

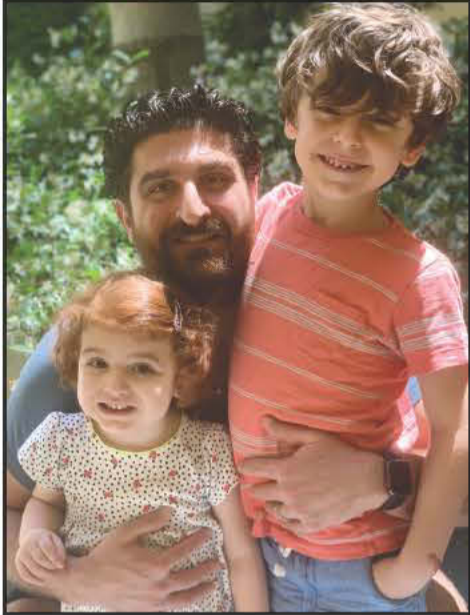
THE SANTA MONICA STAR

Also covering
The Greater
Westside

Volume XIX Number 6

Connecting You With Your Community

June 2020



Each June we feature dads with their children. Harout Derassoyan is on our cover once again, with daughter Claire and son Noubar.



Eddie Guerboian, left, poses proudly with his son, Avo, and his year-old son, Edward. Edward is Eddie's first grandchild.

Saluting Our Dads During the Month of June



Here's Mike Litvack cooling off with his seven-year-old twins, Jackson and Rosalyn.



Ross Furukawa ran the L.A. Marathon in March with his daughters, Maya and Jade.



Timur Berberoglu, right, recalls fond days in the Italian countryside with his children, Candan, left and Deren, center.



Former Santa Monica Police Department Captain Alex Padilla, left, with son Miguel, daughter Priscilla, son Alejandro, wife Stella, and their dog, Kobe.

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Each year we publish photos of dads with their children in the June issue. You may recognize some of the same families from last year.

I wish there was more room for photos and the stories that go with them. Have a wonderful Father's Day holiday with your family.

-D.M.

Meals on Wheels West: More Vital Than Ever

By Anne Wallentine

Many businesses have had to scale back since the pandemic started – but Meals on Wheels West has seen significant growth. “We’re serving more people than we ever have,” says Chris Baca, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels West (MOWW).

The nonprofit, which delivers meals and supports services for independent living, has seen a 45% growth in clients since the pandemic began. Their client bases have doubled in Venice and the Pacific Palisades, and increased in the other areas they serve: Santa Monica, Marina del Rey, and Malibu.

People are often surprised to learn that the nonprofit has so many clients in these areas, but Chris notes, “There’s hidden hunger, even in the most affluent communities.” Chris suggests checking in with neighbors during social distancing when people have less visibility. “You can enroll a neighbor in the Meals on Wheels program,” he says, and “just knowing your neighbors goes a long way.”

Meals on Wheels West “is not just for seniors,” Chris explains. The service also supports people who live with mental and physical health issues, those who face difficult economic circumstances, and veterans of all ages.

Many who use the service are part of the populations to whom the coronavirus poses the most risk. “People see Meals on Wheels as one of the frontline responders,” Chris says. Since March, Meals on Wheels West has hired additional staff and gone from one to five suppliers to accommodate both the increased demand and changes in the supply chain. Where they used to provide only hot meals, they now provide hot, frozen, and shelf-stable meals, as well as meal-replacement shakes. They have also partnered with the Westside Food Bank to provide emergency boxes of groceries.

The pandemic has changed how Meals on Wheels West operates. They have gone from delivering five days a week to three days in order to minimize points of contact. “We’ve taken really strong preventive measures and are very careful to protect our clients and volunteers,” Chris describes. They have also instituted rigorous cleaning and social distancing procedures, providing masks and gloves to their staff and volunteers.

“We couldn’t do this without the support of the community and volunteers,” Chris adds, citing the influx of support they have received during the pandemic. “The City of Santa Monica, Providence Saint John’s Health Center, foundations,



Santa Monica Rotarian Monika White explains her decision to become a volunteer. “Here I am, about to walk up the driveway to deliver food for a couple who are Meals on Wheels West clients. My husband Roger and I deliver meals once a week and also make telephone reassurance calls to some of their clients twice a week. MOWW has established a safe method for picking up and delivering the food, and the meals and the phone calls are very welcomed by the clients. I knew that MOWW is always in need of volunteers and thought this would be a good time to help out.”

and companies have helped us cover the costs of these many new clients.” Volunteers from several tech companies, including Google, Amazon, and Snap, have also joined in to conduct “phone wellness checks” twice a week. The calls provide a personal check-in for homebound clients to augment the delivery service and refer them to other resources if needed.

To provide all of these vital services, Chris says, “I’m lucky to have a great staff and wonderful support.” To learn more about donating or volunteering, visit www.mealsonwheelswest.org.

Do You Recognize These Neighborhood Celebrities?
(Answer on Page 4)



Brain Matters

Stress, Isolation, and Risk of Drug or Alcohol Relapse



By Dr. Keith Heinzerling
The worldwide coronavirus pandemic and the resulting widespread social distancing and stay-at-home orders may be a source of significant stress and social isolation for some people.

Those with drug or alcohol problems may be particularly susceptible to the potential negative effects of stress and isolation, which may increase the risk of relapse. Studies show that stress is a trigger for relapse to drug or alcohol use via actions of the stress hormone corticotropin-releasing factor acting on the brain's reward system.

So, what can people with drug or alcohol problems do while socially distancing themselves to reduce the risk of relapse?

One suggestion is to seek out and schedule regular social interactions with sober friends and family. Feeling lonely or bored has long been recognized by self-help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) as triggers for relapse. Although in-person self-help meetings are not

possible now, online meetings and support were already available from AA (aa-intergroup.org) and SMART Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org/community) prior to the pandemic.

In addition, telemedicine options for connecting with your doctor and/or therapist are now much more accessible due to changes in regulations caused by the pandemic.

Another suggestion, which is often recommended as part of any treatment plan for a drug or alcohol problem, is to avoid long stretches of idle time. Try to keep a regular schedule for going to bed and getting up, and use a calendar to schedule healthy activities throughout the day – such as talking on the phone or video conferencing with family or friends – to avoid lapsing into boredom. Light exercise, yoga, or meditation may also help to relieve stress.

Keeping alcohol use to the minimum and avoiding drug use will help to keep you and your immune system as healthy as possible. But, that may not be possible for all people. If you do use drugs or alcohol in these times, social distancing

and isolation may increase the risk of fatal overdose.

Never use drugs or alcohol alone and know that combining drugs and alcohol, especially opioids and benzodiazepines, increases the risk of accidental overdose. Naloxone or Narcan (<https://tinyurl.com/read-narcan>) nasal spray is available from pharmacies without a prescription in many states, including California, and can be administered by a lay person to reverse an opioid overdose. But, if no one is there to witness an overdose, there will be no one to administer Narcan and call 911 for help.

Again, the safest path is to avoid drug and alcohol use during these times, but if you do use, do not use alone, and follow the CDC's recommendations (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html): wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, keep a distance between yourself and other people, avoid close contact with people who are sick, and clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

(Continued on Page 3)

Paws and Claws

A Rabbit's Disease



By Dr. Frank Lavac MS, DVM, VCA

Q: What is Rabbit Hemorrhage Disease?

A: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) is a fatal disease in rabbits caused by Calicivirus (not Coronavirus). It affects both wild and domesticated rabbits. It has been rare in the U.S. with episodic outbreaks over the past 20 years. With the current outbreak, it has been found in Colorado, Texas, Arizona and Nevada. Most recently, cases have been found in wild rabbits in the Palm Springs area.

The incubation period is one to five days. It causes fever, anorexia, lethargy, and spontaneous bleeding, and even death. It is NOT contagious to people. Rabbits acquire the virus through ingestion, inhalation, or through wounds. It persists in the environment for several months. Keep your rabbits indoors and restrict visitors to your rabbits. Vaccines are available outside the U.S., and we are attempting to see if the USDA will allow us to import the vaccine.

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

Planning Ahead

Estate Plan Signing While Safer at Home



By Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.
Even before the coronavirus pandemic, California has not kept up with electronic execution of Wills and other Estate Planning documents. And, while emergency orders in a

handful of states now permit a notary to acknowledge a document without an in-person meeting with the signer, California is not one of them. Excuse the pun, but California Estate Planning attorneys live by the adage "where there's a 'Will,' there's a way!"

In California, your Will must still be personally signed. You cannot

sign a Will by DocuSign or other e-signature method. You cannot type out a Will on your computer, phone, or iPad without printing it out and signing it. And, unless the Will is written in your own handwriting, it must also be signed by two witnesses. Some states require a Will to be notarized, but not in California – we still need two witnesses.

Although it is standard practice to have a Trust and many other Estate Planning documents notarized, there are only a few documents that require a notary to be effective. For example, there is no legal requirement that a Trust be notarized. Compare a Durable Power of Attorney using the statutory form (the form most commonly used and recognized) which must be notarized. Note that a Durable Power of Attorney other than the statutory form is valid with two signatures. An Advance Health Care Directive can be notarized, but if a notary is not available, it is valid with two signatures instead. Other documents that require a notary are Deeds and Certifications of Trust.

Finding a notary or even obtaining two witnesses can be a challenge under current circumstances. Estate Planning attorneys are finding "work arounds" to assist their clients with proper execution. Signings are happening with face masks and gloves at "Safe

(Continued on Page 4)

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Email: SMStarNewspaper@gmail.com
Editor and Publisher:
Diane Margolin
Editorial Assistant: Miceala Shocklee
Advertising Sales: Diane Margolin
Ad Graphics: Dynamic Graphic
Contributing Writers:
Dr. Frank Lavac, Qin Stubis, Michael Margolin, Lisa Alexander, Anne Wallentine, Sunshine Banister, Mark Presky, Julia Abbott, Jahrid Longworth, Kalina Silverman, and Kera Snell.
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Byte by Byte

Boost School and Skills with Tech Tools



By Miceala Shocklee

With the necessity of stay-at-home procedures continuing and the future of what school will look like come fall still uncertain, parents (and people in general) are ever on the lookout for at-home educational opportunities. Technology can be a time sink, but it can also be a school and skill boost. If your well of inspiration is running dry, try checking out the following sites for ideas on how to teach yourself and those around you.

• **Coursera** - From computer science to psychology to business to climate change, Coursera has thousands of free courses available from universities, independent expert lecturers, and even major names in industry teaching introductory to advanced-level university courses. Some courses provide certificates of completion at the end. Some courses can be done at whatever pace the student chooses, while some are done on a more scheduled basis. To explore options, visit: www.coursera.org.

• **Masterclass** - The Masterclass set-up capitalizes on the appeal of celebrity instruction. Students can delve into topics under the instruction of major names like Jane Gooddall on conservation, Neil de-Grass Tyson on scientific thinking and communication, Judy Bloom on writing, or Wolfgang Puck on cooking. Classes can be done at the student's own pace, but accessing some courses does require a membership. To find out about free trials and membership options, visit: www.masterclass.com.

• **Khan Academy** - Whereas Coursera and Masterclass are often more targeted towards adult independent

learners, non-profit Khan Academy has material suitable for learners of all ages. From elementary school math and reading to ACT and LSAT prep, Khan Academy is touted for its concise videos breaking down topics in straightforward, memorable ways. To see what resources Khan Academy has for your learning objectives, visit: khanacademy.org.

• **Duolingo** - Available online and as a smartphone app, Duolingo is a treasure trove of learning opportunities. Duolingo offers instruction in languages from around the world for all levels of learners. The site also offers online language learning communities, story features to aid in language processing, and even podcasts in other languages. The site and app are free to use, and offer bonus and ad-free features with a subscription. To get started on learning another language, go to: duolingo.com.

• **Youtube** - Of course, there's always the vast resource that is Youtube. Good not just for cat videos and general distraction, Youtube also has a wealth of educational resources. Many universities have their own channels, and experts from most fields have information and instructional videos (whether that's how-to or how-not-to). If sheltering in place has led to Youtube binging becoming a part of your routine, try switching out one of your usual videos with an education one every five "fun" videos, or every hour, depending on your schedule.

Dr. Miceala Shocklee, is a Caltech alumna and graduate of the University of Edinburgh veterinary school. Her reporting interests include the intersection of science, technology, conservation, and the written word.

Saluting More Dads



Halley Sun Stubis, who just graduated from the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, is with her dad, Mark Stubis, and brother, MIT grad and Johns Hopkins graduate student Keaton Stubis.



Chuck Husting, center, shares that "My older son, Peter, (right), is in the music business. My younger son, Conor is an actor who has been in two Netflix TV shows. Conor is 20 years old. Peter is 22. I am a lucky father. They are wonderful human beings and always fun to be with."

Selling Your Items Online, Part 3

By Mark Presky

This is a continuation of my *Selling Online Part 2* discussion which ran in the April 2020 issue.

Now, you've gotten your item cleaned up (and functioning, if applicable), and you have nice photos that show off your sale item. For most sales platforms like Craigslist and Nextdoor, you may want to use smaller file sized photos, say in the 100-400 kilobyte (kb) range. That way, they'll upload into the listing/ad faster. For eBay, you'll want much larger file sizes for your photos, and to be careful about following eBay's stricter background guidelines.

Most digital cameras today take larger sized photos, e.g. about two to five megabytes (MB), but there are several ways to reduce the file sizes of your photos to 100-400 kilobytes (kb) each (1000 kilobytes = 1 megabyte).

Remember my May 2020 column on using Google? This might be a good time to try using Google.com. I'm able to send photos from my iPhone to my laptop computer, and when I do, the phone asks me for the photo file size that I'd like to send. But, there are many ways to adjust photo file sizes.

If you are not able to do this on your own or by using Google, you might try the free Picmonkey.com program, or just ask someone. Call customer service where you bought your smartphone or camera, or just ask a family member or friend for help. Once you learn this essen-

tially simple procedure, you'll be on your way and will be able to teach it to another friend or neighbor who will be impressed with your tech skills.

Finally, reduce the number of photos you're posting down from 12 to three. The number of photos each platform allows is different. Craigslist allows up to 24 photos. Although you do want to show lots of detail, and to include several item angles (including the bottom), pick the best photos that show off your item, but that still disclose the defects (e.g. scratches).

You don't want the potential buyer to drive all the way over to your place, or to where you're meeting them, only to have them be disappointed in the condition of the item and walk away.

That's all on photos for now. Next time in *Selling Online*, I'll cover information to watch out for, such as fraud and discourteous potential buyers.

Brain Matters

(Continued from Page 2)

Dr. Keith Heinzerling is an addiction medicine specialist at the Pacific Brain Health Center. His clinical and research focuses are on the treatment of alcohol, drug and substance use problems, with anti-addiction medications. As director of the TRIP program, he is involved in the development of psychedelic-assisted therapies for those suffering with addiction, depression, anxiety, and PTSD. PacificBrain Health.org | 310-582-7612.

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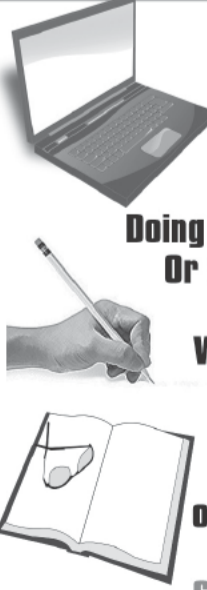
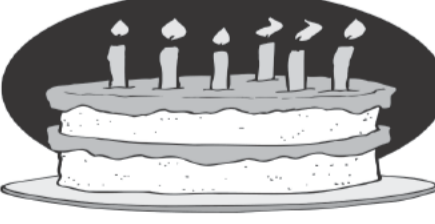
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Local Realtors Keep the Personal Touch ... From a Social Distance

By Anne Wallentine

Realtors Chuck Husting and Christina Jhun Hopkins have been business partners for 11 years. "We have a great time together," Chuck says, because "we complement each other." Christina brings practicality, organization, and discipline to the table, while Chuck is interested in the many aspects involved of the sale.

Both realtors are L.A. transplants: Christina was born in South Korea, and Chuck is originally from Chicago. Like most of L.A.'s non-native species, they are now firmly rooted here. Each has lived on the Westside for almost 30 years.

The partners cover a "broad spectrum" of residential properties across the Westside from Santa Monica to Westwood, and Malibu to Playa del Rey. Despite their differing approaches, Chuck and Christina agree that one of the best parts of their business is building a rapport with clients. "Each client

ends up becoming like our family," Christina says. They keep the needs and comfort of their clients in mind when they meet them.

They "cherish" getting to know the community that surrounds each property, from owners to staff, as well as the "uniqueness" of each home. "Every property has [a] sort of romance to it," Chuck notes. "It's usually a new chapter in somebody's life when they're buying a new home. And, it's a big deal."

Christina's previous experience as a pianist also affects their approach to selling homes. She likens the effort and coordination of setting up an open house to the process of preparing for a performance. "In both cases," she says, "it's a big accomplishment."

Though there has been a "pause" in the market, the partners don't see COVID-19 as ultimately changing the way the real estate market functions. "We still think it's about people coming to a house and seeing it," Chuck says. "It's about peo-

ple taking the proper steps of precaution as opposed to virtual tours," he adds, acknowledging that "I'm not talking the way the big buzz is at present." Though camera and video technology have vastly improved, Chuck says, "Pictures can be deceiving. They just don't necessarily relate the true feel of a space." Christina agrees. "We still need to show - human to human."

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a period with "not much inventory" and "pent-up demand," according to Chuck, although

"we're just starting to see momentum come back" in the local market. While he acknowledges that the long-term is hard to predict, Chuck sees the Westside as "different than other areas, because we have a lot of momentum with tech as it continues to combine with entertainment." Not to mention - although he does - "the weather, the ocean, and the amenities" inherent to the area.

To learn more about these special local realtors, visit www.chuckandchristina.com.

Teen Scene

All About AP Exams

By Julia Abbott

If you know a high schooler, they have probably just finished their AP Exams. AP Exams are internationally administered exams in a variety of subjects for college credit.

This year, AP Exams were administered online. Of course, this came with a variety of challenges. Cheating was a concern, as it was expected that many kids would pay tutors to take the exams for them. In fact, quite a few kids are expected to have done this.

However, I speak from my own personal experience when I say that these online exams were very, very difficult in a different way. Although makeup exams are offered in June, in some of the subjects, tests were whittled down. For AP European History, we only did a fourth of what we would have done

normally. We were given only 45 minutes to write a very long essay. I will say, it was very time-intensive, and I knew many kids who had issues with the Internet. When I finished, my sister joked that I looked like I'd been in a war.

So, if you know any high schoolers taking AP exams give them a social distancing high five. We were the first group of kids to ever take online AP Exams, which came with a special set of challenges. I'm sure a high five and sending a good thought in their direction will truly make their day.

Julia Abbott is a local high school student.

Estate Plan Signing (Continued from Page 2)

Distance" on the porch at home or at the street curb outside the attorney's office. For clients in a nursing facility unable to receive visitors, with generous assistance of nursing home staff, attorneys are presiding over signings outside the window, communicating with the client inside by phone. Even under "Safer At Home" directives, attorneys are creatively overcoming obstacles to make sure their clients' Estate Plan documents are properly executed, witnessed, and notarized, as applicable.

Lisa Alexander, Esq. can be reached at 310-395-6555.

Answer to Neighborhood Celebrities

(Continued from Page 1)



Chris, left, and Jasmit, owner of Montana Mail on Montana Avenue, are so pleasant and helpful when it comes to providing postal service, mailing and receiving packages.



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Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood

Dairy-Free Living with Chef Jahrid

This month, our Chef Jahrid Longsworth, a resident of the Pico neighborhood and a middle school student, decided to share the surprise he gave to his parents on Mother's Day. He thought some teens may want to try it for their parents on Father's Day or any night to make it memorable.

Jahrid got the idea to surprise his parents with a "date night." He asked them to dress up to attend a special dinner served on their patio, where he played music and served a menu featuring his best dishes.

Jahrid explains, "I did it because I wanted to give my parents a time to relax and enjoy each other. I heard them talking about missing date nights so I wanted to give them a date night at home. I knew they needed to relax and have a good time."

"I started by telling my mom that she could not leave her room. If she would just trust me, I would plan the meal for that night. I then texted my dad from my mom's phone telling him that my mom has an amazing night planned for him, but he had to dress up and wear a suit. I then transformed the patio into a romantic restaurant for two."

"The meals I was honestly not sure about, but knew I was serving pizza. Everything else I created as I



Chef Jahrid created a date night for his parents, Barry and Kera.

needed it. I served a four-course meal consisting of chips and salsa for the appetizer, a Mediterranean salad, pizza, and for dessert, cookies with melted chocolate on top and some oreo cookie crumbles all around."

His mom, Kera said, "Jahrid itemized the menu on the check and where it said *Total*, he wrote, *No Charge*. But, Jahrid added, I need you both to sign the bill confirming that you will continue to love each other and make each other happy until death."

Jahrid explained that, "The gift of it is my parents need to always be there in difficult times, in sickness and in health, and in anger and sadness."

He added that he was not one to plan far ahead. Our chef gains his inspirations through daily life.



Chef Jahrid gets ready to serve a delicious four-course meal.



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Reflections From The East

**Pandemic Pledge:
Live up to the Challenge**



By Qin Sun Stubis

These days, doing chores as simple as grocery shopping or picking up your monthly medicine at the pharmacy can be quite daunting tasks, especially if you're elderly or immune compromised. We can probably count hundreds of ways the pandemic has changed our lives, no matter who we are and where we may be, whether a child in New York City or a farmer in Idaho.

For a few months now, COVID-19 has disrupted our lives. With various levels of quarantine and "stay-at-home" orders still in place, Americans are getting "cabin fever," a phenomenon normally reserved only for frigid winter days.

This virus has tested our patience, forcing us to become isolated, unsocial creatures. It is against our nature to burrow away for months on end, eating, sleeping, working, studying, exercising, and relaxing in the same space. So, it is no surprise that our impatience and agitation have reached a high point: When will all this be over? When will we finally be able to reclaim our freedom?

We can sometimes forget that right now, our world is infested with a lethal, vicious virus, invisible to our naked, naive eyes. Since we cannot see it, we often don't see the mortal danger we're facing, unknowingly surrendering ourselves as prey to a hungry, merciless pestilence in pursuit of victims.

Sometimes I wish that the coronavirus could manifest itself in the form of a giant, scary alien with bloody-red tentacles, growling as it roams down our neighborhood streets, for the physical sight of an approaching monster would surely persuade us all to hunker down and save lives.

Before we moan and groan about missing haircuts and restaurant meals, we have to remind ourselves that many of our fellow Americans have lost their lives during the last

few months because of the deadly virus, and many front-line workers are still risking theirs to take care of us and keep us safe.

When we get tired of staying home, eating at the same table and pacing the same floor, we may want to channel our restlessness into helping those who have lost their jobs and are worrying about losing their homes or putting food on their tables. After all, compassion is our proud old American tradition, a perfect remedy to absorb our excess energy and put it to good use.

This pandemic is a serious health and economic crisis. We're battling a new, invasive and deadly enemy. For that, 2020 will be forever remembered as an epic time when our lives and livelihoods were threatened. How we fight back and what we do will directly affect the future of our world. So, let's take a pledge to do our part and live up to the challenge.

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

Qin is a longtime columnist of ours who lives in Bethesda, MD.



Community Service

Wrapping Up a Great Year with the Rotary Club of Santa Monica



**By Sharon Gavin
President**

The official Rotary Year concludes at the end of June. It's been an honor and a privilege to serve as the club's president. The theme of my year was "Connections," and I am proud to say that we have fulfilled this aspect on so many fronts. We have connected to our community by providing about \$150,000 to local causes, in addition to over 700 hours of hands-on service to help those in need.

From delivering meals to seniors with Meals on Wheels West to painting an apartment complex for Safe Place for Youth to building homes with Habitat for Humanity to speaking to the teens at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica, our Rotarians came out in force to live our motto "Service Above Self."

We have connected to the world by donating almost \$160,000 to international causes that have resulted in bringing clean water to villages in Oaxaca, new medical equipment to a hospital in Oaxaca, and shelter for people around the globe. We have connected to other Rotary Clubs with joint service

projects and socials, and we have strengthened our connections to each other.

From our weekly meetings that featured experts presenting subjects including medicine, technology, veterans, music, art, wildlife conservation, the Santa Monica community, and other countries, to our fun happy hours, parties, and healthy living excursions, our Rotarians continue to support each other personally and professionally.

And, when the world was confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic, we rose to the challenge. We transitioned seamlessly to a virtual world with virtual meetings, socials, and classes, and continued to serve our community through hands-on service activities and extra grants to the local non-profits on the front lines of the crisis.

As the new Rotary Year begins, our club will continue to make a positive difference in the lives of each of our members, in our local community, and in the world. If you are interested in learning more about the Rotary Club of Santa Monica, please contact Savi at rotaryclubofsantamonica@verizon.net or visit our website at rotaryclubofsantamonica.org.

From Me to You...



By Diane Margolin

When I first moved to Santa Monica, I became involved in a few community organizations. I have been a member of the Rotary Club of Santa Monica

for about 30 years. Years ago I worked in Community Relations in the Santa Monica Police Department. We worked with schools on crime prevention programs and created materials for the students and newsletters for the community. We ran a program called Westside Safe Rides where students could call on the weekends if they needed a ride because they did not feel comfortable driving home from a party.

The Santa Monica Chamber offered many opportunities to meet other business owners. Being on the board of a non-profit such as the YMCA or the college was another opportunity to meet more new people.

Each time you worked on a special project, you usually made more friends. This past month, Susan Potter, a dear friend, and her husband Pat contracted the coronavirus and were in our local hospitals. They are very active in our community. I received calls from several friends of ours asking how they were doing. Some emailed, others called. Finally, we were able to reach a relative, and we began receiving daily updates. At that time, I felt an overwhelm-

ing sense of being a part of this incredibly caring community of Santa Monica. We would forward emails to those who had computers and I would call those who didn't.

Susan, who thankfully is now home from the hospital, said she was aware of the prayers and concerns of her friends, even though she couldn't see or talk to us. She and Pat are still dealing with some of the characteristics of the virus we have heard about. But, as they are getting stronger each day, they feel the love of their friends who live and work around them.

Please be sure to wear masks and honor social distancing. You are protecting yourself and those around you.

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Thoughts From a Second-Time Father

Toys Become More Fun for Adults as Their Kids Get Older



By Michael Margolin

Jake has just turned four, and Alexa's seventh birthday is right around the corner. Generally, I do not feel like there are a lot of things that

remind me that I am getting older. I am only about to turn 41, and I am blessed with good health, and as far as I can tell, I have good coverage on my head. I say as far as I can tell, because I have had my head shaved for the last 20 years or so. But, Jake turning four years old came with an unanticipated example of how our kids are getting older. It had to do with the gifts Jake received.

Alexa has not been given little kid toys in a while. What I mean to say is that for several years, she has not received Playskool-type toys or toys that are given to children still trying to figure out what sound the cow makes.

Now, Jake is in Alexa's category. Just looking at the gifts he received, it is blatantly obvious that we do not have infants or toddlers anymore. I find the gifts that Jake got for his birthday to be much more fun to play with! We are building rockets and racing cars and making super bouncy balls! I KNOW what sound the cow makes. I had never made a bouncy ball before.

At the end of the day, I found myself reflecting on how this is a new stage. A stage we are lucky to be in, and another one to get used to. Jake's birthday fell on Mother's Day. The next time it falls on the second Sunday in May it will be for his 10th birthday. Chances are that one will be much different than his fourth. Since nobody is really having a normal birthday party, we arranged for family and friends to drive by and shout *Happy Birthday* to acknowledge our little man's big day. We had about 10 to 12 cars participate. A lot of them were filled with friends I have had for more than 30 years with their wives and kids. It reminds me of how thankful I am to have surrounded myself with such good people. The importance of these special friendships is something I will always stress to my children. Because especially in times like this, we need to be reminded of the good that we have in our lives. Being able to see my friends' kids grow is special, too. The older they get, the more fun they become. I guess that goes for the toys as well.

Michael Margolin is the father of two young children. He is an avid sports fan and a soccer coach on Alexa's team.

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From the Santa Monica History Museum



Children at Garfield Elementary School, circa 1930 -- School children participated in a nutrition class at Garfield Elementary, which was built in 1910 and was located at 7th Street and Olympic Boulevard. Courtesy: Santa Monica History Museum, SMHM Collection [For historical reprints, please contact SMHM and specify image #36.2.151.]

Downtown Business Owner Express Appreciation

As the owner of a small family-run business in downtown Santa Monica for 75 years, I was so impressed by the kindness and caring shown by members of our local community after the devastation we all experienced on Sunday, May 31.

On Monday, June 1, in the early morning, I saw so many volunteers wearing masks and gloves sweeping up broken glass with their

brooms and dumping it into the giant trash bags they had brought. Others were repainting over the graffiti left by the looters.

I felt the love and spirit of community exhibited by those who came to help clean up. You are all appreciated more than you can imagine. Thank you so much for your time and dedication.

--Bill Bubar, Bubar's Jewelers

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