

# THE SANTA MONIKA STAR

*Also Covering  
The Greater  
Westside*

Volume XXIV Number 10

Connecting You With Your Community

October 2025



Collecting funds for UNICEF gives young people a chance to make a difference in the lives of other children worldwide who need help.

## Santa Monica First United Methodist Church Celebrates Its 150th Birthday

**By Pastor Greg Batson**

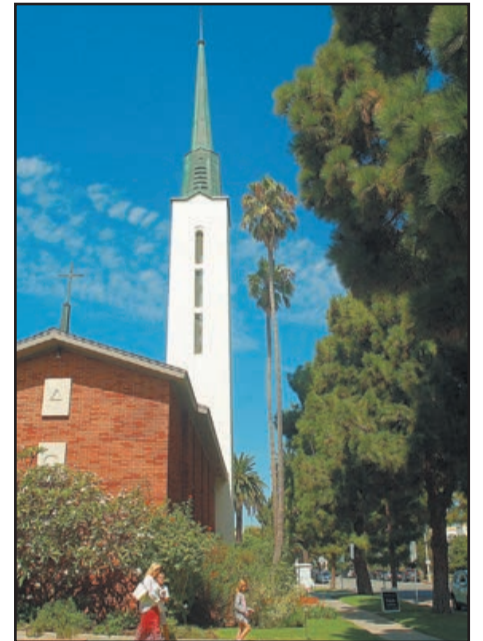
When I arrived at the Santa Monica First United Methodist Church as an Associate Pastor 25 years ago, I quickly learned how connected it was to our community. However, now serving as the Senior Pastor, I truly appreciate the depth of that connection as the church and our City both celebrate their 150th birthdays.

On October 15, 1875, the Rev. John D. Crum gathered a small group of new residents together for the first meeting of Methodists in Santa Monica. The City of Santa Monica had just been established earlier that same year. As these residents arrived, some felt called to form a new faith community. They met in a second-floor loft of Mr. Brady's hardware store located at Fourth and Arizona Streets, marking the start of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Santa Monica.

Soon the congregation would build a structure of their own at 6th and Arizona, a small, gothic sanctuary that accommodated the growing congregation. That original church building was moved eventually to Second Street, and is now a private home. As the congregation grew, a larger sanctuary was built at 4th and Arizona, serving as the church home for the next 57 years until our current campus was constructed at 11th and Washington in 1953.

A church, however, is much more than a building or an institution. It is community of faith comprised of people who are neighbors to one another. Generations of our families and friends have dedicated themselves to enriching the life of our community.

Our Christmas and Spring concerts have provided choral and orchestral performances for the public. Upward Bound House, a non-profit organization providing



Come to the First United Methodist Church on October 12 to celebrate their 150th anniversary.

housing and services for seniors and families facing homelessness, was envisioned, founded, and built by our congregation.

We continue to support many other organizations including the Westside Food Bank, The People Concern, and American Red Cross with both volunteers and our financial gifts.

Our sesquicentennial celebration began in September with a different theme and focus each Sunday, including a History and Archives exhibit that features photos, videos, and artifacts.

We look forward to the culmination on Sunday, October 12 with a special anniversary worship service featuring Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank and many clergy who have previously served our congregation and this community. A reunion luncheon will follow.

I am grateful to serve as the Senior Pastor of this congregation. We all look forward to continuing to serve this community in the years to come.

## Become a Halloween Hero for UNICEF

**Family Features** - If you participated in trick-or-treat adventures as a child, you're part of a long tradition for millions of children. This year, you can teach your own children or grandchildren what it means to become a Halloween hero for UNICEF.

The program got its start in 1950 when a handful of kids in Philadelphia collected change in milk cartons (\$17 that first year) to help children in post-World War II Europe. Over the years, the campaign grew into millions of children bringing little orange boxes with them on Halloween night to collect coins while trick-or-treating.

Generations later, kids have raised nearly \$200 million for lifesaving programs for children around the world, providing health care, nutrition, emergency relief, and more.

In honor of its 75th year, a month-long initiative is engaging partners and supporters with

multiple options for giving.

"For 75 years, the little orange box has inspired generations to turn Halloween into something bigger," said Shelley Diamond, chief marketing officer, UNICEF USA. "Today, whether through online fundraisers or family-friendly activities, we encourage the young – and the young at heart – to put some meaning in their Halloweening all October long."

Funding makes a meaningful difference in everyday lives. Each \$1 donation could provide a school or community with 30 pencils or two bars of soap. Every \$5 can provide water for a child for a full year or ensure five more children can be vaccinated against measles. An \$8 donation, less than most fast-food meals, could provide a package of 25 diagnostic tests for malaria.

Visit [unicefusa.org/TOT75](http://unicefusa.org/TOT75) to learn how you and the impressive little ones in your life can participate all month long.

## How Did Adriana and Amy Come to Share Their Business Space?



Read Stacy McClendon's Column on Page 5 for the answer.

## Do You Recognize These Neighborhood Celebrities?

(Answer on Page 11)



## Blessing of the Pets at Pilgrim Lutheran Church



Rev. Lew Upchurch was busy blessing the pets that came to the Summer event. Dr. Goldie brought Nala and Riley. The dogs did tricks for everyone.

Go to Page 5 to read more about the annual event. A friendly group of visitors brought their pets to be blessed by Rev. Lew Upchurch at Pilgrim Lutheran Church on 1730 Wilshire Boulevard.

## Take A Look Inside

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# What's Happening on the Westside

• **Saturday, October 4 - Mini Fall Festival at Virginia Avenue Park** - 9 a.m.-noon. Meet members of the Pico Farmers Market and go to the free pumpkin patch. There will be a crafts booth, face painting, and live music.

• **Wednesday, October 8 - The Santa Monica Conservancy will present Untold Stories with Sharon Reyes: The History of the Marquez-Reyes Family** - 5 p.m.-7:30 p.m., with a reception at the historic Shotgun House and a talk at Ocean Park Library across the street. Sharon will be sharing historic photos from her personal collection as she describes the experiences of the Marquez-Reyes family in the Santa Monica Canyon, after receiving a land grant from the Mexican government in 1839. This event also includes an unveiling of exhibition

panels describing Rancho life in that era. Learn more about the event and the Marquez-Reyes Family at [smconservancy.org/2025/09/untold-stories-with-sharon-reyes-the-history-of-the-marquez-reyes-family/](https://smconservancy.org/2025/09/untold-stories-with-sharon-reyes-the-history-of-the-marquez-reyes-family/).

• **Saturday, October 11 - SMC Glass Pumpkin Sale** - 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Palisades-Malibu YMCA's Simon Meadow at Temescal Gateway Park, located at 15601 Sunset Blvd. (corner of Temescal and Sunset), Pacific Palisades. Proceeds from this sale will benefit the SMC Art Department, the Palisades-Malibu YMCA, and local artists.

• **Saturday, October 11 - Cozy Crochet Workshop** - Montana Branch Library. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. To register, email [library@santamonica.gov](mailto:library@santamonica.gov).

• **Saturday, October 11 - Family**

**Night Halloween Bash** - Bone-chilling extravaganza with the entire family! Spine-tingling games, haunting melodies, and a frightful costume contest. 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Santa Monica Elks Lodge #906. 1049 Pico Blvd. Open to all Elks and their guests. \$10 per person. RSVP <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/sm-elks-lodge-events/items>.

• **The Santa Monica College Music Department is presenting the 2025 Fall Jazz Series, with live concerts on October 17 and November 21** - The series will present a concert with Oscar Hernandez y Alma Libre on October 17 and conclude with the Peter Erskine Quartet on November 21. Details available at [smc.edu/events](https://smc.edu/events), or by calling 310-434-4323.

• **Tuesday October 28 - Teen Decoden: Halloween Edition.** Santa Monica Main Library, Youth

Activity Room. Games and Halloween-related treats will be available. 4 p.m.-5 p.m.

• **Wednesday, October 29 - Ocean Park Branch Library Historical Tour and Discussion** - Open House from noon - 8 p.m. featuring Halloween crafts for children and snacks for all. At 3:30 p.m., Dr. Kenneth Breisch will discuss and lead a tour of their Carnegie Library.

• **Friday, October 31 - Happy Halloween!**

• **Saturday, November 1-2 - Kline Academy Open House of Fine Art Exhibitions** - November 1-5 p.m.-9 p.m. - live music. November 2 - Noon-5 p.m. Live demonstrations. Details: 310-837-7310, 837-7194.

## Free VITA Tax Assistance Preparation Services

Haven Services is offering free VITA Tax Assistance preparation on two dates at the Santa Monica Public Library. These services are in response to the Federal and California State tax filing deadlines being postponed to October 15, 2025, for L.A. County residents due to the January wildfires.

VITA services are available:  
• Saturday, October 4  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Montana Branch Library,  
1704 Montana Ave.

[smplmontanabranch.youcanbook.me](https://smplmontanabranch.youcanbook.me)  
• Friday, October 10  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Pico Branch Library,  
2201 Pico Blvd.

[smplpicobranch.youcanbook.me](https://smplpicobranch.youcanbook.me)  
Services are by appointment only. For a list of required documents and to schedule an appointment, call Haven Services at 213-375-4663, go to [havenservices.org/programs-services/income-tax-assistance](https://havenservices.org/programs-services/income-tax-assistance), or visit any Santa Monica Public Library location to pick up a flyer.

Haven Services is a nonprofit organization serving residents throughout the Greater Los Angeles area. Their mission is to provide a safe haven for vulnerable communities, empowering them with no-cost financial education and services that break the cycle of economic hardship for good.

The Santa Monica Public Library is wheelchair accessible and welcomes persons of all abilities. For special accommodations, please contact Library Administration at 310-458-8606 at least one week prior to the event, or email [library@santamonica.gov](mailto:library@santamonica.gov). Library Administration office hours are Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. TTY/TDD users may call 310-395-8499.



-Joe Analco



### Happy October Birthdays

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



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# Discover the Arts and Activities

## Binge Fringe Festival Returns to Santa Monica Playhouse for a Month Beginning October 14

The Binge Fringe Festival (BFF), will be bringing a month of free shows to the Santa Monica Playhouse as it returns for a tenth anniversary season this October. Following extensive repair and renovation to their Main Stage due to a flooding incident, they plan to re-open their refurbished Main Stage with the new Festival.

Santa Monica Playhouse has been a cultural treasure in the seaside community for 65 years. The BFF's primary focus is on Santa Monica and Los Angeles-based artists, but there will be exciting artists from near and far on view as well.

Santa Monica Playhouse is located at 1211 Fourth Street, just south of Wilshire. There is a municipal parking facility across the street. All events are free, but reservations are required. Some events are family-friendly. There will be something for everyone.

To reserve your free tickets for an event, just go to [SantaMonicaPlayhouse.com](http://SantaMonicaPlayhouse.com).

The Festival will run from October 14 through November 16.

Binge Fringe Festival is presented through generous grants from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, the City of Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Arts Commission, the We Are Santa Monica Fund, and Playhouse PALS.

To find out all the BFF information, the best place to go is their website: [SantaMonicaPlayhouse.com](http://SantaMonicaPlayhouse.com). The BFF Banner is right

at the top of the home page.

On Friday, October 31, an all-ages Halloween event, *Absolutely Halloween*, will be held at 5 p.m. Written and directed by Chris DeCarlo and Evelyn Rudie; Performed by Isabel Lindley, J.T. Melaragno, Cydne Moore, Joseph Perez, Charlotte Robinson, Graham Silbert, and Megan Wright.

Audiences will have fun celebrating Halloween as they take a musical comedy journey with a bevy of delightful characters, learning super lessons about life, love, laughter, and sugar along the way. The show is in its 19th sell-out year. Photo ops and a Halloween nibbles reception with the cast will follow the show. Tickets: \$15 for kids, \$17.50 for adults.



*The Company* - Bottom, Charlotte Robinson (Cattypuss); Middle row, from left, Celeste Akiki (Fifika), Isabel Lindley (Candy), Megan Wright (Patty Patches); and top, Joseph Perez (Lester the Jester).

## Plan to Be in a Dickens-Style Christmas Choir

Join British singer/songwriter Laura Saggars and her jolly good team of first-rate voice teachers at the Laura Jean Music Academy for a no-pressure Christmas choir experience.

Their rehearsals are all about music and connection. You'll meet smashing locals, sip on steaming hot apple cider (none of that lukewarm nonsense), share a good old chortle, and bask in the heartwarming glow of community spirit.

## Playhouses in Santa Monica and Beyond

### Assistance League Theatre

1367 N. St. Andrews Pl., Hollywood  
323-545-6656

### Geffen Playhouse

10886 Le Conte Ave., L.A.  
310-208-2028

### Miles Memorial Playhouse

1130 Lincoln Bl., S.M.  
310-458-8634

### Morgan-Wixson Theatre

2627 Pico Bl., S.M.  
310-828-7519

### Palace Theatre

630 S. Broadway, L.A.  
213-629-2939

### The Broad Stage

1310 11th St., S.M.  
310-434-3200

### The Odyssey Theatre

2055 S. Sepulveda Bl., L.A.  
310-477-2055

### Westchester Playhouse

8301 Hindry Ave., L.A.  
310-645-5156

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## Reflections From The East

# Halloween Ghosts: Hauntings From Our Own Past



**By Qin Sun Stubis**

As another October materializes, my neighborhood is being transformed once again into a scary place with glowing eyes, severed hands, and skeletal remains draped in torn black gauze. Seemingly nice, normal people suddenly turn their energies and ingenuity (along with a few plastic props) to compete with each other to see who can make the most haunting and entertaining effects.

I can't count how many times I've gotten such a scare from an unexpected burst of loud, eerie laughter as I pass by a house close to the sidewalk, before smiling and suddenly realizing that

it is the spookiest time of the year again.

Halloween is the time when we put away our fears of darkness and death, and invite scary vibes into our lives for the pure fun of it. Some brave souls set up tombs and graveyards right on their front lawns while others post goblins and witches at their front doors to welcome trick-or-treaters.

We love Halloween because we know it is staged. Its spookiness is created to entertain us and give us a chuckle, and its scenes are mere theatrical settings. In truth, we enjoy the thrill of a good haunting as long as it is not related to some trauma from the past.

The longer we live, the more regret and pain we carry within ourselves. When our relationships sour, our lives don't go our way,

or we make a horrific blunder, we lament and our conscience, if we are lucky enough to have one, suffers. Depending on their importance, we either cast our miseries and disappointments into the void and try not to think about them, or obsess about our traumas and mistakes, letting them sit on our chests like demonic succubi, sucking the life out of us.

Eventually, what has taunted us will be transformed into phantoms to come back and haunt us. And, if they are associated with lifelong pain or regret, these "ghosts" will resurface often and fiercely. Charles Dickens created the perfect example of this with Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*.

While it is impossible to avoid pain, regrets, and mistakes in life, we can certainly learn something

through Scrooge, and how he manages to transform himself in his old age. Acknowledging that we are mortal beings susceptible to hurt, temptation, and bad judgement may be the first step in stopping our past from haunting us. And, as soon as we realize that we've done something wrong, correcting ourselves right away may be a wise move.

So, for this Halloween and maybe every other day, live well and do the right things in the present to prevent our past from haunting us in the future.

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

# October: A Season for Family Outings



**By Cheryl Thode**

Hello again, reader, and welcome to Fall. As many of us know, October in Southern California (especially in Santa Monica) has its own special rhythm. This month brings an anticipated break from the recent heatwaves of the Summer and early Fall. The mornings start with that crisp hint of ocean breeze, the afternoons glow in golden light, and the evenings invite sweaters and a stroll. For families, it is the perfect month to get outside, discover something new, and enjoy a little seasonal magic with the kids.

However, sometimes our lives (especially during this month) can seem so hectic from our kids' sports schedules, to school tasks, and to our own responsibilities that we draw complete blanks on what to do as a family when we do have some precious seconds to spare.

So, for those of us who want to have something fun and

"October" to do, but need some suggestions, here's a few fun and family-friendly activities our city and county have to offer.

To start off, visit the Santa Monica Pier. Generations of families have wandered across its planks, played in the arcade, and taken a ride on the Ferris wheel, while watching the sun sink into the Pacific. It never loses its charm, especially for little ones seeing it all for the first time. As an added perk, just below the pier, the Heal the Bay Aquarium offers an indoor stop where kids can get up close to starfish, learn about local marine life, and even touch a few sea creatures. It is a nice way to mix in a little education between rides and snacks.

Another not so far away adventure is at Tongva Park, a beautiful six-acre space filled with playgrounds, fountains, and shady corners for a picnic. Parents can relax on a bench while kids climb and run off their energy. If you need to head indoors, the Cayton Children's Museum is just a short walk from the beach and is packed

with interactive exhibits that encourage curiosity and creativity.

If you are looking for something more outdoorsy, October is also a great time to explore some of our region's natural spaces. Topanga State Park, just a short drive from Santa Monica, offers family-friendly hiking trails. Take the family to see the leaves just starting to turn color, get the first feelings of crispness in the air, and give the kids a chance to spot a hawk circling above or a rabbit darting across the trail. This is also a great place to picnic before or after a family hike.

Of course, let us not forget we are in the month of October, and no October family activity list would be complete without mentioning a visit to a pumpkin patch. All around Los Angeles County, farms and temporary patches spring up, complete with hay bales, corn mazes, and photo backdrops that make it feel like Fall even if the sun is shining. A quick drive east or south can take you and your family to real working farms where kids can pick

their own pumpkins straight from the vine. As an added perk, visiting real pumpkin farms is a great way to support local growers and create those classic Fall memories.

Finally, if your family prefers a more laid-back pace don't forget the ever-present option of a simple evening walk along Palisades Park. The place is truly magical in October. This month is the perfect time to get out and explore outdoors.

The beauty of our city and its surroundings is in its variety. You can spend a morning learning at a museum (the Getty anyone?), an afternoon hiking in the mountains, and an evening listening to the waves at the beach – all in the same day. So, go explore!

Wherever you go, make it fun, bring some hot chocolate in a thermos, let the kids collect a few fallen leaves, and enjoy the slower rhythm of the season.

Wishing you a family-filled October. God Bless!



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**Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood**

**You Never Know How Things Can Turn Out**



**By Stacy McClendon**

The Palisades Fire is just the start of where this story begins. I happened to be at my standing mani/pedi appointment with my nail technician, Amy. I have been her client for nails and facials for over seven years. Getting pampered is one of my favorite things to do!

Amy has had to move locations a few times, due to management changes and clientele losses. I originally met Amy at her first shop on Main Street, before COVID caused her to lose customers.

From there, Amy acquired her own location inside of Phoenix Salons, which is where she resided until the Palisades Fire occurred and many of her customers lost their homes and businesses while others decided to move out of state.

Amy was considering how to keep her business. I, along with other customers began thinking of ways to help her find a new place. I thoroughly enjoy going to see Amy, as I know I always get top-notch service in a wonderful setting. All Amy's nail care and services are organic, so no chemicals are used in the products or her space, which enhances both the services and the entire appointment. This is one of the main reasons that I started going to Amy, plus she's a really wonderful person, who goes the extra mile with her clients.

Then one of Amy's customers called her hair stylist, Adriana, on the spot during her nail appointment.

Adriana owns Adriana's Hair Studio at 2917 Pico Blvd. Amy's customer thought the studio might be a good fit for her to work from. Amy talked to Adriana and stopped by to visit her studio not long after. They both hit it off upon meeting, and now they work together, offering all of their services in the salon.

When Amy originally told me that she found a new location to work from through her customer, I was curious and asked where it was since I've been living, working, and writing in Santa Monica for quite some time and know a lot of people in the city.

When she mentioned that it was Adriana's Hair Studio, I chuckled and was happy for her. I had met Adriana to write an article for our paper when she opened her business in May, 2022. I remembered her and knew that this would be a perfect fit for Amy.

Bravo to these ladies for turning an unlikely situation into a positive one, by being flexible, open, and adaptable to change. This has since provided a win-win for them and their customers, as their clientele continues to grow from sharing their customer base. We customers are happy and satisfied to have the opportunity to get more high-quality services offered at the same location.

Please contact Adriana's Hair Studio at [adrianashairstudio.com](http://adrianashairstudio.com) to book an appointment, and Organic Nail Spa by Amy at [organicnailspabyamy.com](http://organicnailspabyamy.com).

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

**Senior Care**

**Thinking About Changing Your Medicare Enrollment?**

**By Elana Foxx, CLTC**

Health and Medicare Enrollment is almost here!

**What should you be thinking about?**

- Has your health changed?
- Have your medications changed?
- Have you moved into a new zip code?
- Has your financial income changed?
- Could you qualify for financial assistance with copays?
- Do you qualify for MediCal?
- Do you qualify for chronic care (lung or heart disease, diabetes)
- Are you turning 65 within the next six months?
- Have you retired?
- Is your current plan working with

your preferred doctors?  
-Is your current plan still covering your medications?

-Can you lower your premium and still keep the same quality of coverage?

Once you have reviewed these questions, it is recommended that you reach out to a Medicare or a Health Insurance Specialist depending on your age and needs.

A specialist will help ascertain if you can save money on premiums, copays and keep your preferred doctors.

Elana Foxx - Certified Medicare and Covered CA Specialist #0E13252 licensed in OR, CA, TX, AZ, CO. Call 805-338-7727.

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**Blessing of the Pets (Continued from Page 1)**

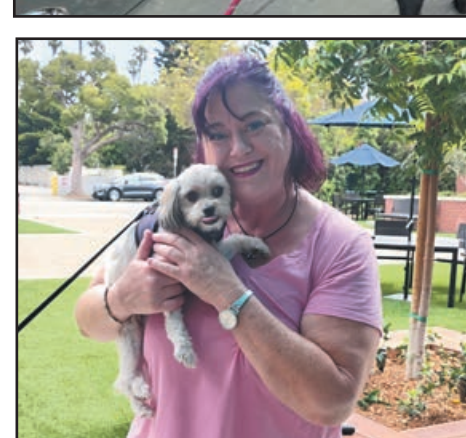
They shared stories about their pets as they congregated in the grassy area next to the church. Treats for the pets and human visitors were offered.

Many of the church staff fol-

lowed the direction of Kathy Fjermedal who began planning for the event well in advance. She was assisted by Pamela Lawrence, Diane Margolin, Libby Knapp, Joe Analco, and Alphagraphics.



Laura, a church member, brought Jefferson to be blessed.



Pictured above, Rev. Upchurch's daughter, Phoebe, who was helping her dad with Night Rider. Shown below, Pamela Lawrence who was holding Sparky after he had been blessed.



Barbara Calandras, center, and Mathew Mulligan, left, participated while Rev. Upchurch blessed Sparky. Photos by Pamela Lawrence

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## Helping to Prevent Seniors From Financial Fraud

Financial fraud targeting older adults is on the rise, with new scams emerging regularly. “Seniors, often living on fixed incomes, are particularly vulnerable, and even small losses can have devastating consequences,” says Tim Petlin, the Owner of Right at Home in Santa Monica. For those with larger assets, scams can still pose serious risks.

### Top Scams Targeting Seniors:

1. Grandparent Scam: Fraudsters impersonate grandchildren in distress using AI, asking for urgent financial help.
2. Medicare Scams: Scammers pose as Medicare representatives to steal personal info or offer fake services.
3. Tech Support Scams: Fraudsters claim to offer tech support, gaining remote access to steal data or demand payment.
4. Counterfeit Prescription Drugs: Seniors are targeted with online deals for fake or harmful medications.
5. Funeral and Cemetery Scams: Scammers exploit grieving families, pressuring them into unnecessary expenses.
6. Anti-Aging Products: Bogus health treatments are marketed to seniors, often overpriced or dangerous.

### Warning Signs of Financial Abuse:

- Unexplained bank account activity (large withdrawals

or transfers).

- Sudden changes in financial accounts or power of attorney.
- Unpaid bills despite available funds.
- New, overly-involved acquaintances controlling finances.
- Anxiety or reluctance around financial matters.

### How to Protect Yourself:

- Verify requests: Always confirm any urgent money requests, especially if they come from family members.
  - Be cautious: Never share financial info with unknown sources or respond to unsolicited offers.
  - Monitor accounts: Regularly check bank statements for unauthorized transactions.
  - Shred documents: Protect personal info by destroying sensitive papers.
  - Report fraud: Contact the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau or FBI’s Elder Fraud Hotline if you suspect fraud.
- Awareness is Key:** By staying informed and cautious, seniors can better protect themselves from scams and fraud. “Remember trusted adages like *If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is,*” Tim advises.

**For more information, contact Right at Home of West Los Angeles at [www.rahwestla.com](http://www.rahwestla.com), at 310-313-0600, or by email at [info@rahwestla.com](mailto:info@rahwestla.com).**

## Palisades Fire: Minimizing the Financial Gap for the Most Vulnerable

By Richard Lombardi

In the aftermath of the devastating Palisades Fire, thousands of residents are confronting the harsh reality of recovery: the financial gap between what they’ve lost and what their insurance will actually cover. While some may be able to tap into savings, FEMA grants, or SBA loans, many – particularly the elderly, special needs families, and underinsured homeowners – simply lack the resources to rebuild. For them, the fear of being displaced from the community they’ve lived in for decades is becoming all too real.

In response, a local initiative has taken shape with one clear goal: to help close that gap. The Pacific Palisades Long Term Recovery Group (PaliLTRG) is a newly established, community-driven organization committed to supporting the most vulnerable wildfire survivors. Though still in its early stages, PaliLTRG is now accepting applications for assistance at [www.PaliLTRG.org](http://www.PaliLTRG.org).

Building on the success of the American Legion’s Palisades Wildfire Community Support Center and the Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) – which assisted over 1,600 families in just five days – PaliLTRG is now guiding the transition to long-term recovery, known as Phase 3.

What makes PaliLTRG different is that, while it is led by local Palisadians who deeply understand the unique needs of their community, it has been guided and supported by National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). NVOAD brings decades

of national experience in post-disaster recovery and has developed a proven playbook to help local communities quickly establish effective long-term recovery groups. This guidance ensures that PaliLTRG is not reinventing the wheel, but instead operating with the best practices, accountability, and a streamlined structure that accelerates support to those who need it most.

The group’s management board includes Jim Cragg (Board Chair), Jessica Rogers (Vice Chair), Richard Lombardi (Vice Chair), Martin Hak (Treasurer), and Elynor Chiu (Secretary). Each brings years of experience in nonprofit management, crisis response, housing, finance, and social work – along with a deep personal connection to the Palisades and its residents.

In addition to its ties to national and state disaster recovery networks, PaliLTRG has aligned with trusted local organizations including Pali Strong, the Pacific Palisades Residents Association (PPRA), and the Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC). This collaboration ensures broad community outreach and coordinated support for those most in need.

Survivors with the capacity to manage aspects of their recovery will be guided to training and resource tools. Those needing greater support – especially seniors, special needs families, and those with limited technological capabilities – will be paired with Disaster Case Managers who will serve as advocates throughout the process. Each case will be

**(Continued on Page 11)**

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**Thoughts From a Second-Time Father**

**Revving up For the Busy Fall Season**



**By Michael Margolin**

It is that time of year again where the lazy and slow days of Summer have dissipated and the school

year starts. Everything seems to go into overdrive. Not that I had an abundance of sluggish days over the past several months, but I certainly feel the time speeding up again.

We certainly had an enjoyable Summer that included some long distance traveling and some much shorter excursions. The hot season ended with Alexa and Jake basking in some fine accomplishments. Alexa's soccer team won our local tournament. This was a big deal for our team because we had plenty of ups and downs. But, our young ladies kept their eyes on the prize and played harder and tougher than any other team in their bracket, and they brought home the gold. They are an excellent example of how hard work and perseverance pays off. And how, after some brutal losses, sports can teach us about resiliency, and if you keep fighting and pushing, you can be really tough to beat.

On Jake's athletic front, we are now full swing into his soccer season and he has kept going to jiu-jitsu as well. I was not sure he would be up for both, but he has

been and I have been impressed by it. Of the many things I think jiu-jitsu has helped Jake with, it is evident that he has become more agile, aggressive, and confident on the soccer field. Both of my kids have been so much fun to watch.

Of course with the end of Summer comes the beginning of new school years. Seventh grade for Alexa, and Jake is now a fourth grader. Jake's teacher was one that Alexa had previously and she is great. Recently, we went to back to school night for both kids and became acquainted with Alexa's teachers.

All of them seemed to be excited about the new school year and eager to do their jobs. Attending back to school nights and the open houses, later in the year, are always a reminder that I am actually an adult with children in elementary and middle schools.

Not that I really need reminders. Maybe it is because these school events are occurrences that I very clearly remember attending with my parents. And, now here I am. Raising children of my own. Missing the slower days, and enjoying these quickly passing days and weeks the best that I can.

*Mike Margolin has been writing for us since his daughter Alexa was born 12 years ago and son, Jake, nine years ago. He also coaches each child's soccer team. Mike is a great sports fan.*

**Preserving the Stories of Historic Broadway in Santa Monica**



Early members of the Philomathean Club dressed up for a special event. On November 7, 2025 the club will be honored for Black Excellence and Community Building from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Details next month.

**By Michael Ano**

Founded in 1921, the Philomathean Club was the first African American women's charitable organization in Santa Monica. Long-time member Carolyn Edwards recalls, "They started by providing layettes for newborn babies, baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and sometimes monetary donations if people were out of work. There were no other services available then for the new families."

Through persistent fundraising efforts, rummage sales, and the support of their community, the Philomatheans built their Broadway hall in 1958. "It wasn't just a building," Carolyn explained. "It was upward mobility. These were African American women, most of them working as domestics, and yet they became entrepreneurs.

They purchased commercial property, and that was rare. Once

you accomplish something like this, you don't just let it go.

Over time, the Philomathean Club expanded well beyond emergency aid – funding church windows, Little League uniforms, contributing to sickle cell research, disaster relief, and most notably, a college scholarship program that grew from a single award to over a dozen multiyear scholarships annually.

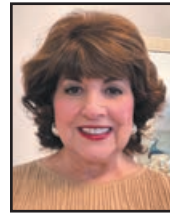
In April 2024, the City of Santa Monica officially designated the building as a City Landmark – the first such recognition along this historic stretch of Broadway and a long overdue affirmation of the neighborhood's rich Black heritage.

Today, Philomathean Hall stands as one of only a handful of surviving buildings from the once-thriving Broadway neighborhood, most of which have been erased by

**(Continued on Page 11)**

**Entertaining With Ease**

**Questions and Answers to Make Entertaining Easier**



**By Maureen Molé**

Recently I started a new Instagram account, Entertain\_at\_Home\_with\_Maureen. Here are a few questions that

I received at my new account and my responses.

**• What should a host do if there's a lull in the conversation while hosting a party?**

Before my party, knowing all my guests and what they've recently told me about their lives, I think of questions that I might ask each person if there was a lull in the conversation at my party. For example, I might say, "What did you think of that new restaurant you tried last week?" Even better, I'd brainstorm a connection between guests, and I might say, "You both just vacationed in Italy this Summer." Guests never need to know that I planned the questions in advance.

**• When hosting a sit-down dinner party, what is your opinion on using place cards?**

I like to use place cards at my sit-down dinners. It might sound a bit formal, but it puts guests at ease when they arrive at the table and know where to sit. It helps when trying to maximize socialization by

seating guests next to guests who would enjoy each other's conversation. Also, place cards are an opportunity to add color to the table and contribute to a seasonal or birthday theme.

**• At a dinner party, where should I seat the shy guest?**

I always try to seat the shy person in the middle of the table so that person can speak to guests on either side and across the table.

**• After the table is set and the guests will arrive soon, what are things I should check before they arrive?**

I always prepare the area where the coats will go. I check that the front door is well lit and free from dust or outdoor debris that may often accumulate. Also, be sure that children's toys and bicycles are not left in front of the house.

I check the bathroom that the guests will be using to make sure there is enough toilet paper and a clean hand towel. Finally, I set the room lighting to a desirable glow, pour a glass of wine for myself, and wait for the doorbell to ring.

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

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**From the Santa Monica Pier Guy**

**Change of Seasons, But Not Reasons**



**By Jim Harris**

For the past several months, I have assailed you all promoting the Santa Monica Pier Corporation's status as a nonprofit organization and announcing our first-ever fundraising event, A PIERfect Benefit. That special day happened, finally, on September 6 and I am delighted to share that it was a huge success! Those who attended know, and those who didn't, well – it was truly something special. We'll see you next time!

And, now my staff and I are deeply immersed in doing what you all know us for, hopefully with a better understanding that our slate of free public events are all paid for through the efforts of a very special nonprofit organization, and not through City funding. We have a busy Fall season ahead – a season full of reason!

A couple of weeks ago, we launched our new season of Locals' Nights, those "Third Thursdays" in which we feature Santa Monica's great local talent, businesses, and special organizations which will continue every month through May. If you haven't been – Why not?

Our October Locals' Night is, per

tradition, a nod to our local high schools' homecoming season, and as such is a nod to our children and, in a not so subtle way, to our own youth. Admit it, even the word "homecoming" recalls warm memories, right? Another tradition tied to the October Locals' Night is the "Save the Pier!" play, a re-enactment of the early 1970s grassroots community movement to, literally, save the Pier from City Hall's attempt to demolish it. The play opens on the October 16 Locals' Night, and runs through October 19 at the Pier's west end.

Just a few days before all of that tradition, the Pier Corporation is introducing something new, wonderful, and perhaps more meaningful than anything else that we do. We are introducing our first-ever Youth Day. We will bus 200 children from underserved communities to enjoy a free day at the Pier. Many of those children will experience the Pier – and see the Pacific Ocean – for the very first time in their lives.

I know that I preach this often, but how can I not shout out that the Pier Corporation produces truly special, meaningful events at our truly special, meaningful Santa Monica Pier. If you want to know more about who we are and what we do, please visit [www.santamonicapier.org](http://www.santamonicapier.org).

**Teen Talk**

**Thoughts From a Busy High School Student**



**By Michelle Li**

My name is Michelle and I am a junior at Santa Monica High School. I have been in Santa Monica for about four years, but have lived in the greater Los Angeles area for the majority of my life.

As a new columnist for *The Santa Monica Star*, I am excited to share all things teen!

Halloween is quite the magical day – people of all ages, costumed, roaming about, walking over lawns filled with fun decorations, and best of all, the candy. Yet, the holiday is also scary. Apart from the jumpscare in movies, and the haunted houses, there are also real dangers that everyone should be aware of. That said, here are some precautions you and your family can take to keep everyone safe.

1. An adult should accompany young children. Ask for your child's location to be shared through their phones.
2. Set a specific curfew to return home.
3. Never go in anyone's car, unless preapproved by the parents.
4. Never enter someone's home unless a parent specifies that it is allowed.
5. Carry flashlights or glowsticks to be visible to cars and other people.
6. Never eat any candy that was opened before you received it. This includes homemade treats! Don't eat any candy until returning home. Check candy for choking hazards and allergies.
7. Stop at crosswalks and look both ways before crossing. When

- crossing, walk, do not run.
8. Do not eat too much candy. No one wants a stomach ache or a cavity.
9. Most importantly, have fun! Be sure to stay safe and have a great Halloween!

On another note, each generation has its own linguistic fingerprint, and the one crafted by Gen Z has added some of the most creative words to the dictionary.

What has taken previous generations multiple years to develop and spread, Gen Z has accelerated the process using the popular short form content app, TikTok. The lightning speed at which Gen Z vocabulary changes can make conversations and comprehending intimidating. If you are feeling lost in translation, this guide is here to help you!

Lets start with one you have probably heard, "crash out." Originally meaning "to fall asleep due to exhaustion" according to *Merriam-Webster*, Gen Z has altered the meaning. For Gen Z, "crash out" can be used as both a verb and a noun. In its verb form, "crash out" means to have an emotional outburst because of an upsetting event. In its noun form, "crash out" is used to refer to a certain instance where someone had a meltdown.

Another popular term is "clanker." This term first appeared in an article in 1958 by William Tenn to describe robots. It has also been used in *Star Wars* media, appearing in a game by the franchise released in 2005. In 2025, the term has come to mean robots or artificial intelligence (AI). It has evolved into a derogatory

**(Continued on Page 11)**

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-Michael Beck

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# Community Service on the Westside

## Tricks and Treats for the Entire Family at the Santa Monica Family YMCA!



**By Araceli Alejandre, COO**

Get your costumes, your family, and your Halloween spirit ready for an evening packed with fun and celebration. The Santa Monica Family YMCA invites the entire community to join us for our Halloween Spooktacular on Thursday, October 30, from 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m. This annual tradition will feature trick-or-treating, music, bounce houses, games, and engaging activities for children. It's a safe, indoor, family-friendly way to enjoy the holiday with something for everyone.

At the Y, we're more than just a gym. We're a gathering place for families to bond and grow together. Throughout the year, we offer programs designed to strengthen connections and spark creativity. Toddler Exploration provides parents and their little ones the chance to learn and play together through arts, music, and

nature-themed activities. Creative Club gives kids the opportunity to express themselves through hands-on projects like painting, drawing, and DIY crafts. And, for busy parents, our Child Watch and Parent's Night Out programs provide safe, fun environments for children while parents enjoy a workout at the Y or an evening out in Downtown Santa Monica.

Some of these programs require an active YMCA Family Membership, which offers even more ways to stay connected, healthy, and active as a family.

We're proud to be Santa Monica's home for community, wellness, and family fun. Whether you're here for Halloween festivities, or looking for programs that support your family year-round, the Y is here for you.

For details on membership and programs, visit [ymcasm.org](http://ymcasm.org), or stop by the Santa Monica Family YMCA today. We'll see you at the Spooktacular!

## The Santa Monica - Pacific Palisades Lions Are Always on the Go



**By J. Kingsley Fife**

We Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions enjoy some very interesting programs at our dinner meetings.

Our speakers talk on a wide variety of subjects which make our evenings very informative.

At our last meeting we had Micah Akerson, the Community Recreation Manager for the Santa Monica Department of Recreation and Arts, which incidentally is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. He gave a very informative, colorful slide talk on the numerous activities and the many services they provide for everyone of all ages, including leagues in basketball, softball, soccer, tennis, pickleball, a new skatepark, and swimming lessons at the city's aquatic center. They also do cul-

tural activities such as the Montana Art Walk. For further details, check the department out online.

We Lions are looking forward to being involved with a variety of activities through the end of the year. Our Service Chair, Lion Brian Ransom, gave us a rundown on our upcoming schedule which includes Westside Food Bank 5K Hunger Walk on 11/2 at Ocean View Park; Santa Monica YMCA Healthy Aging Fair on 11/17 at the Santa Monica YMCA; and our traditional Salvation Army bell ringing in December at Bristol Farms. We're all going to have a lot of fun.

Are you interested in knowing more about Lionism, perhaps filling a void in your life and developing new friends? We'd love to invite you to one of our dinner meetings. For more information contact me at [jkfife88@yahoo.com](mailto:jkfife88@yahoo.com).

## An Update From the SMBWC



**By Patricia Webber**

The Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club (SMBWC) has been bustling with activity this Fall with exciting Club rentals and member activities. Our rentals have been a mix of private events and public presentations. (I guess word of our beautiful, updated restrooms has gotten around!)

Our 115-year-old facility always needs sprucing up here and there to keep it not only functioning for 21st century operations, but to maintain its place in Santa Monica history. And, speaking of history, we are delighted that the Santa Monica History Museum has chosen our club for its 150th anniversary celebration on October 19th.

One of our newest member activities is the Saturday Walking Group. Held on the first Saturday of the month, participants meet in front of the club at 8:30 a.m. The group decides on the route for the day. Everyone is welcome. For parking, we suggest you use the public parking structure next to the club as our parking lot is rented by a parking service. The city structure gives 90 minutes free parking before any charges

apply. If you have any questions about this activity, please contact Alicia at [alicia.syres@yahoo.com](mailto:alicia.syres@yahoo.com).

Another of our very popular activities is our Book Group which meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month. All are welcome. Before talking about the current selection, the first 15 minutes will include a short discussion of books members have recently read and liked. A new feature at the meetings will be a table for books members no longer want – and they can then take any they would like. No limits! But, if someone brings a book that is not taken, they must take that back home with them. More information about upcoming Book Group and selections can be found at [book-clubs.com](http://book-clubs.com). (Note: There will be no meeting in December.)

For inquiries on Club rentals or member activities, contact us at 310-395-1308 or [www.smbwc.org](http://www.smbwc.org).



-Joe Analco

## Rotary Means Fellowship and Philanthropy



**By Mitchell Kraus**

At the Rotary Club of Santa Monica, our Friday lunches are a highlight of the week. We bring in engaging

speakers – leaders in business, the arts, education, and public service – while enjoying the “three F’s” of Rotary: Fellowship, Fun, and Philanthropy (ok, not an ‘F’). It’s a time to connect, learn something new, and share laughs with neighbors who care about making a difference in their community.

But, Rotary doesn’t stop when lunch ends. Each month, we host a lively happy hour, giving members and guests a chance to relax together in a more casual setting. We also roll up our sleeves for hands-on volunteer opportunities

– from local service projects to global initiatives that extend the reach of our community’s goodwill.

For those who enjoy deeper connections, there’s our Dining Club, where smaller groups gather to eat and get to know one another better. And our Networking Troikas bring three members together for coffee or a meal – simple, small gatherings that spark fresh friendships and collaborations.

So yes, we have great lunches, but Rotary is so much more. It’s about coming together, building relationships, and finding ways big and small to make life in Santa Monica brighter.

Learn more at [rotaryclubofsantamonica.org](http://rotaryclubofsantamonica.org).

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## Join the American Red Cross in Supporting Hispanic and Latinx Communities

**By Angelica Saucedo**

Every year from September 15 to October 15, National Hispanic Heritage Month honors the contributions, culture, and resilience of Hispanic and Latinx communities across the United States. For the American Red Cross, it's part of a broader, year-round commitment to serving Latinx communities with culturally relevant tools, trusted partnerships, and grassroots investments.

**Bridging Gaps in Preparedness** - Latinx communities often face disproportionate impacts from climate-driven disasters and health emergencies, compounded by language barriers, economic disparities, and lack of access to preparedness resources.

To close the gap, the Red Cross is continuing to expand its Spanish-language tools, including WHALE Tales (a water safety program for children), CPR training, and new Preparedness Checklists available in multiple languages at [redcross.org/prepare](http://redcross.org/prepare).

**Boosting Lifesaving Blood Donations** - Latinx blood donors play a critical role in stabilizing the nation's blood supply, especially since more than half of the U.S. Latinx community has type O blood – the most requested type by hospitals, used in emergencies. Through October 31, the Red Cross resource group VIDA is leading a national virtual blood



Sonimar Torres is a first-time donor who gave blood in honor of her friend who beat leukemia. "I really feel good for donating. I will definitely do it again," she said.

Photo Mimi Teller/American Red Cross

drive to increase donations and support health equity. Sign up at [redcrossblood.org/VIDA](http://redcrossblood.org/VIDA).

**Investing in Communities Beyond Disaster Relief** - The Red Cross is working to build more inclusive systems by investing in grassroots leaders through the Latino Engagement Micro Grants, funding local solutions, and enhancing volunteer outreach. As the Latinx population is projected to reach nearly 30% in the U.S. by 2060, these investments are essential to creating long-term equity.

Whether it's helping communities prepare for emergencies, supporting blood drives, or lending your skills during California disasters, volunteers make a real impact at the Red Cross. You can get involved at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org).

## Paws and Claws

### Should I Get Chickens at Home for Fresh Eggs?



**By Dr. Frank Lavac, MS, DVM**  
**Q: I am thinking about getting some chickens at my home for fresh eggs. What are the biggest concerns?**

**A:** Backyard chicken flocks have become more popular as people

like to have control over their food sources. Owning chickens is a big commitment and requires more time than you might expect. Finding good information is key and UC Davis has a great website on backyard poultry care: [ucanr.edu/site/uc-cooperative-extension-poultry/backyard-poultry](http://ucanr.edu/site/uc-cooperative-extension-poultry/backyard-poultry). Another good website is Poultry DVM.com.

Proper feeding is the cornerstone of healthy chickens and good quality eggs. Only feed a balanced pelleted diet.

When you purchase a group of chicks, make sure that they have been vaccinated for Marek's disease. Once you have a flock, do not bring new chickens into that flock. They can introduce disease.

Make sure that your chickens are kept in a secure enclosure as predators can be a serious problem.

Chicken ownership is fun, interesting, and a big responsibility. Enjoy!

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

## Adopt a Pet



SnoCap is a 15-pound bundle of cuddles, curiosity, and charm. Rescued through their San Bernardino Intervention Program, she and her five siblings spent their first two months safe and loved in a foster home. Please contact the Lange Foundation, [info@langefoundation.org](mailto:info@langefoundation.org) for more details.

## Planning Ahead

### Why Not Take the Money?



**By Lisa Alexander, Esq.**  
Hulk Hogan's estate has been in the news with headlines that his estranged daughter, Brooke, is refusing to take

her inheritance. Now, it turns out that Brooke was not included in her father's estate plan after all. Apparently, she had requested to be left out and that's what happened.

But the question remains: Why would Brooke turn down an inheritance? Was it intended as the final snub of an estranged daughter? The initial reports were that she expected there would be fights over her father's estate and she didn't want to be involved. There were pending legal disputes with an ex-wife and expected claims on his estate by his current wife. They married a few years before Hulk Hogan's death. Legal battles can go on for years, they can be costly, and it was reported Brooke did not want to become embroiled.

There can be other reasons for declining an inheritance. If a beneficiary has legal or creditor issues, the beneficiary may not be able to keep the inherited money if it has to be used to satisfy debts or legal claims. If the beneficiary declined the inheritance and if the money would pass to the beneficiary's children instead, it could be a good decision for the beneficiary to decline.

Sometimes a beneficiary already has significant wealth of their own and the inheritance would be more of a tax burden than a benefit. Again, depending on how the inheritance would be distributed if

the beneficiary declined, it could be a great way to transfer wealth to the next generation with less tax.

There is a legal term for declining to take an inheritance. It is called a "disclaimer" and there are technical requirements that must be met to make a proper disclaimer. If an inheritance is "disclaimed," it is treated as if the disclaiming beneficiary was predeceased. Then, you have to look at the Will or Trust to see who would receive the inheritance if the intended beneficiary is not living.

Often, it is the beneficiary's descendants, but not always. If the beneficiary disclaims, they cannot control who gets the inheritance. The Will or Trust determines it. And, to avoid tax issues, the disclaimer must be made within nine months from the date of death.

There are many good reasons for

*(Continued on Page 11)*

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# Fond Memories to Recall



Santa Monica Pier Director, Jim Harris, met with Barry Griggon of Homerun Entertainment at the Pier's first fundraiser last month. Barry's company produced the successful event. *Photos by Cali Gilbert*



Jeff Jarow from PAR Commercial Brokerage met Andi Curl at the Pier fundraiser because they were wearing the same shirt with pictures of Santa Monica locations. Jeff had bought his from Jams, a store on Main Street that had gone out of business long ago.

## Thoughts From a Very Busy High School Student

(Continued from Page 8)

term and a slur for robots and AI. The last term we will discuss today is rage-baiting. This term began with influencers, people with a large following on social media platforms, creating provocative content to elicit a response and trigger anger to gain engage-

ment and profit on their content. Gen Z has expanded this term to involve general, everyday actions. The "internet brain" of Gen Z, the need to be perpetually online, led to the more colloquial use of this term.

## Preserving the Stories of Historic Broadway

(Continued from Page 7)

redevelopment. For Carolyne, "It's a visual reminder of the struggles these ladies overcame. Land ownership meant something different to our parents. This building tells a long story of resilience, of women who put their heads to-

gether and built something lasting. It represents our history." The image on Page 7 and the one of Gilbert's grocery store in the September issue are courtesy of the wonderful collection of the Santa Monica History Museum.

## Palisades Fire: Minimizing the Financial Gap

(Continued from Page 6)

reviewed by a donor table, where recovery partners including non-profits, government agencies, faith-based groups, and private donors will bring their focused resources – Money, Manpower, Materials, or Mental Health assistance – and work together to close identified financial and emotional gaps.

Though still in its formative phase, PaliLTRG is laying the groundwork for a comprehensive recovery effort that centers

around compassion, equity, and community resilience. As applications begin rolling in over the coming weeks, the group is preparing to help residents navigate the long journey home.

Pacific Palisades has always been more than a collection of homes – it's a community defined by strength, empathy, and neighborly care. And together, we will rebuild – stronger, wiser, and more united than ever.



—Joe Analco

## Answer to Our Neighborhood Celebrities

(Continued from Page 1)



Laura and Tatiana are ready to greet and serve you at Sweet Lady Jane on Montana and 17th Streets.

## Planning Ahead

(Continued from Page 10)

disclaiming an inheritance. When considering a disclaimer, it is important to understand the consequences and seek good legal advice to comply with all the legal requirements.

**Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.**  
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