to find and retain employment. **(310-401-9400).** **Westside Coalition** works collaboratively on issues of housing, hunger and health through service coordination, public education and advocacy. **(info@westsidecoalitionla.org).** **St. Joseph Center** in Venice provides homeless and working poor individuals with the resources and tools to become stable. **(310-396-6468).**

Enjoy a New Year’s celebration at the Santa Monica Playhouse. Champagne, sparkling juice, delightful sweets and savories accompany this rousing, family-friendly Rudie-DeCarlo in-person multi-media musical review with Playhouse artists and special guests from around the globe. With finger-snapping jazz, foot-stompin’ country rock, Jewish patter songs, romantic ballads, bouncy sing-a-longs, this show has it all! Add hats, tiaras, noisemakers, lei and streamers and you have a not-to-be-missed New Year’s Eve celebration. Two shows, Saturday, December 31, at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. Details: 310-899-4119.



Turn to the PJ Library for books on Hanukkah. A free program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, PJ Library sends engaging storybooks and activities that provide fun ways for families to connect with Jewish life. PJ Library’s high-quality books have become everyday favorites of kids from birth through age 12. More than 670,000 books are delivered to families worldwide each month. To find out more, visit pjlibrary.org.



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The Holiday Season Begins (Continued from Page 1)

the event for gift cards to your favorite Santa Monica eateries or luxury accommodations at their partner hotels.
In the spirit of the holidays, the hotel will be accepting donations of canned food, new or gently worn clothing, or monetary gifts in partnership with local non-profits Santa MoniCARES, the Westside Food Bank, and Chrysalis.



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The Real Estate Advisor

Earnest Money at Risk When Private Mortgage Insurance Denied



By Richard Lombari

A couple of weeks ago, an agent that I coach called with an interesting scenario. She was working with a home buyer who was successful in making an offer on a home and subsequently received an approval from a mortgage company. The buyers were thrilled and removed loan approval as a contingency for their purchase. Here's the catch.

The loan the buyer was approved for was for more than 80% of the purchase price which triggers a requirement from the lender for the buyer to acquire "Private Mortgage Insurance" (PMI) which would cover the lender in the case of the buyer's mortgage default up to the 20% balance.

This means that if the buyer defaulted and the property was ultimately sold for less than the loan amount, the insurance would protect the first 20% of loss. The buyer was putting down only 3% of the purchase price, so the PMI was on the hook for a maximum of 17% of the purchase price.

The Private Mortgage Insurance company denied their application.

The buyer could not get a mortgage without the PMI and they had already removed the mortgage contingency which placed their

entire earnest money deposit at risk.

I have NEVER seen a Private Mortgage Insurance application declined. It has been a rubber stamp. It's been essentially standard procedure for a 3% down purchase being accepted if the lender approved the loan. It wasn't a rubber stamp this time. The denial was due to the homebuyers' source of funds for the 3%.

The buyers found a local grant to help with the down payment and supplemented these funds received from their tax refund and stimulus check.

The PMI company felt too little of the 3% the buyer was putting down was from the buyer's earned funds and would be at a higher risk for loan default. The agent was able to help the buyers procure another PMI company that accepted their purchase financing, and the purchase was completed.

PMI rejection is incredibly rare, but here is the lesson: If you are putting less than 20% down on your purchase, do not release the finance contingency until you have the PMI approval as well.

Richard Lombari is a 30+ year real estate veteran, author, coach, speaker, and broker in California and Florida. He can be reached at 310.903.6509 or www.LombariRealEstateWealthAdvisors.com.

From the Santa Monica History Museum



From the SMHM Bill Beebe Collection 3.2.4574 - Del Mar Club Holiday Decorations put up in 1942. The decor includes Christmas trees, bells and a fireplace. Emerson Gaze was the photographer. The club is now known as the Casa del Mar Hotel.

Basketball League Tradition for 65 Years

Biddy Basketball is a specialized and unique league which has been a tradition at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica (SMBGC) for the past 65 years.

The league has produced major college and professional athletes, but what they are most proud of is producing caring, loving, and responsible citizens. The coaches are dedicated and passionate about teaching the game of basketball. They start with the fundamentals and progress with each practice, making sure that every player understands the skills and drills, before moving to more competitive and intermediate or advanced skills.

Brandon LaBrie, Director of Wellness and Athletics, has been involved with Biddy Basketball for more than 40 years – as a player (1978-1983), volunteer, and now staff member.

"I have continued to volunteer every year in-between and beyond my employment, and I have watched this league grow throughout the years. My goal is to provide a competitive and developmental basketball program that includes quality instruction in all aspects of basketball with an emphasis on fundamentals and skill development.

"Biddy Basketball has been a staple in so many homes for more than six decades, and I know it will continue to produce great student athletes for the next six decades and more."

Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica runs all of the Santa Monica Unified School District's elementary school and middle school Healthy Lifestyles After School Sports Leagues. Additional schools and Club branches included in their leagues are: Boys & Girls



Kids also learn life skills in addition to basketball skills in the Biddy Basketball league.

Clubs of Santa Monica Main Branch, St. Anne's Boys & Girls Club, and Mar Vista Gardens Boys & Girls Club. The schools they serve are Roosevelt, Franklin, McKinley, Edison, Grant, Will Rogers, SMASH, JAMS, and Lincoln Middle School.

If your child attends one of these Boys & Girls Clubs, or one of these schools, you can register them to play. They also accept new players and registration is open on their website www.smbgc.org/sports.

All practices are held at the respective school or Boys & Girls Club that your child attends. All games are played at their main branch located at 1238 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica,

Biddy Basketball serves youth from grades 2nd – 5th at the elementary school level and 6th-8th at the middle school level. The season begins the week of December 5 and the last day is March 4, 2023. Each team will have two practices per week and one game per week. The league fee is \$250 per child, and they offer financial assistance to those that qualify.

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Byte by Byte

The Reason for the (Racing) Season: RFID Tags



By Dr. Miceala Shocklee

For many, the chill of the Winter season means hunkering down for human hibernation mode – bulky layers, long days spent inside with hot cocoa, hobbies revolving around comfort and Couch potato-ing. For others, Winter means gearing up for the end-of-year and imminent spring race season.

Fall marathons, turkey trots, resolution runs, and spring races dot the calendars of running enthusiasts. As runners count down the days to their next big run, they may also be counting minutes on the clock, aiming to get a PR (personal record) by running as fast as possible. But, how do runners – and races – track their times?

On a day-to-day basis, most runners employ a route-tracking

app from Garmin, Strava, Under Armour's Map My Run, or even the phone's own software. These apps use the phone's built-in GPS system to track metrics like location and speed. Some of the apps, like Strava, allow runners to compare their pace along common routes to those logged by other runners, or their own past attempts, and will alert runners if they've achieved a PR or ranked fastest among other users for a particular stretch of the route.

What about race day? Rather than relying on GPS tracking, most races now utilize RFID, or "radio-frequency identification" methods to clock a runner's time. RFID tags, or chips, are small, self-contained systems revolving around radio transponding, transmitting, receiving, and identifying. Back-of-bib chips are most common these days, though some races may feature shoelace tags or

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Reflections From The East

For This Holiday Season: Something Old and Something New



By Qín Stubis
For many, year-end holiday celebrations are often about repeating what we generally have already done many times before. And yet, we always look forward to them as if we were experiencing them for the first time. We cannot wait to gather up all our loved ones for company and merriment, and dig into some old family recipes to create this year's exciting feast.
It is our traditions that make

this time of the year so very special, mostly a mixture of the old American customs and our own family rituals. We carry them faithfully from our parents and grandparents, and pass them on to our children and their children.
Whether hanging up a tree ornament that belonged to our great-grandmother, or playing a holiday record once owned by our parents, old traditions can magically bring back the presence of our loved ones who are no longer with us or cannot be with us, allowing us to relive the nostalgic moments we've so treasured

in life.
Growing up during the Cultural Revolution in China, I lived through a period of history when traditions and rituals were considered to be outdated and unrevolutionary, and therefore discouraged. As a citizen of a country with 5000 years of history, ironically, I learned few holiday traditions, which is why in my later years I've become obsessed with learning about them.
Now a Chinese immigrant married to an American of Latvian, French, and English descent, our family holiday celebrations could

be more inclusive, and we add new elements all the time to reflect all our cultural and family heritages. For holiday meals, we have our usual Latvian piragis – little baked dumplings filled with bacon and roasted onions, Shanghai spring rolls, American pies, English pasties and French beef bourguignon, all nestled side by side on our banquet table.
Most recently, we've learned to make Chinese mooncakes, the newest addition to our expanding menu of holiday pleasures.

(Continued on Page 7)

Keeping the Gift of Family Traditions Alive



By Cheryl Thode
It's that wonderful time of year again, the *Holidays*. What is it that makes this time of year so special? The lights? The food? The family gatherings?

For me, this time of year is so magical and is one that I eagerly anticipate because it brings with it rich and storied family traditions.
In my family, food and family gatherings have been the highlight of this time of year. I fondly remember how on Christmas Day my grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles, and cousins all gathered around one big table, and after sharing in grace, ate the most amazing food that had been cooked and prepared all day.
Then, when the meal was over, all the kids got to pick their favorite dessert and stay up past bedtime to eat it! I believe what made this time so memorable was the fact that despite everything going on in the world, the people who came were just happy to see each other, connect, and be present with one another.
Family traditions such as getting together for the holidays, making special holiday cookies with Grandma, going out for a night stroll to look at the Christmas

lights, or even reading that special holiday book at night to the kiddos create such long-lasting gifts for our children.
Every family has their own unique way to celebrate this time of year. From activities such as counting down the days with advent calendars, to baking festive cookies, to lighting a menorah, to going on family ski trips, to visiting with family members for wonderful meals, the traditions we all take part in this time of year are what make it so special, magical, and longed for.
What are your traditions? Do you have a special activity or event you like to do with your family? Is there a special food or drink that you enjoy during this time of year? Are there songs you cannot wait to listen to? How about the weather? Do you look forward to getting to the mountains for a nice snow day?
Since the pandemic, I feel that this holiday season will be the most normal one I have had in a long time. I have anxiously awaited it, and I am so ready to celebrate it with my family and friends. We, especially our children, all long for something to enjoy, participate in, and look forward to. The anticipation of a long-awaited event, time, and holiday is a universal human need.

This December, I encourage you all to think about what it is about this time of year that you have been looking forward to. Then make a plan to do it! Whether it be ice skating, having hot chocolate by the fire, sharing family stories, looking at pictures of past holidays, taking a family holiday photo, sending out holiday cards, caroling, building a gingerbread house, or even going out to look at the holiday lights and decorations, please go out and enjoy this season!
The past couple of years have taught us that time is limited, family is precious, and that the events of tomorrow are uncertain. However, our traditions can be timeless, if we recognize them and make a point to share them with the next generation, our kiddos. As the old saying goes, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why we call it 'the present,'"

Enjoy the gift of today and share your family traditions with each other. Happy holidays, and God bless.

If you or someone you know is a mother in need of a group of mothers to share with and grow her own village, please visit our website at the link below and register to be a Mother of Monica. Go to <https://stmonica.net/ministries/fellowshipgroups/moms>.

Answer to Neighborhood Celebrity
(Continued from Page 1)



It seems that whenever you need to buy tires, there are many others who got to the store before you did. Even when you have an appointment, you may have to wait hours. How you are treated by the manager of tire sales makes a big difference. Eric Aguayo, at Firestone Auto Care on Lincoln Blvd. in Santa Monica, is gracious, kind, understanding, and respectful. He patiently answers questions as he makes you feel welcome in the shop. Stop by to meet him.

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Clergy Corner

Lighting the Chanukah Candles



By Rabbi Alex Kress
There is a famous photo of a Chanukah menorah sitting on a German windowsill with a Nazi flag hanging in the back. The photographer, Rachel Posner, was a Jewish woman who understood the significance of the juxtaposition in the Winter of 1932, just before Hitler came to power. She wrote on the back of the photo: “Death to Judah” so the flag says, ‘Judah will live forever,’ so the light answers.”

As our days grow short and darkness reigns, our holidays of light come to answer the darkness and inspire us with hope. In Judaism, one of the main practices of Chanukah is “publicizing the miracle,” or sharing the light of our Chanukah menorahs with the world. Sometimes you’ll see a chanukiah outside the front door of a Jewish home or in a window facing the street so others can enjoy the light.

In Jerusalem’s Old City, this

practice is particularly beautiful as the dark, stone city is illuminated in a golden glow that warms the soul and inspires connection. In Santa Monica, we find the “publicizing of the miracle” at the annual menorah lighting on the Third Street Promenade. Every night of Chanukah, a different Jewish community on the West-side leads singing and celebration for all. My community, Beth Shir Shalom, will be leading on Friday, December 23 and I hope you will join us and the other communities during the holiday. After all, this is what this season is about: gathering together, creating holy moments, giving generously, and responding to the dark with light. Happy holidays!

Rabbi Alex Kress serves Beth Shir Shalom, a warm and down-to-earth synagogue community at 19th and California Ave. His work centers on pursuing justice, inclusion, and good synagogue coffee.

Each month, we ask a member of the clergy to write a column for our readers.

Mar Vista: Neighbor to Neighbor

Come Watch Holiday Light and Music Show



By Michael Byrne
The holiday season is officially here: *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* is playing in the market, Starbucks is serving coffee in their trademark red cups, and Christmas lights are up all over town. However, if you live in Mar Vista, one house in particular will certainly stand out.

The Holiday House, located on McLaughlin Avenue near Char-nock Road (just Google it – it’s on Google maps!), is the passion project of 16-year-old Dylan Keville. I discovered the Holiday House in mid-October when driving home one evening seeing crowds of people gathering on the sidewalk for what looked like a rock show – laser lights, fog machines, and screaming ghosts all coordinated to a Halloween-themed soundtrack. I went to one of the Halloween “light shows” with my family and it did not disappoint.

Several of the decorations are actually animatronics (imagine a howling ghoul that will suddenly rise up nine feet in the air) that are activated by signs on the side

walk that read “step here!” The show itself started promptly at 9 p.m. leading off with the *Ghostbusters* theme song, all of the lights were perfectly synchronized with the beat of the song. It was awesome. Dylan told me his passion started when his grandmother brought him some decorations to put up when he was a kid. But for the last six years, Dylan has upped the ante by manually programming the lights to perform to holiday music. (He shared that each song takes about two hours to program!) He does this all out of love for his community and to “see the smiles on people’s faces.” Every show is completely free of charge. Though Halloween is officially over, it’ll be back next year, and Christmas shows are live and start every hour on the hour from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. For more information, visit www.marvistaeggcompany.com. If you’d like to support Dylan and The Holiday House, he accepts donations with venmo @dylan-keville.

Michael is a fairly new Mar Vista resident.

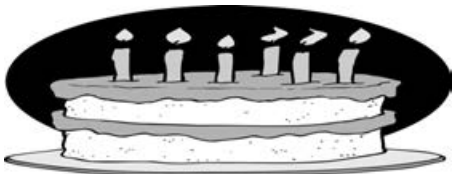
Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood

Gift YM Jewels This Holiday Season



By Stacy McClendon
An eye-catching and stunning piece of jewelry or accessory can elevate even the simplest of outfits by making a statement, sometimes a very bold one ... which is exactly what they are supposed to do by giving that added sparkle, uniqueness, and a view into a person’s world and favorite things, whether it be through color, shape, style and/or the wow factor.

Santa Monica resident Ayana Robinson is a pro at creating unique pieces that help you showcase and highlight the uniqueness of you. I’ve been a very satisfied customer of hers for well over four years. However, I never got to sit down with Ayana to see how this all came to be, until now.



Happy December Birthdays to:
Mike Cvejich, Dee Menzies, Aaron Leland, Bill Bubar, RoseMary Regalbuto, JR Dzubak, Bob Sullivan, Judi Barker, Herb Roney, Gita Runkle, Julie Thomas, Frank Lavac, Joyce Margolin, Glenn Ricard, Gretchen Clore, Scott Ferguson, Vicky Curtis, Tammy Andrews, Zachary Perez, Carole Mullaney, Monty McCormick, Carl McKinzie, Monika White, Chuck Husting, Bill Kleinheidt, Susan Annett, and Mike Gitchell.

Ayana was surrounded by entrepreneurship all her life. Her mother and father own C & L Catering, her father cooks amazing dishes, while her mother bakes and showcases sweet and tasty goods. However, jewelry was Ayana’s niche that began to unearth itself when she began to create different jewelry designs in middle school and started selling them to bible school participants. Once they started noticing her designs, they began wanting them for themselves. Over the years, Ayana kept making and sharing different pieces with her growing customer base as a hobby. She now owns and operates YM Jewels, LLC, an online shopping store that showcases her designs which she also shares at many events and pop-ups throughout the year. Her business is also included on the list of Buy Local Santa Monica website underneath the jewelry and accessories section.

(Continued on Page 14)



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Planning Ahead

Transfer on Death Deed – DIY Beware



By **Lisa Alexander, Esq.**

A Revocable Transfer on Death Deed, also called a “TOD Deed,” is a way to transfer a home to a named beneficiary, effective at death, without a Probate. It is promoted as a “do-it-yourself” alternative to making a Trust (expensive) or adding someone as a Joint Tenant. The problem with adding a Joint Tenant is that person will have ownership rights with you during your lifetime. With the TOD Deed, the named beneficiary has no ownership rights until after you die. You can revoke the TOD or sell the property at any time, without involving the beneficiary.

There are strict requirements for signing and recording the TOD Deed. It requires two witnesses, it must be notarized, and the TOD Deed must be recorded on or before 60 days after it is notarized. After the person making the TOD Deed dies, the beneficiary is required to locate the deceased person’s heirs (this may require hiring an heir search firm), send a required Notice, and record an Affidavit with the Death Certificate and statement under penalty of perjury that the required Notice

was given. The beneficiary inheriting under a TOD Deed is personally liable for the deceased person’s debts up to the value of the property inherited. There may be title problems with a TOD Deed because the inherited property may be subject to liens of the deceased person recorded up to 120 days after the Affidavit is recorded (which may be delayed by the Death Certificate or missing heirs).

I have had two experiences with TOD Deeds, and neither worked out well for the intended beneficiary. In my first experience (during-COVID-19 shutdowns), due to delays at the Recorder’s Office, the TOD Deed was not recorded until 61 days after it was notarized – one day too late. We had to open a Probate. In another case, the TOD was signed without witnesses and never recorded. Again, we will have to involve the Court.

The TOD Deed is not necessarily simple, and a lot can go wrong. It should not be used without clear understanding of the legal requirements and consequences for the named beneficiary.

Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.
Main Line: 310-395-6555
Direct Line: 310-656-4310
Fax: 424-238-6140

Basketball League Tradition (Continued from Page 3)

Register now to receive a free spot in their Basketball Camp.

The Biddy Basketball Camp will be held from December 20 – 22. The three-day camp is for both boys and girls. This camp is open for all registered players in their Biddy Basketball League to sign up. The camp is structured to be developmental and competitive. It will focus on teamwork, individual and team skills, the art of shoot-

ing, court awareness, proper spacing on the court, and tournament style games.

If you have any questions, please contact BLaBrie@smbgc.org. Contact Brandon with questions or register your children now at www.smbgc.org/sports.



Why you need dental insurance in retirement.

Medicare doesn’t pay for dental care.¹

As good as Medicare is, it was never meant to cover everything. If you want protection, you need to purchase individual insurance.

Early detection can prevent small problems from becoming expensive ones.

The best way to avoid large dental bills is preventive care. Experts recommend checkups twice a year.

Previous dental work can wear out.

Your odds of having a dental problem only go up as you age.²

Treatment is expensive — especially the services people over 50 often need.

Unexpected bills, like \$189 for a filling, or \$1,219 for a crown³ can be a real burden, especially if you’re on a fixed income.

When you’re comparing plans ...

- ▶ Look for coverage that helps pay for major services.
- ▶ Look for coverage with no deductibles.
- ▶ Shop for coverage with no annual maximum on cash benefits.

Simply put – without dental insurance, there may be an important gap in your healthcare coverage.

1 “Medicare & You.” Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2021. 2 “How might my oral and dental health change as I age?” www.usnews.com, 11/30/2018. 3 American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute, 2018 Survey of Dental Fees, Copyright 2018, American Dental Association.

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Maurice Jordan

(Continued from Page 1)

SMS: You became a model in the 1970s while also getting certification as a chef. How did modeling enter the picture?

MJ: "The suggestion of being a model came from my high school sweetheart, Mary, and I just laughed. A year or two later I saw an ad in the paper: John Robert Powers was looking for males to attend their classes. I laughed again, but this time I went over and signed up. I did it for fun."

SMS: Your culinary resume includes a simultaneous stint in the mid-1990s as a private home chef and an executive chef for numerous restaurants across the U.S. At the height of your tenure as a chef, you again changed direction. This time it was to commercial real estate, finding your niche in property management. What prompted you to leave the world of chefs?

MJ: "At 13, I got my first paycheck as a dishwasher at the Boston Naval Shipyard. It was there I knew I wanted to work in a kitchen. Over the years, everything changed in the F&B [food and beverage] business, too many bottom lines and also the workers' attitudes had changed. They either didn't take an interest in their work, or they wanted to be a 'celebrity chef' – after watching a couple of TV shows. A lot of other chefs I worked with also felt we were more like babysitters than leaders or teachers."

"It was in 1999, after a year with Delaware North's Roaring River State Park in Missouri, when I walked into my office at 1:15 a.m. and started taking a good look at my 'Wall of Encouragement.' While reading some of what I had accomplished in the business, I realized I'd been up the day before since 5 a.m., and in the kitchen by 6 a.m. I shook my head and said, 'I'm tired.' It was then that I made a goal to leave in five years (I would be 50). While with the Marriott Corporation, I had been taught to set goals in five-year increments: it's called 'WAYGIFY', or, 'Where are you going in five years?'"

SMS: As both a commercial realtor and property manager, what do you most enjoy about the work?

MJ: "The daily variety of people and places – it's also a stable income, and now I don't need to go



Maurice and his wife, Tess, enjoy dancing in the Los Angeles Chapter of USA Dance.

after real estate deals, they just fall in my lap."

After a lifetime of successful endeavors, Maurice and his wife, Tess, had planned to become a realtor team in Palm Springs, once she'd received her license.

Unfortunately, things changed when Tess developed dementia, leading Maurice to become her full-time caregiver. Remaining on the Westside, Maurice continues to share his life with Tess, with vigor and optimism, supported by friends, family and colleagues who, undoubtedly, are making their journey a little bit brighter.



Reflections

From The East

(Continued from Page 4)

By reviving and keeping up the old traditions, we not only celebrate the end of a year, but our very diverse family.

By adding new elements to our otherwise ritualized holiday routine, we can make sure that every year-end celebration is a special one.

You can always reach me at qstubis@gmail.com, or please visit me at www.qinsunstubis.com.

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In December, we can celebrate the 131st anniversary of when James Naismith created basketball, the creation of Bingo in 1929, and the birthdays of Bette Midler, Ozzy Osbourne, Jeff Bridges, Jay-Z, Beau Bridges, Donny Osmond, Rita Moreno, and Mayim Bialik.

Thoughts From a Second-Time Father

Becoming Resilient After Disappointments



By Michael Margolin

Last year, when she was in third grade, my daughter Alexa applied to be part of a leadership organization at her school. This organization has a group of students who meet during the week and talk about ways to make their school better and how they can be good leaders. Not everyone that applies for this organization gets in. There is an application and an interview. When she first applied, she was not accepted. She knew she would have another chance this year. So, now in 4th grade, she reapplied and practiced her interview questions and was selected to be a part of the group.

What I have learned about Alexa over her nine years on this planet is that she appears to be quite resilient. I have mentioned more than once that her competitive side was evident as early as playing Candyland. If she lost, she wanted to play again. She was not happy she lost, and she did not complain, she just wanted another chance to win. With this leadership group, her reaction to not being selected has been consistent with similar situations she has faced. She gives herself a moment to be unhappy, expresses her feelings, and then she gets right back on the horse again as soon as she gets the chance. She has learned not to dwell on things she cannot

change or on disappointment. These are admirable traits in my book.

We recently went to the San Diego Safari Park with the kids and Enjoli's parents. This trip was a gift from her parents that we were going to use earlier this year, but could not because the weather did not cooperate.

Jake had been waiting months and months to visit this place. I would say it lived up to expectations. Jake is six and seems to know more about animals than I ever did and maybe ever will. We followed Jake around this giant park for about half a day. And, even though we saw rhinos and lions and stampeding antelope, Jake was determined to see the cassowary. If you are not familiar with this creature, it has been labeled as the world's most dangerous bird. After hours of walking around and admiring other animals, we found this hazardous creature. Many yards behind a sturdy barrier lay the cassowary – behind a fairly large bush which kept us from really being able to see it. We waited and squawked. No movement. The flightless bird did not cooperate in letting us admire its perilous beauty. Maybe because he learned something from his older sister, Jake understood that today was not going to be the day he got to get a good look at the animal he would not stop talking about all day. And, so it was time to move on.

(Continued on Page 10)



Celebrate

CHRISTMAS WITH ST. MONICA

For 136 years, St. Monica Catholic Community has gathered the faithful to celebrate the birth of our newborn king, Emmanuel—God with us.

The humility of Christ brings the promise of great joy and lasting hope.

Christmas Eve Masses: Dec. 24
Church & Outdoors: 4 p.m.†
Church: 6 p.m. · 8 p.m. · Midnight

Christmas Day Masses: Dec. 25
7 a.m. · 9:30 a.m.† · 11:30 a.m

†**LIVESTREAM**
stmonica.net/christmas
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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Meet Me Under the Fig Tree

Join us for the return of The Miramar’s annual community holiday gathering under the historic Moreton Bay Fig Tree. Enjoy an afternoon filled with fun and festive frolics for the entire family.

**A Free Event for Our Community with Live Entertainment,
Photos with Santa, Seasonal Crafts, and Snow!**

Sunday, December 11, 2pm - 5pm

This year, we join forces with Santa MoniCARES to benefit Westside Food Bank and Chrysalis. Please bring new or gently worn clothing or non-perishable food items to contribute to those most in need.



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Connect to Nature in December

By Julie Rensink Hanson

The end of another year is fast approaching, and for many of us, watching our local wildlife has played a role in helping us through the ups and downs of uncertain times.

Birds, with their behavior and beauty, bring us joy when it can be hard to find it elsewhere and provide us with a connection to the shifting seasons. So, at the end of 2022, we take a moment and say “thank you” to the birds and wildlife, and look forward to a new year filled with discoveries from the natural world.

And, what could be more joyful than to see a Cedar Waxwing, a sign that a new season is here. If you have fruiting trees or bushes, Cedar Waxwings may descend on them in big flocks. A beautiful soft brown with dashing black masks and red-pointed wings, Waxwings are a colorful treat when they visit your yard. They sit close together on branches and have been known to pass each other berries. Consider planting Toyon (California Christmas Berry) or Coffeeberry to attract a flock to your yard.

Your fruiting bushes also may attract American Robins, who often flock with Waxwings in the winter. Well-known for their prowess as worm catchers, the robins also go for berries of all kinds, and will add their sweet song to your yard.

Look to the night sky mid-month to be amazed by the Geminid Meteor Shower. The duration of the shower is expected from November 19 through December 24, with the peak predicted for December 14. While urban lights over Los



A Cedar Waxwing

Angeles County may make it difficult to view the meteors, there are great locations not far from the city center for excellent year-round night sky viewing.

As you gather with family this holiday season, there is a simple action we can all do to help the planet; reduce and reuse the materials you use for wrapping packages during the holidays. Use your creativity, and start at home to find materials to reuse, such as paper grocery bags, twine, and pre-used wrapping paper and bows. You can also use alternative packaging, such as mason jars and tin containers. This action will save you money and reduce the waste that might otherwise reach our landfills, waterways, and wildlife habitats.

Call the Wild Bird Unlimited Nature Shop at 424-272-9000, or go online to www.wbu.com/santamonica for more information.



From Me to You...



By Diane Margolin

Over the years, I can recall the media showing us images of happy families enjoying holiday dinners.

As I spoke to more people about what they did over the holidays, I found out that they didn’t always look forward to family dinners for various reasons. They didn’t like some of their relatives, or they didn’t have wonderful memories of these traditions that we keep hearing about on television.

In this issue, Deborah Gray wrote about giving the gift of your time by volunteering to help at one of our many local charities. You can start your own traditions. If you don’t have a dinner to attend on one of the “big” holidays, volunteer to deliver for Meals on Wheels West on that day, for example. The response of those who receive food that day should make you feel very special. Giving to others makes us feel good about ourselves. Maybe even better than the recipients of our gift of time.

Last month, I lost a longtime friend, Barbara Carson. Her daughter wrote about her on Page 10.

At Barbara’s church service, the priest reached out to the people in attendance and asked them to call out words to describe Barbara. “Brooklyn. Funny. Adventurous, Devoted friend. A woman who made a difference in our lives. Optimistic. Cared about social justice. Insistent.” All were perfect descriptions. It gave those of us in attendance a chance to remember her in a positive way.

I spent time with Barbara when she lived in Santa Monica and when we both lived in New York. We really loved to sing, and we would sing in the car or when we were walking on the city streets. I

could never picture walking down Wilshire Blvd. singing, but on Park Avenue, it seemed perfectly natural, especially after we had gone to a Michael Feinstein concert and were walking back to my apartment.

So, as I remember my adventures with Barbara when we went to museums, or to sing around a piano at a golf course when her good friend was playing the piano, I will focus on all the positive memories I have.

We are so sorry to share sad news about Malibu resident, Kay Lehne. She passed away in the advanced stage of Alzheimer’s disease last month. Kay and her husband, John, had been married for 63 years. They raised a wonderful family of three children and seven grandchildren. Kay had been a local home economics teacher. Eventually, Kay joined her daughter, Carolyn, and son, Steve, and they formed KC Restoration. In that business they restored buildings such as Union Station, Wilshire Boulevard Temple, and the Bullock’s Wilshire Department Store, which was one of my favorite places to visit. Services are pending.

American Pickers will be coming to our area in January. Collectors interested in being considered for the show should reach out to them by phone at 646-493-2184, or email AmericanPickers@cineflix.com. Be sure to include your full name, city/state, contact information, and a brief description of your collection.

Also, please note that the Pickers only pick private collections, so NO stores, malls, flea markets, museums, auctions, businesses, or anything open to the public can be considered.

Have a wonderful holiday season. Remember to reach out to those are in need when you have the time.

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Community Service on the Westside

Discover the Santa Monica Family YMCA Community



By Eduardo Lowe
Member Engagement Director

The Santa Monica Family YMCA is happy to be open to our community seven days a week, which includes full access to our heated indoor Aquatics Center.

Our focus areas at the Y are Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility. We are dedicated to serving our community by providing programs and services that enrich the quality of the physical, mental, spiritual, and social lives of individuals and families.

We invite you to visit or tour our facility any time. Some of the benefits of membership at the Y include free parking, group exercise classes, older adult programming, an indoor aquatics center, racketball, state-of-the-art cardio equip-

ment, adult wellness programs, swim lessons, youth and family programs, and so much more.

Come to connect, discover, and grow. At the Y, we are not just a gym. We are a community. When you join the Y, you invest in yourself, your health, and your community. The Santa Monica Family YMCA is a non-profit organization, so we are not just focused on adding members, but on improving the quality of your life and our community. There are many ways the Y can help you and others.

We will have our annual Open House in January. Everyone who visits will receive a complementary Day Pass. This will allow you to see, experience, learn, and try all the Y offers. We hope to see you there.

To learn about everything the Santa Monica Family YMCA has to offer, please visit our website at www.ymcasm.org.

Santa Monica - Pacific Palisades Lions Club Looks Forward to Holiday Program

By Kingsley Fife

We Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions have had a busy month. At our dinner meeting, we passed the ceremonial gavel from President Susan DeRemer to incoming President Kingsley Fife. Our Club has a tri-presidency with a different acting president in charge for four months. After Lion King, comes Lion Kathy Boole in March 2023. Also, at our recent dinner meeting, we heard from Santa Monica City

Councilman Lion Phil Brock, who gave us a very interesting, comprehensive report on the Santa Monica city election.

We're looking forward to our annual Salvation Army visit on December 14. Captains James and Katrina Fleming will be our honored guests who will put on a colorful show. We hope to reciprocate with a nice donation to their worthy cause. To bolster this, we will

(Continued on Page 13)

SMBWC Humming With Activity



By Pat Webber

This year is nearly at an end, but the Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club (SMBWC) is humming with activity. It's been two years since we've been this busy and we're relishing this time to come together to fulfill our local community commitments.

One of our annual projects is collecting boxes of cereal which we give to the Westside Food Bank. This year, our members contributed 75 boxes. This project, once again, was spearheaded by Events Chair Alicia Syres. We look forward to setting a new goal of more boxes for 2023. Another project was the Santa Monica CARES' Socktober campaign, to which we collected and donated 70 pairs of socks.

This month we are hosting a holiday party for members and invited guests, especially anyone who may be interested in joining the SMBWC. Anyone interested is asked to contact Becky at

310-395-1308, or email at info@smbwc.org. This will be an evening event.

Continuing the holiday theme, members will be invited to our holiday luncheon. Canasta and bridge players always enjoy this, especially because the proceeds go to the Elmira T. Stephens Scholarship Fund.

Our weekly activities continue to attract club members and guests, especially now that folks are feeling more comfortable in group settings. Anyone interested should contact Becky at the phone or email listed previously.

Another weekly activity is the Arts and Crafts and Conversation group. If you paint, draw, embroider, collage, crochet, knit, or make jewelry, you are encouraged to bring your unfinished projects or start a new one. As with the canasta and bridge, we ask for a donation of \$5, or \$3 for members. This group meets on Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., but you can come and go as you wish. Contact Joan at joinietee@gmail.com, or call 310-390-7101 to sign up.

More About Cannabis



By Stephen Freedman

Cannabis has been legal in California for over 25 years, yet the misconceptions surrounding the product and the industry are prevalent. Outdated information has put up roadblocks that we, as legitimate cannabis workers, are fighting daily to knock down. But, as our industry continues to grow and expand, we are reaching new individuals who are finding joy and relief within the cannabis field in a modern and convenient way.

At ERBA Markets, we strive to not only make the experience in our dispensaries enjoyable, but to educate the public, removing the taboos that hinder our business. We cater to all people with a variety of needs. Sure, we see the twenty-somethings looking to have fun, but we also aide those individuals who are suffering a multitude of ailments, some terminal.

With our expansive inventory, we are able recommend a specific product tailored to the patients' wants and needs. This is not confined to smoking either. We carry edibles, balms, lotions, capsules, and tinctures – some with the psychoactive THC, but many with other cannabinoids for sleep,

relaxation, inflammation, and pain. Our staff is trained to help everyone find exactly what they are looking for.

We are also striving to modernize the cannabis space. We have created our own ERBA Markets App, where patients can learn more about a product and order for pickup or delivery. We regularly meet with innovative companies who can help move our business and industry forward. We have even developed our own digital gift cards.

While this industry is still in its relative infancy, we are striving to become a leader in not only service and education, but innovation as well. We want all our shops to be welcoming spaces for everyone in our community, and we are excited for what the future will bring.

Stephen Freedman is the General Manager at ERBA Markets. Locations include the Woods, Los Angeles, Venice, Lompoc, South Bay, and WeHo.



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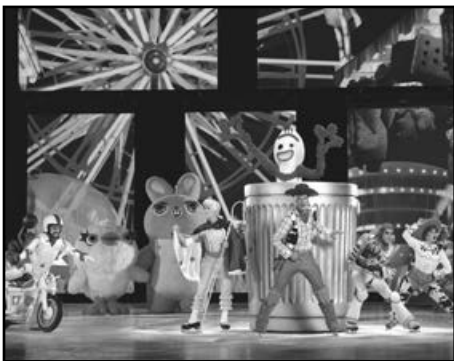
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**'Disney On Ice Presents Road Trip Adventures'
Featuring New and Classic Tales This December**

'Disney On Ice presents Road Trip Adventures' will whisk families away on a getaway full of magical participatory moments. Featuring new and classic tales, this unique multi-generational experience makes its SoCal debut for four weeks playing Los Angeles, Anaheim, Ontario, and Long Beach from December 8 thru January 2, 2023.

Exciting twists and turns await as Mickey, Minnie, Goofy, and guests of all ages embark on an interactive and memorable adventure to iconic Disney destinations. Shows in Los Angeles will be held Thursday, December 8 and Friday, December 9 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, December 10 and Sunday, December 11, shows will be at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. at



Disney On Ice presents its popular characters in magical performances at the Crypto.com Arena.

the Crypto.com Arena – 1111 S. Figueroa St., Downtown L.A. Tickets can be purchased online at AXS.com or in-person at the venue box office. Ticket pricing is subject to change based on market demand.



Read the story below with some suggestions on how to select a gift your teenager might appreciate.

How to Choose a Gift for a Teenager

By Nicole Abbott

Picking a thoughtful gift for your teenager is hard for multiple reasons. Many teens don't involve their parents in their social lives, they don't often communicate their interests, or they are too busy to demonstrate obvious hobbies or passions.

However, all people have subjects of interest, even if they're not apparent. So, with that being said, a great place to start when trying to find a gift for your teen is with trying to learn their interests.

Getting your teens gifts that show you know their hobbies can be really touching! Looking into bands or artists they like is always a safe and rewarding option. Merchandise from a favorite artist is always appreciated, and not something teens often get for themselves. Concert tickets, if possible, would be even better: they'd also provide you with an opportunity to spend quality time with your kid, doing something that they're very passionate about!

Every teenager also appreciates some new clothes – so, if you're unsure about your kid's interests, just take note of their style, and try to get them something that

matches what they usually wear. New items that match their usual fashion will always make teenagers happy, especially if it's an article of clothing that they've wanted for a long time.

There are, of course, also the common gifts that 99% of teenagers would be over the moon to receive. For many teens, self-care essentials like bath bombs, salts, body lotions, nail polishes, etc., are often a good choice.

If you have a teen who's into gaming, the newest game releases or accessories for their gaming console are great buys. And, of course, in either case, planning a day to do something fun and unusual (like go to a theme park), one-on-one with your kid will really make them feel happy and loved – and at the end of the day, that should be the goal of any gift that you choose to buy.

Nicole Abbott is a local high school student.



**Santa Monica - Pacific Palisades Lions Club
(Continued from Page 12)**

participate in the Red Kettle Day, Friday December 16, at Bristol Farms market on Wilshire. Watch for us ringing a holiday bell by a red kettle on a stand in the store parking lot.

Mid-month, we'll be having our annual holiday party at Tony P's Dockside Grill in the Marina. This is always an eagerly anticipated festive event with great food, games, and a fun gift exchange.

Later this month, we're going over to Pasadena to help other Lions decorate our Lions International Float for the Rose Parade. We always enjoy this exciting experience and meeting other Lions from other clubs.

If you're interested in being our guest at our dinner meeting and learning more about us and what we do in the community, contact smpplionsclub@gmail.com, or Dr. Kingsley Fife at 310-454-2960 or Yoriko Fisher at yorikofisher@gmail.com.



Incoming Lion President Kingsley Fife receives the gavel from outgoing Lions Club President Susan De Remer.





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Places to Go in Santa Monica Word Search

Dear Readers:
This word search, the first in a series, was designed especially for you. It will be unlike other word

searches you may have seen. It was created in the memory of Jean McNeil Wyner, a.k.a. Mrs. Santa Monica, who loved doing word

searches. We hope you enjoy doing it. There are 72 locations in Santa Monica for you to find.
—*Diane Margolin, Editor/Publisher*

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The Reason for the (Racing) Season: RFID Tags (Continued from Page 3)



Miceala shows us medal for the first race she ran.

even round-the-ankle bracelet-style tags. In a race, each RFID tag’s inventory number is associated with a particular bib number. When a runner crosses the start line – the RFID timing mat – an electromagnetic interrogation pulse from the RFID reader registers the RFID tag in the bib, making note of the time that register has occurred. When the runner crosses the finish line, the RFID mat at the end registers the tag again. The two times allow for the official “chip time” of the runner, which may differ from the less personal “clock time” that only correlates with how long the runner has taken to cross the finish line respective to when the race started, not necessarily when they personally crossed the start line. Some RFID tags work in short-range only, requiring the reader (mat) to be very close by, but other tags feature longer-range tracking. In ultra-racing, these tags allow event staff to track if a runner has gone off-course, potentially needing aid – and also allow those staying comfy at home to track a runner along their route to the finish line and, if they can, time their own (likely) car-based route to show up in time to cheer at the finish line.

Dr. Miceala Shocklee is a full-time aquatics veterinarian and part-time science writer and freelance editor.



Gift YM Jewels (Continued From Page 5)

Almost all of her jewelry is handmade. Her sister Aliya helps with the business, and her other sister Atiya makes the one-of-a-kind cloth head wraps sold on her webpage. The wood and spiral earrings are special one-of-a-kind designs, as each one is made individually and comes out differently because of the texture of the wood and the designs imprinted on them. Please visit https://ym-jewels.myshopify.com to view and purchase more handcrafted YM Jewels designs to gift for the holidays. Happy Shopping!

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



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Celebrating Birthdays at Flapjax Diner

It was one of those exceptionally warm days we were having when I met recently with my brother, Don, and his friend Bill for breakfast in the spacious back patio at Flapjax Diner on Wilshire Blvd.

Bill and I were celebrating our birthdays, and Don was happy to join us. He enjoys breakfasts out.

Flapjax Diner is open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. from Tuesdays to Fridays, and until 3 p.m. on the weekends. Their menu focuses on breakfast, brunch, and lunch dishes. You can start with appetizers and toasts, try plate-sized pancakes with the most tempting flavors, or choose an entrée from the All-Day Brunch suggestions. Giant burgers and sandwiches are served with fries or mixed greens, and generous salads round off the menu. There is a choice of hot drinks and cold drinks which add a refreshing touch to your meal. The menu has a note that asks you to let them know of any food allergies.

As you can see by the pictures, the portions are very generous and flavorful due to the blended taste of the various ingredients.

And, so delicious. Bill ordered

the pancake scramble with scrambled eggs, kielbasa, cheddar, and green onions atop these pancakes that almost covered the entire plate.

I ordered the English muffin open-faced sandwich with scrambled eggs, chicken, mozzarella, grilled tomato, chipotle aioli and mixed greens.

Don ordered patatas bravas, which were crispy potatoes, fried eggs, cheddar, spicy salsa brava, and bacon bites.

Bill and I had to take home what we couldn't finish. Don was able to eat everything on his plate.

What Don noticed in the restaurant are the special homey touches that owner Ebru Caplan puts around her dining spaces. Even in the very clean bathroom there are magazines and fluffy towels. There are plants throughout the restaurant and outside.

Another important feature is the customer service. The staff are so welcoming, happy to help when you request something, and always gracious. You feel relaxed when eating there, and after enjoying your meal, look forward to returning again soon. —D.M.



To celebrate our birthdays, we got a special pancake. I couldn't wait to take a bite.



The serving was so big Bill couldn't finish his pancake scramble.



Don enjoyed his patatas bravas.



I ordered the open-faced English muffin sandwich.

Bringing Joy to Adults One Holiday Tree at a Time

By Charla King

Holidays are full of the hustle and bustle of gift wrapping and giving. But, for some, it's far less festive. They may be ill or lonely, alone, or homeless.

JoyCatchers aims to bring some joy back into their lives with the gift of a small, colorfully decorated artificial tree that will fit in even the smallest room.

This was the idea behind the JoyCatchers Tree Trim when I invited 20 friends to join me decorating trees in 2006. "Let's do this again" they said, and an annual tradition began, growing to JoyCatchers becoming a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization last year.

To learn more about JoyCatchers, visit www.joycatchers.org, or call 310-890-2487.

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DELIVERING MORE THAN A MEAL: MOW West's core, heritage program that delivers a LA County dietitian approved hot lunch and light dinner to homebound seniors. Our Wellness Check monitors the health and wellness of MOW West clients.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: Volunteers call clients weekly for friendly conversations that reduce isolation and loneliness. The Wellness Check monitors and reports health & wellness with a focus on mental health. Referrals are made to other needed social service agencies.

FOOD & SHELTER: As formerly homeless people are housed, MOW West delivers healthy meals and referrals to additional social services that help maintain stability, health & wellness and reintegrate into society.

SUPPORTING VETERANS ON THE HOMEFRONT: Delivering cost-free meals to veterans of all ages and their spouses.

KEEPING PEOPLE & PETS TOGETHER: Providing pet food and and veterinarian care to clients who have pets living with them at home. Studies show pets make people happier and healthier.



Conrad, Veteran client



Marianne, Food & Shelter client



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