

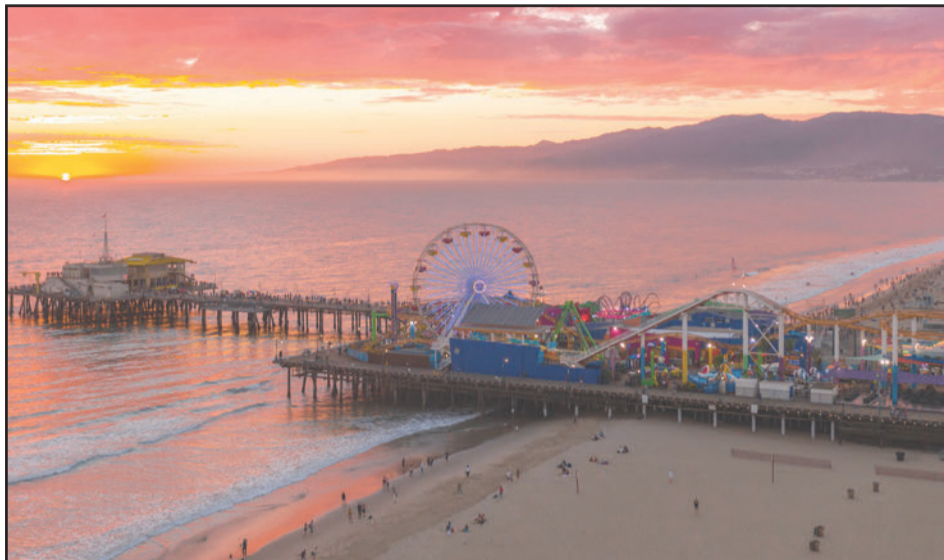
THE SANTA MONICA STAR

Also covering
The Greater
Westside

Volume XXIV Number 8

Connecting You With Your Community

August 2024



If you can't get to the Santa Monica Pier in person, try going on to the live webcams that offer three different viewing options. Photo: Pacific Park

Santa Monica Pier Live Webcams

Wish you could cool off by going to the beach, but it isn't possible at this time? You can still enjoy stunning views of the Santa Monica Pier and nearby beaches.

Pacific Park's Santa Monica Pier cams stream live video 24/7. Enjoy three different live cam options including See The Wheel, Watch The Park, and See The Pier.

Watch nightly light programs on the Pacific Wheel. Look at the surf, sand, and sea at Santa Monica Beach from Malibu to Palos Verdes. Located at the end of

Route 66 next to Venice Beach and the historical Muscle Beach, the Pier's webcams offer a glimpse from one of the most celebrated beaches in the world.

Pacific Park is the amusement park on the Pier and home to L.A.'s iconic Pacific Wheel. The Ferris wheel's 174,000 LEDs illuminate the Los Angeles coastline nightly with light shows that feature seasonal colors, fun animations, and messages. Go to pacpark.com/santa-monica-pier-live-cams.

Santa Monica PAL Hosts Annual Scholarship Dinner for Members



Santa Monica PAL youth, including 12 juniors and seniors, were honored last month with personal recognition and individual scholarship funds totaling \$38,000. From left, Chris Naelgas, Arnoldo Paniagua, Tia Hansen, Maribel Hernandez, Aaniyah Evans, Jacqueline Morales, Rosa Cruz, Esteban Nunez, Emily Rodriguez, Joshua Lesley, and Hawene Alemayehu. Not pictured, Jesse Morales who also received a scholarship. Photo: Santa Monica PAL

The Police Activities League (PAL) hosted its annual Chris Carrey PAL Education Scholarship Fund recognition ceremony last month at St. Monica's Grand Pavilion in Santa Monica.

Santa Monica PAL youth, including 12 juniors and seniors, were honored with personal recog-

niton and individual scholarship funds totaling \$38,000.

More than 100 guests joined to celebrate the student recipients with special guest presenters including Senator Ben Allen, Chair of the Board of Equalization Tony Vasquez, Mayor Phil Brock, and

(Continued on Page 2)

Connie Engel Opens Unique Art Gallery on Montana Avenue



Connie Engel stands proudly by one of her own paintings in her gallery that recently opened at 1327 Montana Avenue.

Photos by Bernadette Lucier

Connie Engel has been painting and drawing all of her life. In 2002, she went "professional," as she describes. Her work has been in museums, online, and published all over the world.

Her paintings range from abstract to representational. "At first, I was known for pots and pans, fruit and flowers, as well as still life and reflection. I love to paint

everything," she explains. Her paintings are all sizes, but she especially likes to do large canvases.

Connie has always wanted to have the perfect venue to display her work for people to see.

They can see the colors in person, she noted, and appreciate the texture of the paintings.

A longtime Santa Monica

(Continued on Page 7)

"Summer Fun" Acapella Concert Planned for August 25

By Harris Levey

Acapella music is back! Acapella comes from the Greek "acapellus" which means singing without a musical background. This describes Westside Voices.

In 2006, a group of accomplished singers, from diverse musical backgrounds, came together to sing a variety of music and have a good time.

During the pandemic, the group was eager to get back to singing. Under the guidelines of a major health organization, they rehearsed outdoors in February using an industrial heater for warmth, and put on an outdoor concert while wearing face shields. It was the first time many of the audience had left their homes since the outbreak. In 2020, Westside Voices received a commendation from the City of Los Angeles

for "incredible performances to the community."

Join us for a "Summer Fun" concert on Sunday, August 25, 3 p.m. at Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 880 Toyopa Dr, in Pacific Palisades. Suggested donation is \$15. Enjoy an hour of great music, fun, and some surprises.

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Ishihara Garden's Best Tomato Competition

By Michaela Grant
Climate Action Corps Fellow
City of Santa Monica

Tomato lovers, mark your calendars for the upcoming Fifth Annual Best Tomato Competition on August 17 at Ishihara Park Learning Garden. This exciting event promises to celebrate the diverse varieties of one of nature's greatest fruits – the tomato.

The Best Tomato Competition will feature a variety of activities for the young and the young at heart. For kids wishing to discover the wonders of the garden, Garden Bingo is available to play. For the competition, we are inviting each resident and gardener to enter a homegrown tomato in a tasting competition that will include tomato judges and tomato scoring on every entry. Don't worry if you don't grow tomatoes. Come join us



Three plates of different varieties of Cherry Tomatoes will be displayed for the tasting competition.

anyways to tour the garden, serve as a volunteer tomato judge, and enjoy the sun.

Tomatoes are not only delicious, but they are also quite nutritious. Tomatoes are high in vitamins C

and K, potassium, antioxidants, and folate, making them an important part of a balanced diet. They also promote heart health, improve skin issues, and boost immune function.

Because of their versatility in the kitchen, tomatoes are a common ingredient in many diets. There are countless ways to eat tomatoes, from light salads to flavorful sauces, and hearty soups. So, come taste the variety of flavors at the Fifth Annual Best Tomato Competition and learn new ways to include this superfood in your diet. Before you know it, the competition will be here today, and gone tomato, so take advantage of this tasty and enlightening experience! To find out more information, visit: santamonica.gov/events/whose-tomato-reigns-supreme.



Outgoing Rotary President Ken Waltzer with incoming President, Monika White.

Rotary Club of Santa Monica Installs New Board of Directors

By Monika White, PhD

The Rotary Club of Santa Monica celebrated its annual change of leadership with a rousing thank you to Ken Waltzer for a successful year as President 2023-2024, and a big welcome to incoming President, Monika White, PhD for the 2024-2025 year.

The event was held at the Santa Monica Family YMCA with a dinner/dance at the end of June, including a Rotary "Dancing with the Stars" competition. It was won hands down by outgoing president Ken and his wife Jennifer, after all four judges rated their swing dance a perfect "10" score.

Monika White has been an active member of the Rotary Club since 1995. She has served as vice president, secretary, a member of numerous Rotary committees, and chair of several projects. Monika and her Board of Directors were officially installed by Past District 5280 Governor, Olivia Patterson Ryans, in the presence of Rotarians, families, and friends.

The new Board consists of Officers Karin Wallerstein, Vice President; Gary Ogden, Vice President; George Pickell, Treasurer; and Tanya Gilbert, Secretary. Directors are Len Lanzi, Timur Berberoglu, Renuka Desai, Martyn Felix Crown, Richard Lombardi, and Hodge Patterson. The Board is

(Continued on Page 8)

Santa Monica PAL Hosts *(Continued from Page 1)*

Vice Mayor Lana Negrete.

The Chris Carrey PAL Education Fund was created through a joint gift from Ed Simmons of Standard Parking and Neil and Karen Carrey. Since 2002, the fund has provided scholarships for post-high school education expenses to PAL members who meet required criteria, show financial need, successfully complete an application package, and then are selected by the Chris Carrey PAL Education Fund Committee.

Several of the awardees had been active participants in PAL's seven youth programs for more than seven years. "This annual event, now in its 22nd year, owes its success to the invaluable participation of individuals and businesses, particularly Ed Simmons and Standard Parking, as well as Neil and Karen Carrey," said Eula Fritz, Director of the Santa Monica Police Activities League. "Their generous contributions help transform dreams into realities for PAL youth, many of whom would be unable to achieve their goals without this support."

The PAL Scholarship awards are in memoriam to Chris Carrey, who lived in Santa Monica for all 16½ years of his life. He was an excel-



Posing above, from left, Scott Heineman, Ed Simmons, Emily Rodriguez, and Neil Carrey.

Photo by Bernadette Lucier

lent student, having attended school in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Chris was very active in youth sports and especially excelled in tennis. However, most of all Chris

wanted to become a chef. Chris performed his community service at PAL. He would have been proud of the PAL kids going on for additional education after high school. He would have also been proud that scholarships to help PAL kids with education are being awarded in his name.

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 424-581-6005

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Website:

www.thesantamonicastar.com

Email: smstarnewspaper@gmail.com

Editor and Publisher:

Diane Margolin

Editorial Assistants:

Pamela Lawrence, Miceala Shocklee

Advertising Sales: Diane Margolin

Ad Graphics: Dynamic Graphic

Artwork: Joe Analco

Contributing Writers:

Dr. Frank Lavac, Qin Stubis, Michael Margolin, Pat Webber, Cheryl Thode, Deborah Gray, Susan Barry, Lisa Alexander, Gigi Appelbaum-Schwartz, Tanya Gilbert, Stacy McClendon, Jim Harris, and Maureen Molé.

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Happy August Birthdays

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From the Santa Monica Pier Guy

A Midsummer Update About the Pier



By Jim Harris

We're halfway through Summer and there is nary a sign of the traditional Twilight concerts at the Pier. I am often

asked why that is. Many people loved the concerts, and they were indeed a great Summer tradition for a full 35 years.

So, why have they ended? The reasons are many, actually, with the main factors being their popularity (too many people), public safety concerns, and ultimately, financing. While the concerts were indeed greatly loved, they drove tens of thousands of additional visitors to the Pier and beach area during the season that already places the highest number of visitors and congestion to our City. Furthermore, those large crowds created an imbalance for how our police and fire professionals could best address emergency situations. For a couple of years we tried a new format to lessen the traffic and safety burdens, which resulted in a dramatic decrease in interest for sponsors. And then came the pandemic....

Concerts will return to the Pier someday, in some format.

In the meantime, I am excited to share with you the great slate of

events that we have coming up in the next few months.

On September 6, we celebrate the Santa Monica Pier's 115th Birthday with a free movie, lots of activities, and birthday wishes sent from around the world.

On September 19, we begin our fourth season of Locals' Nights. Held on the third Thursday of every month from September through May, we provide entertainment "by Santa Monicans, for Santa Monicans."

From October 17, through 20, we re-enact the 1970s grass roots movement to "Save the Pier!" with our annual melodramatic stage play held at the Pier's West end.

And, on November 2, we share the most beautiful event on the Pier - Dia de los Muertos - featuring extraordinary altars and performances by Aztec dancers, baile folklorico, and mariachi bands.

All of our events are free and open to the public, and details are always on santamonicipier.org. Come enjoy with us!

Jim Harris is the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Pier Corporation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Pier visitor experience, as well as an accomplished author and playwright.

Byte by Byte

Sounds of Summer



By Dr.

Miceala Shocklee

My whole life, finding headphones - and now earbuds - that work well for me has been a futile effort more often than not.

As much as I celebrate the progression of technology in general, integrating that progression into my own life has been a slow process. The transition from headphones to earbuds has been an especially long journey.

Over-the-ear headphones aren't practical for most of the sports I do, behind-the-ear loops tend to irritate my ear cartilage, and for my entire life (up till about a month ago), in-ear earbuds never sat sustainably.

So, rather than risk an ear bud falling out and careening over a cliff during a coastal long run, or toppling out of my ear and onto the side of a car-packed road during a cycle, I elected to stick with the tangle of low-quality logistics that most wired headphones exist as.

However, the drawbacks of that wore at me over the last few years of earbud development. With my ultramarathon training ramping up recently, it was finally time to make the switch. After months of collating information and reviews across sites like Runner's World, Wired, Reddit, and of course product delivery sites like Amazon, I settled on the Jabra Elite 8 Active earbuds. Multiple sites (and users) touted them as tough enough to handle the dust and humidity of

my runs through the Middle East desert, while also being designed well enough to fit small ears with a grip that would help them stick but not agitate.

All those sites... weren't wrong? The earbuds function just fine through peak summer conditions, where other models that I borrowed along the way tended to crumble under the burden of climbing humidity. The Jabra earbuds have stayed in with minimal readjustment needed over multiple hours of bouncing along on long runs, where I've found myself needing to jam other models as snugly into my ear canal as they can fit and cross my fingers less than a half hour in.

With fit and survivability having been my main focus when searching for earbuds, I was also pleasantly surprised to find that the sound quality is on par with other models that prioritize music quality over sport performance.

While there are likely to be some ear shapes that the Jabra Elite 8 Active won't fit well, endurance athletes with smaller ears who don't want to sacrifice sound for function, especially during an especially sweaty summer, the Jabra Elite 8 Active earbuds are a patently solid option.

Dr. Miceala Shocklee is a part-time freelance writer and editor and a full-time staff veterinarian with SeaWorld Abu Dhabi Yas Island in the United Arab Emirates.



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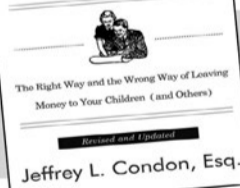
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Reflections From The East

My Sweet Memories of “Flower Dew Water”



By Qin Sun Stubis

For the almost 30 years of my life in China, it sat on the top of our one-and-only paint-chipped black dresser, snuggled against an old, worn mirror. Its presence was not always pronounced. Because of limited tabletop space, it was often buried behind piles of books and newspapers. But, we always knew where to find it when we needed it, and we needed it often, especially in the hot, buggy months.

Its long, slim glass bottle now reminds me of the one used for Tabasco sauce. And, like that spicy and tangy sauce, it came in several sizes, as well. The liquid inside was crystal green and its paper label was bursting with colorful flowers. Most importantly, it had a magical name, Flower Dew Water. For many at the time, it

was a common household item; for our family, it was often the only “luxury” my mother would splurge on. When she was very tight on money, she got us the smallest bottle.

“Mom, I’ve got another mosquito bite!” I would whine, following her and scratching the itch until she fetched the bottle and dabbed its soothing liquid on my bump. I never cried out in pain when it stung my wound because I loved my Flower Dew Water too much. I would sniff its sweet scent long after it dried. When I was old enough to reach the top of the dresser, I didn’t have to ask Mother for it anymore.

We always knew when someone in the family had touched the bottle because of its escaped presence, a long trail of mild, sweet fragrance that many, these days, might find to be very ordinary, like the scent of laundry detergent or shampoo. But at the time, the only

soap we could afford had a rough, bad smell and our shampoo, which came in small, square packets, was not scented enough to leave any fragrance in our hair.

Our Flower Dew Water was everything to me. It was not just a cure for bug bites and headaches, but the only perfume I had, with a pleasant, sweet smell I could carry around as I battled our sultry Summers during and after the monsoons.

When the temperature soared toward 100, I carried with me at all times a moistened hand towel perfumed with my Flower Dew Water. With it, I wiped my sweaty forehead as I inhaled its scent. On a crowded bus, I held it to my face to make the ride more bearable. During the Winter months, too, I would release a few drops of our precious Flower Dew Water to freshen the air in our freezing cold room, dreaming of the warmer, better days ahead.

What was in the concoction? What made it so green and smell so good? I never thought of asking such questions. It was always there for me, and I knew it was special.

My life has long moved on since my childhood and the day I flew to America some three decades ago. Instead of that sweet scent, I have learned to enjoy real perfumes by Chanel, Guerlain, and Tom Ford.

And yet, when Summer arrives, the fragrances of the orange blossom oil, rose leaf oil, and lemon oil released from the Flower Dew Water still find their way to my memory, tempting me to go back in time and explore my past.

You can always reach me at qstubis@gmail.com, or please visit me at QinSunStubis.com. You can find a copy of my book, “Once Our Lives,” online at Amazon.com.

New School Year – Time to Set Some Goals



By Cheryl Thode

Well, parents, we are in the final month of Summer before the kids go back to school. How has your Summer been?

Have you been able to go to the beach? Did you take the family on a vacation? Have you been shuttling your kids to various camps?

For me, this Summer has been busy. I have truly enjoyed the less structured time that Summer brings, but I am ready to get back on the school “schedule” bandwagon. My son’s first day is later this month. So, we are in the middle of “prepping” for this new school year. From securing his required supplies to choosing the right backpack and lunchbox, we are gearing up for what will hopefully be another great year.

It’s funny how the start of a new school year brings the same joyous, nervous, and energized feel-

ings out of him as I have right before a new calendar year. I can feel his anticipation and excitement about what this school year will bring. Who will be in his class? What teacher will he have? Will he like what he is learning?

As parents, we want our children to thrive and be happy. Transitions, especially the start of a new school year after a summer break can be both exciting and anxiety-producing. How can we help our kids channel that nervous energy and thrive during this upcoming school year?

To me, the best way to set my kids up for success is the same technique I use for myself at the start of every New Year – setting goals for the upcoming year.

Along with getting their school supplies together this year, guide your child in selecting and identifying goals for the school year. The start of a new school year is a great time for your child to plan and envision their ideal

year ahead. As with adults, goals motivate kids and provide them with a sense of responsibility and purpose.

So, how do you go about setting these New School Year goals? Just like with adults, kids need to start by doing some self-reflection. We can help by asking our kids what they are looking forward to in the new school year and what they would like to do. Do they want to meet new friends? Is there a subject they want to explore and learn more about? Are they interested in trying a new sport or club? Do they want to improve their study habits? Basically, have an open-ended discussion to see what specific goals they are interested in pursuing this year.

Once they have identified some tangible goals, it is our job to work with our kids to write these goals down and place them somewhere they can see them daily. Then, throughout the school year, revisit the goals with your kids and

discuss how they feel their goal journey is developing. These “check-ins” are a great time to teach your kid how to evaluate their goals, and to decide whether they are making progress or perhaps need to change their strategy.

Teaching our kids how to identify a goal, create a plan to reach that goal, and then review the progress made towards achieving the goal will help them to take control of their school year. It will provide them with personalized goals to achieve, and a sense of purpose. These are critical skills that they can use throughout their entire life. Remember, goal setting is for any and everyone. Perhaps, while your child is setting their goals, you can set some New School Year parenting goals as well!

Cheers to the start of a wonderful 2024-2025 School Year!

Mini Message Bulletin Board



Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions Club Dinner Program

First Wednesday each month at 6 p.m.
Santa Monica Elks Lodge
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Clergy Corner

Welcoming the Batson Family



Pastor Greg Batson, center, with his family, from left, Tom, Wes, Tania, and Dan.

By Pastor Greg Batson

Greetings! My name is Greg Batson, and I am excited to return to the First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica, where my journey in ordained ministry began as an Associate Pastor. Twenty-four years ago, Tania and I, along with our 22-month-old son Tom, moved from New York City to Santa Monica to begin this new chapter of our life.

We were welcomed with open hearts and arms. The next four years were full and rich. I was part of a wonderful staff, learning the fundamentals of being a pastor. Tania pursued her career as a professional singer in Los Angeles. Our family grew with the birth of our son Dan in 2003 at Santa Monica Hospital (Wes would arrive two years later in Burbank). The congregation nurtured us, and we are so grateful for that time together.

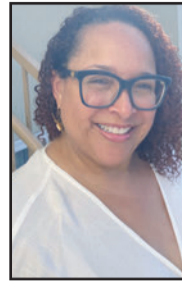
Over the next 20 years, we have moved to different locations throughout Southern California. I have served as Senior Pastor of three other congregations: Burbank First UMC, Aldersgate UMC in Tustin, and Foothills UMC in La Mesa. I also served as President and CEO of the California-Pacific United Methodist Foundation.

Like all journeys, there have been unexpected twists and turns, but always filled with God's grace. Tania has moved into non-profit fundraising and development. Our three sons are now young adults. Tom lives in New York City and works for Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies. Dan graduated last month from Chapman University with a degree in Broadcast Journalism and Documentary Filmmaking. Wes has completed his freshman year at UC Santa Barbara and is majoring in

(Continued on Page 11)

Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood

The Temecula Valley Balloon and Wine Festival 2024



By Stacy McClendon

I headed from Santa Monica to Temecula at around 5 a.m. on an early mid-May day. The morning was overcast and needed to change, as I had planned to ride in a balloon if/when offered, and knew that flights are always dependent on weather conditions. Lake Skinner, in Winchester, was cool and calm as I, and others, drove up the beautiful long, winding road with rolling hills and brush that leads to the park entrance. The sun began to peek out, which only made me happier as I knew the balloon ride would be a go.

The festival started in the center of town in 1983, with a focus on the balloons, but has since grown to a festival that spans a weekend (three days), has one Main Concert stage and one Wine concert stage, wineries and breweries, over 100+ vendors (which includes plenty of yummy food vendors), camping on site and more.

I attended with other members of the media to learn about the history of the festival from the Board, enjoy balloon rides, and connect with some of the vendors sharing their products. I decided to start my morning with a balloon ride. Stacy, the pilot from Westchester, took me and two others up on our balloon flight. Stacy has been a pilot for 18 years. (She received her pilot license prior to her



The hot air balloon pilot Stacy took the guests up for a ride.



The hot air balloons floating over the grounds were so colorful.

Driver's License), but has been around the sport her whole life, as this is her father's sport/love. The balloon we rode in used to be her father's, prior to him selling it. It was also super cool that one of the other ladies on the balloon ride shared the same birthday as I do. I knew from there, that the day could only get better 'just like aging wine.' I also connected with

(Continued on Page 7)

Discover What's Happening on the Westside

- **Tuesdays Tales: A Traveling Storytime** - Weekly series featuring stories, songs and rhymes, travels to a different library location each week. Free tickets are available at 10:15 a.m. For ages 2-5. Main Library, August 6; Montana Library, August 27.
- **Thursdays, August 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 -Tech & Tasks** - 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Main Library, Tutoring Center. Volunteer tutors provide help with reading documents or written tasks, using mobile devices, navigating government websites, filling out forms, using email, writing resumes, and more.
- **Friday, August 9 - Guitarist Will Kimbrough** will be performing at McCabe's Guitar Shop at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$25. Details: www.willkimbrough.com.
- **Saturday, August 10 - Free movie, Wonka**, music, and popcorn in Reed Park. Bring your picnic blanket and chairs. Music starts one hour before the movie at 7:45 p.m.
- **SMPL Teen Literary & Arts Magazine: The Luminary** - Submissions accepted from August 15 - November 1 - Submit art or writing to get published in the first issue of Santa Monica Public Library's Teen Literary & Arts Magazine, *The Luminary*. Stop by any

- branch location for submission guidelines. For teens in grades 7-12.
- **Saturday, August 17 - Community Free Market** - First United Methodist Church is pleased to present the Second Annual Community Free Market - a one day event where all are welcome to come by and pick up FREE new or gently used kitchen /household items! Bring your friends and family, and look for housewares, small appliances (toasters, blenders), holiday items, toys, books, and more. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Call Janet at 310-663-9861 for assistance and more details. Washington Avenue and 11th St.
- **Friday-Mondays - Tours of the Annenberg Community Beach House.** 12 p.m.-2 p.m. 415 Pacific Coast Highway. Once the site of a grand mansion designed by Julia Morgan for actress Marion Davies and media tycoon William Randolph Hearst, this "hot spot" on Santa Monica's Gold Coast drew guests ranging from Greta Garbo to Winston Churchill. Today, expert Santa Monica Conservancy Docents lead free, walk-in tours centered around Davies' historic guest house. Please call 310-458-4904 to confirm dates and closures.

SANTA MONICA PIER

ENJOY SUMMER AT THE PIER
WHERE THE FUN NEVER SETS!

Did you know the Santa Monica Pier Corporation is actually a 501(c)(3) non-profit? Yep! We're on a mission to keep the Santa Monica experience awesome for everyone who visits. With cool events happening all year, we're making sure the Pier stays as fun as ever!

santamonicapier.org | @santamonicapier

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Kristen B., Age 34, Sono Bello Ambassador

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Happy Birthday to Meghan Markle, Barack Obama, Tom Brady, Martha Stewart, Martin Sheen, Dustin Hoffman, Connie Stevens, Danny Bonaduce, Steve Martin, Derek Fisher, Melanie Griffith, Viola Davis, Danielle Steel, Gary Larson, and Ben Affleck.

Entertaining With Ease

What Not to Do As a Dinner Guest



By Maureen Mole

Summer is the time when there are lots of parties, get-togethers, and weekend guests. Occasionally, the behavior of hosts and guests can be thoughtless and sometimes, downright rude. Here are a few examples of what not to do when you are the host or the guest at someone's home. These situations actually happened to me or people I know.

- Guests should not take photos of the host's home, table settings, or food and post them on social media without the express permission of the host.
- When I hosted a weekend guest, even though I was an early riser, I decided to wait until about 8 or 9 a.m. so I could have breakfast with her. I waited until around 10 a.m. and finally ate alone. She arose at 11 a.m. and said to me, "I like to sleep in when I'm a guest." Overnight guests should advise the host if they plan to "sleep in" the next day.
- Guests should not blow their nose in fabric napkins. Really, it has happened.
- Hosts who have invited guests for the weekend should not tell them to bring their own snacks unless the guests have special dietary requirements that are not easily accommodated by the host.
- One guest arrived one and a half hours late to a dinner party after having a fight with her boyfriend. When she arrived sans boyfriend, the host tried to calm her down and said, "I have a special aperitivo for you." The guest waved her hand and said, "Gimme a real drink!" The advice here is don't behave like this guest.



Be sure there is enough food to go around before you ask for more.

- At a barbeque, a friend told me that a couple showed up with a whole other entire meal. The guests brought Italian sausage for the barbeque, corn on cob, salad, and a cake. The host wondered if the guests thought they may not like what was served, so they brought their own food. Or perhaps, the guests were so grateful to be invited that they overdid the "host gift." Either way, it's best not to bring a whole other entire meal.
- Guests should not bring uninvited guests to a party without giving the host reasonable advance notice. Every host has a menu planned and might not have enough food or room at the table for more people.
- Guests should not wander about the house, or use the host's personal primary bathroom unless told to do so by the host.
- My friend visited an out-of-town relative for the weekend. The host announced that she doesn't eat breakfast or lunch, leaving my friend rather uncomfortable and hungry. The host should provide the traditional three meals a day unless otherwise discussed with the guests.

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

Red Cross Urges Wildfire and Extreme Heat Preparation

Our city and state are experiencing an increasing number of extreme heat events and wildfires. More communities are at risk than ever before. Climate change is making extreme heat and wildfire events more frequent, more severe, and longer lasting.

We're encouraging everyone to prepare now to protect yourself and your loved ones. Extreme heat is deadly and kills more people than any other weather event. A few quick tips:

- **Make a Plan:** Built a kit and plan for cooling centers/evacuation centers.
- **Plan to Stay Connected:** Utilize local, state and Red Cross apps to get the most up-to-date notifications.

• Visit redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies. For checklists and more information on how to protect you and your loved ones.

We urge volunteers and community organizations to join us in preparing for wildfire season with our wildfire defense awareness education, which include a checklist of important actions to prep for the next wildfire and/or heatwave.

Members of the community who would like to learn more and serve as volunteers helping neighbors prepare can call 310-394-3773.

Sean Inoue
Executive Director
American Red Cross
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Love Links

Was It Divine Intervention When Norm and Debbie Finally Met?



Debbie and Norm Lantz on their August wedding day 34 years ago.

What a joy it is when we see someone and think to ourselves, "I'm going to marry that person!" even though you haven't met yet, and then it actually happens!

Ironically, for Norm Lantz, who was 20 while he was working at the YMCA in San Pedro as a counselor and director of camps, he told his sister that decision when they were sitting in his office. He had heard heels clacking down the hallway, peeked out and saw a woman who had come to pick up a child from their preschool. He didn't know her, or that her name was Debbie, but he had made up his mind to marry her. That was the summer of '88.

The irony was that he had met most of her family before he had a chance to meet her. Her cousin was his boss at the Y. Her mom and two aunts ran a catering service out of the Y kitchen. Another cousin was a preschool teacher. Her two younger cousins were campers. And, it was her son who Norm had been reading stories to, along with the other students in the Y preschool.

Norm went back to college and during a spring break in '89, his sister who was still working at the Y as the preschool director, asked him to stop by to say hello at a birthday party dinner for one of the Y staff. He didn't want to go.

But, he reluctantly agreed. As soon as he saw Debbie, he asked his sister, "What is *my future wife* doing here?" She turned out

to be the cousin of many of the people he knew from the YMCA.

Debbie was dancing with someone, but that didn't stop Norm. He walked over to the couple and took her in his arms. (And, as he described, "We have been inseparable for the last 34 years.") While he went back to finish school, they dated for one year.

Over Christmas of '89, Norm proposed. They were married on August 18, 1990 in the First Baptist Church of Palos Verdes by the minister who Norm knew as he was growing up. It was a big wedding as you might imagine. Debbie's mom is one of seven sisters and five brothers. All of her cousins from the YMCA attended.

Norm finished his studies in health care and became a hospital administrator at UCLA-Health.



Debbie and Norm in Hawaii.

He found out that the Santa Monica Family YMCA was looking for a representative from the hospital to be on the Y Board. He applied. Three years later, Norm is now the President of the Board. He said, "I was thinking about how the universe aligns certain things in certain ways." The YMCA had been a big part of his life, and now he could be of service again.

Norm and Debbie love doing things together whenever they can, and he still holds her hand as he always has done. They also enjoy their family of three boys and two grandchildren.

We are delighted to share the story of Norm and Debbie Lantz and wish them Happy Anniversary and many more wonderful years together and with their family.

Connie Engel Opens *(Continued from Page 1)*

resident, Connie has been looking for the perfect space to display only her work. She found it at her new gallery which is located at 1327 Montana Avenue.

"People love it," she shared. "The community has been very welcoming. Recently, a family visiting from Ohio looked at three paintings that they were considering for their home. Another woman came in and decided to commission a painting for her office."

Connie is so excited about her new venture. Plan to go by to meet her and see her work for yourself. The gallery hours are Tuesday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. Connie can be reached by calling 424-322-0459, or go to connieengelart.com. —D.M.



At Connie's recent gallery opening were from left, Heidi Landers, Richard Landers, Steve Love, Connie Engel, Stephen David Engel, Josh Engel, and Diane Worthington. Photo by Bernadette Lucier

Temecula Valley Balloon and Wine Festival

(Continued from Page 5)

Board members, staff from the wineries, and the Sheriff's department.

The event ended early, so festival preparations could continue. The two ladies I met in the balloon ride and I decided to drive over to Wilson Creek Winery, per a recommendation from Jeff who works there.

The grounds were beautifully tailored and perfect for picture taking, events (they host many), and enjoying. We perused the gift

shop and enjoyed a wine tasting. All of the tastings were divine, but the memories of the Limoncello Sparkling Wine and Chocolate wine lingered long after we left.

Afterwards, we decided to enjoy lunch at the restaurant on site which was wonderful. I had a delicious Salmon BLT sandwich with a scrumptious salad.

The Temecula Valley and Balloon Festival is usually held in May. Watch for news on the festival next year in our paper.

Annual Midsummer Poetry Fest to be Held at Kaufman-Brentwood Library

On Sunday, August 25, at 2 p.m., The 35th Annual Midsummer Poetry Fest will be held at the Kaufman-Brentwood Branch Library, located at 11820 San Vicente Blvd. The event features local poets reading their original compositions. This event is open to the

public and hosted by the Friends of the Library, with a reception following the readings.





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The Magic of Travel With Tanya

Harvest Season in Bordeaux: A Journey Through France's Wine Heartland



Above, an elegant reflection of an autumn day in picturesque Bordeaux.

By Tanya Gilbert

Nestled in the southwest of France, Bordeaux is synonymous with world-class wine. Each year, as the summer sun mellows into autumn, the region bursts into a flurry of activity for the wine harvest, or "vendange." This season, from late September to early October, offers a unique and enchanting experience for wine enthusiasts and travelers alike.

Traveling through Bordeaux during the harvest, visitors can immerse themselves in the wine-making process. Many châteaux open their doors, offering tours that provide a behind-the-scenes look at the magic of transforming grapes into exquisite wines.

The harvest season is also a time of celebration. Wine festivals and events abound, featuring tastings, gourmet food pairings, and live music.

Beyond the vineyards, Bordeaux itself is a city of elegance and charm. Its neoclassical architecture, vibrant markets, and world-class dining make it a delightful base for exploration.

• **Getting There:** Bordeaux is just a two-hour high-speed train ride from Paris, or a one-hour 10-

minute flight from Paris.

• **Getting Around:** Consider pedaling your way around Bordeaux. With extensive cycling paths and relatively flat terrain, it is a great option to explore.

• **My Favorite Hotels:** Villas Foch: A beautiful 19th-century boutique hotel in the city center, or Les Sources de Caudalie: An exceptional spa hotel a few minutes outside of Bordeaux.

• **Where to Dine:** There is no shortage of Michelin-starred restaurants, but if you are like me and looking for outstanding casual dining, be sure to try Racines by Daniel Gallacher. A cozy spot offering innovative cuisine with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. La Symbiose: A favorite among locals, this restaurant combines excellent food with a warm and inviting atmosphere.

For those seeking a blend of tradition, taste, and travel, there's no better time to visit Bordeaux than during the vendange.

Thinking about booking your next trip? I curate unique experiences for curious travelers. Email me at tanya@mariposatraveladvisors.com.

Rotary Club of Santa Monica

(Continued from Page 2)

rounded out by President Elect Bill Chillingworth and Past President Ken Waltzer.

The Rotary Club of Santa Monica meets Fridays from 12:30-1:30 p.m. at the Santa Monica Hilton Hotel and features an array of interesting speakers and fellowship. Rotarians serve their com-

munities through support of non-profit organizations, scholarships for high school and college students, and humanitarian projects in other countries. Anyone interested in Rotary can find more information at rotaryclubofsantamonica.org.

Memories of the July 4th Main Street Parade



Evelyn Lauchenauer, Parade organizer Jeff Jarow, and Emma Ramey.



It was 18 years ago when Jeff Jarow created the Main Street July 4th parade. He is in the photo to the left. Above are members of the Airport2Park non-profit group with Evelyn.



Steve Sims, a Delivery Volunteer with Meals on Wheels and Nancy Gimbrone, an Operations Volunteer, at the parade.



Charles Andrews and Nina Furukawa represented the Santa Monica Daily Press in the parade.

Photos by Evelyn Lauchenauer

What Happens When Your Children Go Off to College?

By David Bruce

Let's face it, women are better at running the world because their brains can juggle a thousand possibilities at once. Men, much less so. If you ask a man what he's thinking and he says 'nothing' he is telling the truth. My wife and I fit the bill. This particular day, she was overwhelmed with the Thousand Mom Things, and it was my turn to check something off her busy mind.

The Issue: our son was off to college and the online searches, group texts, parent Facebook groups, and random TikToks shared amongst my wife's friend group manifested into what my simple-minded brain could only label as group panic.

The Problem: what if he has an accident as an adult and we have no legal say in his care? If we didn't have a plan, disaster was guaranteed to strike, right?

Solution: get a Power of Attorney (POA). As a realtor who deals with estate work, deaths, probates, and

myriad legal issues, I always considered a POA as something for my parents when they started aging. 'What-ifs' wouldn't stop talking in my head. Fear crept in.

In the midst of this mental spiral an online miracle happened. One of my wife's friends had a 20% discount to a solid and inexpensive company who completed a power of attorney and had it wrapped up by the time I made her dinner. Proud that I had solved something for her, I could go back to my simple-mindedness.

If you want the info to take worry off your shoulders, email me at david.bruce@exprealty.com and I can pass on the discount. At the end of the day, let's face it. The moms ultimately solved the problem because they run stuff better. All I did was push a few buttons. You know, the simple stuff.

David Bruce "DB" is a Santa Monica realtor, builder, options trader, empty nester, and Jack of All Trades who enjoys nice people.




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Community Service on the Westside

The Lions Celebrated in July 4th Parades



By Kingsley Fife
Independence Day is such a sacred date, especially now, to remind us how wonderful it is to be able to enjoy the freedoms we have in this country. To accent that point, we Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions marched in both the Santa Monica Parade, in the morning, and the Pacific Palisades Parade in the afternoon.

Doing the duties were Lions Kathy Boole, Santa Monica Mayor Phil Brock, Derrick Beerensteyn, Susan DeRemer, and Yoriko Fisher. The crowd, cheering them along in the stands included Lion Kingsley and Joanne Fife and Lion Rae Kameny.

Our recent dinner meeting was very busy. Our District Governor Jennifer Cho installed our new Club Officers for the coming year highlighted by our Quad Presidents, Susan DeRemer, Pam Andrews, Kathy Boole, and Derrick Beerensteyn.

She also inducted two new Lions into our "Pride," Jane Birman (sponsor-Lion Derrick) and Nick

Ramirez (sponsor-Lion Capt. James Fleming). We were all thrilled to welcome them. Following this, we had the special "Passing of the Ceremonial Gavel," where our current President Kathy Boole turns the meeting over, officially, to our new incoming President Susan DeRemer.

Welcoming roars were given to several guests. Leroy Beerensteyn, Lion Derrick's brother, who was visiting from the nation of Suriname, and Andrew Cruz who heard how active the Lions were and wanted to find out more about us.

To round out the meeting, Governor Jennifer gave us an inspirational message, outlining the joys of service to the community that our membership in Lions affords us. She also described her plans that she has for the District in her year as Governor, which is just beginning. Her enthusiasm was a real motivator for everyone.

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

An Update From the SMBWC



By Patricia Webber
The Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club (SMBWC) recently awarded our Elmira T. Stephens scholarship awards to

four Samohi young women. At a Meet & Greet in May, Events Chair Alicia Syres was able to meet the 2024 ETS recipients.

They are Olivia R. (future studies in Psychology), Jocelyn S. (future studies in Nursing), Emma H. (future studies in Electrical Engineering), and Delaney O. (future studies in Education Classical/Medieval Studies).

Established in 1927, and named for the founder of the Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club, the Elmira T. Stephens (ETS) Fund has sought to provide financial assistance to Santa Monica High School young women and men seeking a continuation of their education after graduation. Each Spring, interested graduating seniors submit an application to the Club through their college counselor. This year, 14 applications were received and reviewed by the Scholarship Committee that included Club members Holly Shaf-

fer, Martine Salter, and Irene Moy. Some of the aspects of each application evaluated by the Committee were an essay and information on school activities, plans for future studies, and community volunteering. The ETS Scholarship Fund is supported by our weekly Bridge and Canasta, and Arts, Crafts, and Conversation activities, and donations by individuals.

Our Creative Writer's group is growing and provides a safe space to share your writing and the opportunity to listen to others for inspiration. The group is for new and experienced writers who read their recent work to those present. The genre of writing is diverse and includes short stories, memoirs, poetry, and excerpts of books in progress. At this time, the group does not include writing intended for business, marketing, blog posts, or other nonfiction (unless it is a memoir or autobiography). Shirley Cannon is the wonderful guide and teacher who facilitates the meeting. To RSVP, please contact Shirley at artistshirleycannon@gmail.com.

For information on joining the Club or renting our clubhouse for an event, please visit our website SMBWC.org or call 310-395-1308.

Embracing Healthy Aging



By Araceli Alejandre, COO
Healthy aging is more than just a concept – it's a lifestyle that can greatly enhance the quality of life

for older adults. At the Santa Monica Family YMCA, we are proud to offer a range of services and programs designed to support adults, aged 55 and older, in their journey toward a healthy and active life.

Physical health is a crucial component of aging well. Regular exercise helps maintain strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular health, all of which are essential for staying active and independent. The Santa Monica Family YMCA provides a variety of group exercise classes tailored specifically for older adults.

Our water aerobics classes, for example, offer a low-impact workout that is gentle on the joints while providing a full-body exercise. We also offer specialized fitness classes that cater to different fitness levels, ensuring that everyone can find a class that suits

their needs.

Cognitive health is another key aspect of healthy aging. To support brain health, we've partnered with the Santa Monica Pacific Neuroscience Institute to offer workshops that include educational discussions and tips on how to exercise our brains.

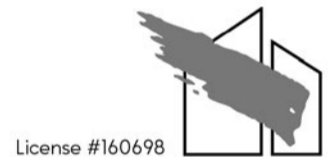
Social engagement is vital for emotional well-being. Isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness and depression, but staying socially active can significantly improve mood and overall health.

At the Santa Monica Family YMCA, we organize a variety of social activities such as game days, book clubs, sing-alongs, and coffee socials. These activities provide opportunities for adults to connect, build friendships, and create a sense of community.

Join us at the Santa Monica Family YMCA and discover the benefits of our programs and services. Together, we can make healthy aging an enjoyable and fulfilling journey! Contact the Santa Monica Family YMCA at 310-393-2721, or online at ymcasm.org for more details.

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Thoughts From a Second-Time Father

When Your Children Graduate From a Familiar School to Attend a New School



By Michael Margolin

Around this time 11 years ago, I wrote my first article for *The Santa Monica Star* about what it was like to be a new parent. I am not sure how to describe how fast that time has gone by. What I have embraced is that there is no way to slow any of that time down. It's like getting on the roller coaster and throwing your arms into the air.

That is about how much we can control it. I remember the day I became a parent like it happened this morning. I remember when Jake came along, just over eight years ago, equally as vividly. And, just like that, Alexa has finished elementary school and is on her way to middle school.

She has plenty working in her favor, though she is not comfortable about leaving the school she has been attending since kindergarten. When your oldest child experiences new things, people, and places, you are entering uncharted waters as a parent, yourself. You do not know for certain how they will handle new experiences, nor do not know how YOU will handle them experiencing all these new things.

When you have only been a parent for a few weeks and your baby will not stop crying and you do not know why, it can be unsettling. Watching them learn to walk, ride a bike, or climb a ladder at a playground can cause the premature graying of your hair. Yet, there is something about all of those scenarios that seem like they could be easier to accept than having my daughter enter middle school.

Not long ago, I had a dream that Alexa was about 18 months old and she came running to me. I picked her up and tickled her. Needless to say, it is the best dream I have ever had in my life and probably ever will. My kids are more and more fun the older they become. I have come to terms to with the hastiness that time passes.

I am embracing every stage, because what other choice do I have? Perhaps, just from time to time, one of their 18-month-old selves will come running to me in my slumber again.

Mike Margolin has been writing for us since his daughter Alexa was born 11 years ago. He is an avid sports fan. Mike is also a coach for both of his children's soccer teams.



Paws and Claws

I'm Taking My Dog on Vacation



By Dr. Frank Lavac, MS, DVM
Q: I'm going on vacation with my dog to Canada in August. Is there anything special that I should do?

A: It's wise that you're getting information now as the U.S. laws for bringing dogs back in the country have changed dramatically starting August 1, 2024.

The CDC and USDA are attempting to reduce introduction of

foreign canine rabies into the U.S. This makes the process of dogs entering the U.S. more complicated.

Check with your veterinarian prior to leaving the country with your dog. In the U.S., a rabies vaccination must be administered by veterinarians accredited by the USDA. The dog must be microchipped and the chip must be in place before the dog's most recent rabies vaccination.

Then, a rabies vaccine certification (not health certificate) must be further endorsed by the USDA. There may be additional health certificate requirements as well. I suspect that the USDA will be overwhelmed by this well-intended process.

We also use a travel expert to coordinate international travel of pets. Her name is Deb Rogers and her website is furwillfly.com. For more detailed CDC information, go to [cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/dogs.html](https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/dogs.html).

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

Adopt a Pet



"Panic" was rescued with her brother, "Attack." They were saved as young kittens from being thrown out on the streets. They are now healthy and happy one-year-old cuties that have been in foster care for a year. They can be adopted separately, but would love to find a home together! Contact Samsons Sanctuary.org.



Joe Analco

Planning Ahead

Set It – But Don’t Forget It!



By Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.
Here is a real life, cautionary tale! In 1980, Jeffrey had a serious girlfriend, Margaret. Jeffrey named Margaret, as the beneficiary of his 401(k) at work.

Jeffrey and Margaret broke up a few years later. Margaret moved on, married and had two children. Jeffrey also moved on with a new girlfriend, living together for many years until they split up in 2014, a year before Jeffrey died.

Jeffrey died in 2015, a year before retirement. He was single, never married, with no children. And, he had no Will or estate plan. His 401(k) had grown to over \$750,000. But, in the 35 years since he named Margaret as beneficiary of his 401(k), Jeffrey never changed the beneficiary designation.

His brothers were appointed as Administrators in the probate of Jeffrey’s estate. They fought hard to claim the 401(k) for the Estate. But, the Court directed the money to be distributed to Margaret. The Estate has appealed. The Court reasoned that Jeffrey had multi-

ple opportunities to update his beneficiary designation, but never did so. And, under applicable law, the Court said it didn’t have the power to override the beneficiary designation.

It is critical to name a beneficiary for any retirement account, be it an IRA, 401(k), 403(b), etc. Without a named beneficiary, the retirement account may be subject to Probate. But, on the other hand, considering what happened to Jeffrey and his 401(k), it is equally critical to periodically review beneficiary designations to make sure they are up to date.

The good news is forms to change beneficiary designations are often easily obtained online. But, in order to be effective, they have to be on file with the financial institution that administers the retirement account.

The moral of the story is: set it (name a beneficiary), but don’t forget it (make sure the beneficiary designation is up to date.)

Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.
JAKLE, ALEXANDER & PATTON, LLP
Main Line: 310-395-6555
Direct Line: 310-656-4310
alexander@jaklelaw.com

From Me to You...



By Diane Margolin
So much has been happening this Summer. Thanks to Cameron Andrews for sharing information about the annual PAL scholarship dinner. It is so inspiring to know the students will be off to a good start in college.

Neli’s, one of our favorite restaurants, is making some changes in their popular menu. We will keep you posted on any new recipes. They still have the most delicious magic muffins, if you’re looking for a perfect housewarming gift for a hungry friend.

If you are dealing with cancer and its treatment, sign up to learn about the many classes offered at the Cancer Support Community

Los Angeles. They are located on La Grange and Bundy in West L.A. There are in-person and Zoom events. An example of what is offered includes Reiki Healing Experience, Saturday Easy Yoga, or a People Living with Cancer Support Group, to name a few. Contact them by calling 310-314-2555.

Have you ever needed to get something notarized and weren’t sure where to go to get help? You can contact Keith Randazzo at Keith@enotarynowNY.com. He is personable, kind, and efficient, and able to get your papers notarized online in a short time. Call him at 646-907-9207 if you have questions. It’s a wonderful service.

Be sure to go down to City Hall on Main Street to celebrate National Night Out on August 6 from 5 p.m.-8 p.m. with our SMPD.

Enjoy the rest of your Summer.

An Update From ERBA Markets

Cannabis and Hemp: Is There a Difference?



By Stephen Freedman
Many people believe that hemp and cannabis are derived from two different species of

plants. The truth is, they are just two different names for cannabis. While most scientists and industry professionals do not differentiate between the two names, the law definitely does. Legally speaking, the main difference between the two is the psychedelic component of the cannabis plant, THC.

Hemp is used primarily for industrial use, and has been used for various purposes for over 50,000 years. It can be used to manufacture paper, rope, textiles, clothing, biodegradable plastics, paint, insulation, biofuel, food, and animal feed.

Hemp has been categorized as cannabis that has less than 0.3 percent or less of THC by dry weight. This threshold was first put forward in a 1979 book titled *The Species Problem in Cannabis: Science and Semantics* by Ernest Small. Small admits there is no taxonomic difference between the two, which makes it difficult to distinguish hemp from cannabis. He proposes the 0.3 percent rule,

but acknowledges that this figure is purely arbitrary. This figure was then used in the legal definition of hemp, which is stated in the Agricultural Act of 2018, among other laws and statutes.

While the main distinction between cannabis and hemp is the THC percentage, the other difference is its legality. The 2018 Farm Bill made it legal to grow hemp or cannabis with less than 0.3 percent THC, and also federally legalized hemp-derived CBD.

Cannabis with over 0.3 percent THC remains illegal on the federal level, as well as any CBD derived from cannabis. However, both are legal medically, recreationally, or both, in a majority of states across the country.

Like most issues surrounding cannabis, more research and specific focus is needed to truly make commonsense laws and regulations regarding this plant. But, knowing the different variations and current restrictions can help in finding a specific product tailored to your need, whether it’s treating a chronic condition or getting high with friends.

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

Welcoming the Batson Family

(Continued from Page 5)

Communications.

When Tania and I met with the Church Relations Committee for our introductory meeting, we were delighted to reunite with old friends and meet new ones. Member Jack Fry reminded us that he was the Committee Chair when we departed in 2004. He remembered saying then this was not “Farewell,” but “Aloha.” In the Hawaiian language “aloha” is used to say

“hello” and “goodbye,” but it is much more than that.

The roots of the word mean “presence” (alo) and “breath” (ha). Aloha then is the sharing of one’s spirit with others, and therefore also a word for love and friendship. Jack was prescient as we now come full circle, returning to where this journey in ministry first began.

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