

THE SANTA MONICA STAR

Also Covering
The Greater
Westside

Volume XXV Number 5

Connecting You With Your Community

May 2026

Sharing the Wonderful Memories of Motherhood



Evan with Kim Dobkin



Jake, Enjoli Margolin, and Alexa



Lynn Koff and Lisa



Hodge, Kelly Patterson, and Mack

Sharing How Special Your Mother is



Ashli, Annie Banks, James, and Drew



Ashley, Julia Lombari, Grace, Ryan, and Jessica



Marlene Dobkin, Sophie, Emily Rose, and Julie Gilberg



Columnist Maureen Molé surrounded by her grandchildren.

When you think about one of your most valuable gifts to give, it is your time. Be sure to share it gen-

erously on Mother's Day with those you care about, and with all the other special people – family

and friends, who are a very important part of your life.

Coming Home: The Return to Pacific Palisades

By Richard Lombari

It's been more than a year since the fire changed everything. Like so many others, Julia and I found ourselves displaced, adjusting to a version of life we never expected. What we thought might be a temporary chapter stretched into months, and then into more than a year. Along the way, we learned to adapt, but we never stopped knowing – we would come back. Now, we are.

Coming home, however, doesn't mean returning to our home. Not yet. For now, we're moving to the Highlands, while our home will be rebuilt in Marquez Knolls. Julia continues to serve as the area representative for Marquez Knolls, and our connection to that neighborhood – and to the broader Palisades community – has never wavered. If anything, it has only deepened.

My own roles as 2nd Vice Commander of the Palisades American Legion and Vice Chair of the Pacific Palisades Long Term Recovery Group have kept me closely tied to the heart of the recovery effort. Both organizations are headquartered on La Cruz Drive, on either

side of the Post Office. That small stretch of road has become, in many ways, a center of gravity for rebuilding – not just structures, but lives.

For the past year, our day-to-day life has been in Marina del Rey, and we are grateful. It offered

(Continued on Page 10)

Where is Qin Stubis Greeting the Bust of Pearl S. Buck? (Answer on Page 4)



Brian, Debby Pearlman, and Evan



Jahshield, Kera Blades-Snell, and Jahrid



Natalie and Lisette Gold



Ruth Cohen and Nancy
More photos on Page 2

Take a Look Inside

What's Happening on the Westside?3	Entertaining With Ease7
Reflections From the East . . .4	Community Service9
Senior Care5	Paws and Claws10
The Pier Guy5	Historic Broadway Spotlight.10
	Planning Ahead11

Sharing the Wonderful Memories of Motherhood (Continued from Page 1)



Pamela and Char Lawrence



Noelle, Marissa, Maureen Molé, and Dana



Nina, Michelle, Simone Kleinert, and Lesley



Halley, Keaton and Qin Stubis

A Confirmation of Longtime Devotion

By Adaeze Nwanonyiri Rosenberg

Selflessness, unconditional love, and sacrifice are a few descriptive words that come to mind when I think of what a mother's qualities are. Your great-grandmother, aunt, niece, or sister-in-law can also be considered a mother. Life has taught me that time is of the essence, and I have been awakened to show a complete appreciation of being with my mother.

Gone are the days when I was younger and would roll my eyes due to the constant correction-filled lectures that were sternly verbalized to me by mother. I always felt that her tone could have been less harsh, but she was simply trying to educate me on subject matters that would help me for the future.

Why would I take all of our fundamental filled conversations as

an attack? Why would I respond to all her questions with a snappy attitude? I simply believed that I would have another chance to speak with her again.

Face to face. Now that we are 1,530 miles away, I have realized that the moments that I took for granted are no longer handed to me daily.

There were times when I desperately needed advice on monumental life changes. I would immediately pull out my cell phone and attempt to speak with my mother. Unfortunately, the call went directly to voicemail. The awkward voicemail cycle caused panic and discomfort.

Although I was unable to walk in her shoes when I was young, I responded, "Mama, I treated you as an enemy when all that you did was love me. Mama, I love you." It was imperative that she hear

those words.

This has caused me to be much more aware and present in cherishing every whisper, laughter, and breath that she shares with me during our long-distance conversations.

Why should Mother's Day be the only day that mothers are nationally celebrated? Every day should contain unstoppable hugs, laughter, caressing, intense stares, and saying everything that you need to say to the human being who represents selflessness, devotion, and love.

It is vital that we do not take our mothers for granted. Make it a point to record her voice when you are in her presence. Dare yourself to start a drawing a sketch of her face on a sheet of paper while she is daydreaming and staring at the skies.

How I wish for another chance to be gifted in accepting the stern and strict tone that was being relayed to me by my mother, even when it was frustrating. Replying with a simple smile is the ultimate gift to show that you are grateful to be in her presence. All of these experiences will become treasured memories.

These stored experiences will be invaluable for the future especially when you may not be able to touch your mother's face. To all the mothers in the world, know that you are irreplaceable and you are loved beyond words. Happy Mother's Day.



Adaeze with her mother, Nikki



Evan, Elise, Ilene Knebel, and Tyler

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The Santa Monica Star
1112 Montana Ave. #525
Santa Monica, CA 90403
424-581-6005
©2026
Website: www.thesantamonica.com
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Editor and Publisher: Diane Margolin
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What's Happening on the Westside

By Pamela Lawrence

• **Monday, May 4 - NEW! Library Playdate**

- A monthly event for children and their parents/caregivers to interact through play, connect with others, and access resources. Limited space, first come, first served. 11 a.m. Santa Monica Main Library, Youth Activity Room. For ages 0-3 years.

• **Wednesdays starting May 6 through end of August**

- Learn to Square Dance - Square dancing is a wonderful opportunity to move aerobically to music, have a lot of fun, and make new friends. Join a new square dance class with a live caller/instructor. 6:30 p.m.-7:45 p.m. Veterans Memorial Building, Multipurpose Room, Culver City. Dress casually and wear comfortable shoes. Singles and couples are welcome. The first class is free, thereafter classes are \$10 per person. The class is open to new students on May 6 and 13.

• **Saturday, May 9 - Celebrating 20 Years at Main Library!**

- The Main Library has been a central hub for learning and connection in Santa Monica since 2006. Celebrate its milestone 20th birthday with a reception and conversation with John Ruble, founding architect, and Kenneth Breisch, former Library Board member. 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Main Library, Central Courtyard. The panel will share stories, talk about the evolving needs of public library spaces, and explore what the future holds for Main

and Santa Monica Public Library. Co-produced with the Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library and Library Board.

• **Saturday, May 16 - Midlife with Dr. Tara Nowakhtar**

- Menopause and perimenopause specialist Dr. Tara Nowakhtar, OBGYN, presents a lecture on the changes that many women experience in midlife and how to manage them. Dr. Tara shares her expertise to demystify this underdiscussed stage of life and answer questions in a safe, nonjudgmental environment. 12 p.m.-1 p.m. Pico Branch Library, The Annex.

• **Sunday, May 17 - Celebrate the 10th Birthday of the Shotgun House!**

- Celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the Grand Opening of the Santa Monica Conservancy's Preservation Resource Center at the Shotgun House at a block-party-style event. The program includes telling of the story of the Shotgun House, and an award honoring a special individual whose efforts helped make it happen. 2 p.m.-4 p.m. 2520 Second St., Santa Monica. After the program, enjoy birthday cake, live music, and a chance to spend time with neighbors. A \$100 donation adds your name to the Shotgun House Birthday Card, on display for a full year. Live Music, Birthday Cake, and Community! Learn more at smconservancy.org /10th birthday. Free admission.

• **Saturday, May 23 - Hula Fun Fest**

- May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Celebrate with a craft and special Hawaiian dance performance by Hālau Hula 'O Hoaloha. 11 a.m.-Noon. Santa Monica Main Library, Central Courtyard. For families.

• **Saturday, May 30 - UCLA American Lung Cancer Screening Initiative Presentation** - The American Lung Cancer Screening Initiative promotes screening for people at high risk of lung cancer. This workshop raises awareness about early detection and encourages eligible individuals to get screened. 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Pico Library Branch, Annex.

• **Saturday, May 30 - Live at McCabe's Guitar Shop** - Discover the history of one of Santa Monica's most beloved landmarks. This special program features a

slideshow presentation of *Live at McCabe's Guitar Shop: Santa Monica's Legendary Music Venue*, which explores the shop's remarkable legacy, the music that has filled its stage, and the unique business model that has helped it thrive for decades. 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Pico Library Branch, Amphitheater. Musicians Mitch Greenhill and Fred Sokolow will share personal stories about McCabe's and perform live music during the event, bringing its vibrant history to life. A book sale and signing follow.

• **Saturday, May 30 - MIND OVER MATTER Mental Health & Wellness Festival** - Come learn about mental health resources, and enjoy games, raffles, panels, music, and more! Santa Monica 3rd Street Promenade. 12 p.m.-4 p.m. For more details, call 310-310-8066. All ages.

Thoughts From a Second-Time Father

Making A Difficult Decision



By Michael Margolin

Alexa will be a teenager this Summer. Since she was nine years old, she has been on the same club soccer

team. The organization that she played for ceased to exist. That meant that the 15 players we had, needed to find new soccer homes. In total, our girls went to five different new clubs. One in particular took about half of our team.

We thought Alexa had a chance to make that new team. She went to their tryouts and looked as good, if not better than most of the players out there. She was clearly good enough to be a consistent contributor. As it would turn out, we were reminded that even in youth sports there are politics. We received an email that said an offer to be on that team would not be immediately extended. It told us that she could keep trying, but that she might want to consider other clubs as well.

Should she keep trying out for that team where she would know most of the players? Or avoid potentially being led on, having feelings hurt by not making that team, or instead find other teams to try out for?

Enjoli and I had fairly strong opinions that Alexa should forget about that team and try to find a new team to join. There would have been a comfort level in continuing to try out for this team

because of the amount of players and coaches she knew. I told Alexa that if those decision-makers could not see what she had to offer, then that was their problem. And, with the idea of simply having some pride and self-respect, she did not need their approval to know her worth and how good of a player and teammate she is. Thankfully, she agreed with us.

She agreed with our opinion and with the idea that she was, in a sense, betting on herself to make a new team. I am very happy to say that Alexa did make a new team and is quite pleased with where she has ended up.

We were pretty straightforward with Alexa in how a lot of this journey played out and it worked in our favor. I also told Alexa it takes guts to be confident enough in yourself and your skill set to know that you can make a new team or get hired for a new job. As it would turn out, Alexa never had a doubt she would make a new team. And, maybe her parents didn't either. It is tough to relax as a parent until there are concrete landing spots for your kid. Be it sports, school, residences, or a job. A side note for me is that Alexa trusts that Enjoli and I will only ever have her best interests in mind. Even if the right decision is the toughest one.

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.

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Moms: Caring For Yourself Shapes Children, Too



By Cheryl Thode

I've been thinking a lot lately about what our kids actually see when they look at us mothers.

Not the obvious things. We all know they see the lunches packed, the schedules managed, the reminders, the rides, the constant doing. But beyond that, there are the quieter things. The way we move through our days. The way we treat ourselves.

Whether we mean to or not, we are showing them something about what it looks like to grow up.

For a long time, I have thought being a good mom meant giving everything. If I am honest, part of me still feels that pull. It is hard to shake. Growing up, I believed that was simply what mothers did. They gave and gave and did not stop to think about themselves in the process.

To be fair, a lot of motherhood does ask that of us. There are seasons where the needs are constant

and the days are long, and you are pulled in every direction. That part is real.

Still, I have started to notice something that gives me pause. My kids are watching how I handle all of it.

They notice when I rush through meals or skip them entirely. They notice when I say I am "fine" but am clearly running on empty. They notice when I do not sit down, do not rest, and do not make space for myself. Even if they do not have the words for it yet, they are learning from it.

That realization has shifted something for me.

I do not want them to grow up thinking that being an adult, especially a mom, means constantly running yourself into the ground. I do not want them to believe that taking care of everyone else comes at the expense of taking care of yourself. I definitely do not want them to carry that into their own lives one day.

So, I have been trying, in small ways, to do things differently. Not perfectly. Not dramatically. Just intentionally.

Sometimes that means actually sitting down to eat instead of picking at whatever is left on their plates. Sometimes it means stepping outside for a quick walk, even if there are a dozen other things that could be done. Sometimes it means saying out loud, "I need a minute," and allowing that to be enough.

What has surprised me is how quickly they accept it.

There is no scoreboard in their heads keeping track of whether I have done enough for them that day. They are not measuring my worth by how exhausted I am. If anything, they seem more at ease when I am calmer, more present, and a little more like myself. That may be the point.

Self-care has become one of those phrases that can feel over-used or out of reach, as if it requires a full day off or something elaborate to count. I am starting to think it is much simpler than that.

It is not about escaping your life. It is about staying in it in a way that includes you.

It is letting your kids see that

you are not just the person who keeps everything running. You are a person with needs, limits, and interests. You are someone who deserves care, too.

When they see that consistently, it gives them permission. Permission to listen to themselves. Permission to rest when they need to. Permission to understand that taking care of themselves is not something they earn after burn-out. It is something they are allowed to do all along.

This time of year, there is a lot of focus on celebrating moms, and that is a beautiful thing. Perhaps part of that celebration can also be a small shift in how we show up for ourselves.

Not in big unrealistic ways. Just in the quiet, everyday choices.

The truth is, our kids are not just learning from what we do for them. They are learning from how we live.

In truth, that may be the lesson that stays with them the longest.

Have a Happy Mother's Day and God Bless!

Reflections From The East

The Strength of Sisterhood - The Topic of My First Meeting as Speaker



By Qin Sun Stubis

Growing up, I relied on my mother and three small sisters for everything, from food and warmth to survive the Great Famine, to the

hopes and dreams that kept us going during the Cultural Revolution. Whether we sheltered ourselves in the tiny wooden hut my father built with his bare hands or our small concrete home later in life, we never had much and didn't know what tomorrow would bring. But we always had each other.

Sisterhood was what sustained us and helped us not just survive, but thrive. As the rest of the world shunned us as political pariahs after our father was imprisoned

for seven long years during the Cultural Revolution, we became our mother's only friends.

Ranging in age from two to ten, we learned to shoulder hardships with her, picking up twigs from local parks, finding unburnt charcoal briquettes from a nearby dumpster, and learning to cook over an open fire when she was sick in bed. There was nothing we couldn't do, even though we were only four "worthless" little girls, as my grandmother often called us.

Throughout my life, I always understood and appreciated the power of sisterhood. I knew we couldn't have made it a single day without each other, and we were always stronger together. After I left for America, my mother passed away, and my sisters' lives were scattered to different places

around the world. Sisterhood became more of a memory and a romantic notion of my past – until I rediscovered it through the power of writing.

Early this April, I was inducted into the National League of American Pen Women (NLAPW), a historic 129-year-old organization that has counted among its members such illustrious alumnae as Pearl S. Buck, Eudora Welty, Maya Angelou, Georgia O'Keefe, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosalyn Carter, and Hillary Clinton.

Founded in 1897 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's niece Marian Longfellow O'Donoghue, and journalists Margaret Sullivan Burke and Anna Sanborn Hamilton, the NLAPW is the oldest women's arts organization in the country. Its headquarters are in

the historical home of Robert Todd Lincoln in the heart of Washington, DC.

Surrounded by women writers, artists, and musicians, I was honored to be the keynote speaker during my first meeting. So, it was only proper that I focused my speech on the power of sisterhood. Through NLAPW, I have now gained 1,600 sisters in 80 chapters across the country – more than I could ever have imagined. And, I feel that I am finally home again.

To find out more about the National League of American Pen Women, go to www.NLAPW.org.

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.

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Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood

Keeping Up With Our Pico Neighbors



By Stacy McClendon

The Pico Neighborhood has always been a longstanding and deeply-rooted community in our city of Santa Monica.

That is no surprise to Raquel (Rocky) Perez as her family has deep roots here, and this is the place she was raised and has called home for years.

Rocky is a social worker who counsels students at Palisades High School by day, and poet who has penned a collection entitled *Confessions of a Chicana with a Broken Tongue*.

Her current focus is a special project entitled *The Soul of Santa Monica: Voices from the Pico Neighborhood* that will highlight stories of those who have lived in, grown up in, or remained connected to the Pico Neighborhood.

Her grandfather, Federico Perez, shared stories about the broader labor networks of Mexican workers during his years working between Mexico and the Santa Monica/Los Angeles areas beginning in 1965. He spoke about what was known as the Coyotera on Cloverfield Blvd. in Santa Monica, a system of temporary housing and gathering where workers stayed while seeking employment and connecting others to job opportunities in the region. Within these labor networks, he was also part of the flow of workers moving through hospitality jobs in the Los Angeles area. His work began as a dishwasher at a hotel in the Pacific Palisades area, and over time he worked his way up to becoming a hotel manager. Between 1965 and 1974, he had lived in various places due

to immigration enforcement pressures faced by immigrant workers during that time.

Her grandfather began traveling to the Santa Monica/Los Angeles areas in 1965 to support his family in Guadalajara. He later migrated more permanently in 1974 with her grandmother, Susana Perez, and their children, including her father, Adrian Perez.

Many of her family members have been living in the Pico Neighborhood and Santa Monica for 50 plus years. Her grandmother Susana still lives in the Pico Neighborhood, with many other family members living nearby.

Raquel is currently seeking anyone willing to share a story about the Pico Neighborhood. These stories can be shared in a variety of styles and writing mediums highlighting memories that are poignant and sweet, honor those who are no longer with us (but not forgotten), fun and funny, or about gentrification and more.

The goal of the project is to give the Pico Neighborhood a voice that shows what makes it such a special place to have lived in, grown up in, or remained connected to. This project will be an anchor that illuminates the heart and strength of the people in the community.

To get more information about this project, send in your submissions to www.rockyperez.com.

Please plan to bring out your family and friends to the soft launch at Locals' Night on the Santa Monica Pier the evening of Thursday, May 21. I'll be there!



Senior Care

Are You at Risk for Cataracts?



By Tim Petlin

Cataracts are one of the most common vision problems that come with aging, yet many people don't realize they're developing until their eyesight begins to blur.

With May recognized as Healthy Vision Month, now is a great time to learn how to protect your eyes.

A cataract happens when the eye's natural lens becomes cloudy, like looking through a foggy window. Vision may become blurry, dim, or hazy. Colors can appear faded, night driving may get harder, and lights may have halos around them.

Because cataracts usually develop slowly over several years, they can be easy to miss. While surgery is the only way to fully restore vision once a cataract forms, healthy habits and regular eye exams can help delay or reduce their impact.

Who Is Most at Risk?

Several factors can raise your risk of cataracts:

- Age: The biggest factor. Most adults over 60 have some lens clouding.
- Sun exposure: Years of UV light can damage the lens.
- Smoking: Tobacco toxins speed lens damage.
- Diabetes: High blood sugar can change the lens over time.
- Steroid use: Long-term use of corticosteroids may increase risk.

Cataracts can develop years later.

- Family history: Genetics may play a role.

How to Protect Your Eyes

Simple habits can help lower your risk:

- Wear sunglasses with 100% UV protection.
- Use safety glasses with tools or yard equipment.
- Quit smoking.
- Keep diabetes and blood pressure under control.
- Eat foods rich in antioxidants – such as leafy greens, eggs, fruits, vegetables, and nuts.
- Limit alcohol.
- Get regular dilated eye exams, especially after age 60.

Most adults over 60 should have an eye exam every one to two years, or more often if they have diabetes or other risk factors.

Medicare Coverage

This year, Medicare Part B helps cover cataract treatment after the deductible, with patients generally paying 20% of the cost.

Cataracts are common with age, but they don't have to steal your vision. If you've been putting off an eye exam, Healthy Vision Month is the perfect reminder to schedule one.

Tim Petlin is the owner of Right at Home West Los Angeles, an in-home care agency that helps seniors remain safe, comfortable, and independent in their own homes. For more information, contact Right at Home at www.rahwestla.com, at 310-313-0600, or email Tim at timp@rahwestla.com.

From the Santa Monica Pier

The Pier as "End of the Trail" for Route 66



By Jim Harris

If you haven't already seen the hype, this year the Pier is being celebrated as the "End of the Trail," meaning the end

of the great iconic symbol of Americana, the "Mother Road," Route 66. That great old highway celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, and at the Pier we're proud to be part of it. Worth noting is that the Pier is not the official end, but its celebrated end. The real terminus is at Lincoln and Olympic Boulevards, where it meets Highway 1.

But what a great ending point the Pier is, right? If you've traveled 2,448 miles from Chicago, what more perfect destination could there be? The Pier is that destination.

There are a year's worth of

celebrations dedicated to Route 66 and our role as its "end." Some people will even begin their journey here, traveling opposite the trail's traditional direction. So keep an eye out for Route 66 activities throughout the year. They will all be incredibly heartfelt, for that comes naturally with celebrants of "The Mother Road." As they celebrate the "End of the Trail," please help us celebrate with them. Their joy is infectious.

On a personal note, I want to offer a quick reminder: The Pier has never really been "the end," but instead "the destination."

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, and the author of the Pier's official history book, "Santa Monica Pier: America's Last Great Pleasure Pier."



Be sure to send photos of your family members with your dads and grandfathers for our June issue to smstarnewspaper@gmail.com with your name and phone number. Above, the Eddie Guerboian family.

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Strengthening Body and Mind: SMARTfit at the YMCA



By Araceli Alejandre

At the YMCA, we are committed to supporting the whole person – body, mind, and spirit – at every age. That’s why we’re proud to offer SMARTfit, an innovative program that combines physical activity with cognitive training to support overall well-being.

SMARTfit is especially impactful for our Active Aging community. As we age, maintaining brain health is just as important as staying physically active. Through interactive and engaging exercises, participants challenge both their movement and thinking, helping keep the mind sharp while improving coordination and strength.

This type of training can play an important role in supporting memory and overall cognitive function. SMARTfit helps improve memory and recall, strengthen focus and attention, and increase processing speed and reaction time. It also encourages problem-solving and decision-making in real time, which can translate into greater

confidence and independence in everyday activities. Over time, these combined benefits help build long-term brain health and resilience.

While SMARTfit is a powerful tool for older adults, its impact extends far beyond Active Aging. It is also used to support individuals recovering from traumatic brain injuries, strokes, and other neurological conditions by helping rebuild the connection between the brain and body.

SMARTfit is equally valuable for youth. Its gamelike, interactive design supports children’s learning by improving focus, coordination, and cognitive development in a fun and engaging way.

At the YMCA, SMARTfit reflects our commitment to inclusive innovative wellness. Whether someone is working on memory, recovering from injury, or building skills for the future, SMARTfit helps our community stay active, engaged, and thriving.

For anyone interested in learning more, you can contact Matthew Takahashi at matthew@ymcasm.org, or call 310-393-2721, ext. 116.

Teen Talk

Celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Month This May



By Michelle Li

I am Chinese American. My parents immigrated from China, and I was born right here in California.

Sometimes, I feel that I am more American than Chinese. I am not quite fond of the idea of consuming chicken feet and I speak Mandarin with the proficiency of a seven-year-old. At home, I speak a mixture of Chinese and English, opting to use English the majority of the time due to my weak vocabulary in Chinese. Still, despite the language gaps or food preferences, I am proud of my Chinese heritage.

May was chosen as AAPI month because it celebrates milestones. It is the month the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the U.S., and it is the month that the Transcontinental Railroad, which was built with significant assistance from Chinese immigrants, was finished. To me, this month is meant to celebrate these accomplishments but also to acknowledge how far Asian culture has come.

It is fascinating to see how ingrained Asian culture has become. Asian flavors can be seen everywhere, whether it is perfectly whisked matcha, crispy Spam musubi, or a steamy bowl of ramen.

New trends constantly go viral, such as Tanghulu (candied fruit

on a stick) or gua sha (using a smooth-edged tool to gently scrape the face).

Beyond food, Asian culture has influenced television and literature. Anime, (the Japanese version of animation), manga, (Japanese comics), and K-Dramas, (television series produced in South Korea), have all become increasingly popular in the states. It is awesome for me to see things that were once considered exotic, niche, or unique become widely accepted into the mainstream culture.

May, Asian American Pacific Islander Month (AAPI), is about celebrating my brand of being Asian. Being Asian doesn’t mean I have to be a particular stereotype. This month, I am celebrating that there are multiple ways to be AAPI, and every single one is valid.

There are plenty of ways to celebrate AAPI Month. You can head to Chinatown in Los Angeles at 418 Bamboo Lane from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 3 for a morning of good food and community. If you are looking to make an impact, join the AAPI Day of Service Clean-Up Event at 760 Westmoreland Ave. on May 16 at 10 a.m. to help the neighborhood shine. Finally, on May 22, at 8 p.m., a comedy show called *Rice Rice Baby* is being held at Bergamot Station Arts Center. No matter which event you choose, May is the perfect time to celebrate AAPI!

Michelle Li is a Santa Monica High School student.

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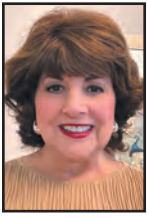
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Entertaining With Ease

Keeping Track of My Party Ideas



By Maureen Molé

Happy Mother's Day to all the moms. My mother, who was a fabulous hostess, taught me so much about entertaining at home. I dedicated my book, *The Book of Entertaining at Home*, to her.

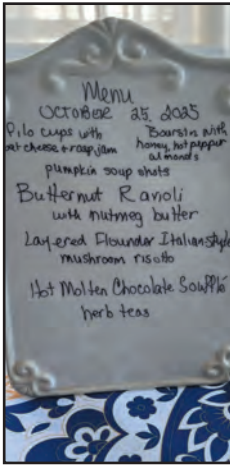
As I began to entertain in my own home, one memorable idea that my mother taught me is to keep a notebook with the details of every party that I host. It could be hard copy or digital. Sure, it sounds like a lot of work, but it is so very helpful and only takes a few minutes to jot down. I recorded the date, the guests, the menu, a few notes about the menu and what the guests liked, and what I wore. Sounds funny, right? Not really.

Before I kept the party book, a friend came to another dinner party at my home a few years later. She surprisingly remarked, "Oh, you made the same main dish the last time I was here." Of course, I didn't remember that, but I quickly recovered and said, "You enjoyed it so much last time, I thought I'd make it again for you." We do seem to repeat our best dinner party main dishes. I often review the book to get some good menu ideas and not repeat the past menus with the same guests. Also, it's like a diary of friends and family. I can look back and remember the cuisine of years ago.

Another great idea that my mother taught me is to write out the menu on an attractive piece of stationery or blank card. You could place it on a small easel or right on the table. Sure, this sounds a bit too formal these days. But I can tell you, everyone, and I mean everyone, loves the idea when they see it. I once attended a small sit-down dinner party, and I took a small portion of the first course, so I could save my appetite for the rest of the meal. However, there was no "rest of" the meal. So, it's such a effective idea to let the guests know what's coming. One Mother's Day, my daughter gave me a porcelain menu stand on which I can write the menu with a felt pen and erase it after the party. What a great gift!

To this day, I still keep the party book and still write the menu for dinners, lunches, brunches, and buffets. Thanks, Mom, and thanks to my daughter, Noelle. Great ideas.

Maureen Molé is the author of Entertaining at Home, a product spokesperson, and lecturer. Follow her on Instagram#Entertain_at_Home_with_Maureen, or email MaureenMole@optonline.net.



The Santa Monica Elks Lodge recently installed its new officers for the 2026-2027 Fraternal Year. The Elks have been a pillar in the Santa Monica Community since 1904, practicing the virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity. Pictured from left, Kevin Steck, Trustee; Irma Santiago, Esquire; Amber Spence, Lecturing Knight; Audrey O'Donnell, Trustee; Heather Jones, Assistant Inner Guard; Michelle VanLerberghe, Leading Knight; Ilene Knebel, Exalted Ruler; Lisette Gold, Loyal Knight; Gloria Steck, Secretary; Nicole Blute, Treasurer; Alan White, Chaplain; Gloria Halfacre, Trustee; and Deann White, Tiler.

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Parenting Talk

A New Way to Think About Parenting



By Frances Barry

You just pulled into your driveway from picking the kids up from school. There was silence from one kid, shouting and kicking from another, and you forgot to buy groceries. As you turn off the engine, you ask yourself, *what just happened?*

As a parent, you carry an ever-expanding backpack of worries – screen time, ultra-processed food, academic pressure, financial strain, community tensions, political and environmental anxiety – layered on top of daily tasks.

This is why I think a “toolbox” approach to parenting – stay calm, validate feelings, set consistent limits – all good advice, but not a complete solution. Rather than framing parenting as a toolbox, I'd like to suggest we, as a society, embrace “parenting” as a standing invitation to strengthen the parent-child bond.

It's the foundation of an approach I call **ORCA** - **O**bserve, **R**eflect, **C**onnect, and **A**ct. I'll explain with the example of the car ride above.

OBSERVE: The goal of observing is to describe the scene. My daughter has her phone in her hands, earbuds in, looking out the window. I asked her a question; she didn't respond. My son is shouting and kicking the back of my seat. I've asked him to stop three times.

REFLECT: Ask yourself how you feel about each part of the scene. Are you worried about your daughter's silence? Are you frustrated about your son's refusal to stop kicking your seat? Crucially, consider how much stress you were already carrying how much of your anger belongs to the school run, and how much hitched a ride from everything before it?

CONNECT: Now that you've

reflected on your own experience of the car ride, tune in to your children's experience. Remember, outside behavior is not always a reflection of a child's inner thoughts. How heavy were their backpacks when they stepped into the car? Later in the day, at a lighter moment, you might consider checking in with them about how their school day was.

ACT: ACT refers to any actions that strengthen your connection with your children. You might pull over for a few minutes of calm. Later, you may explore ways to lighten all your backpacks, such as getting more sleep, finding time to play together, or paying for help around the house.

ACT is for everyone – not just families, and not just the teachers and therapists who work closely with them. Parents are raising the next generation. It's a tremendous responsibility and one that we as a community should support.

ORCA also works well for co-parents. If you and your co-parent were both at the same “scene,” share your observations, reflections, and connections. This is a great opportunity for co-parents to help each other better understand themselves and their children.

Next month, we'll delve deeper into ORCA. I recommend parents become familiar with observing, reflecting, and connecting before taking action. This month, practice ORCA. It may help to use a journal. At month's end, read back. What have you learned?

Remember, you are the center of your children's world. How you show up, how you navigate hard moments, how you stay connected to yourself and the people you love – that is what they are observing and absorbing, and what they will carry with them.

Connection is the legacy that lasts.

Frances Barry is a licensed therapist.

Preparation is Key when Traveling



By Scott Andrews

Traveling with young children can be an adventure, but it requires thoughtful preparation. With a bit of planning, families can minimize stress and create memorable experiences for everyone.

One of the most important steps is organizing essentials in advance. Parents should pack a dedicated bag with diapers, wipes, snacks, a change of clothes, and any necessary medications. Having these items easily accessible during flights, car rides, or train trips can make a significant difference when unexpected situations arise. Be sure to check the airline's rules and regulations for gate-checking strollers and car seats for smoother travel.

Entertainment is another key consideration. Young children can become restless during long journeys, so bringing a variety of activities helps keep them engaged. Snacks, coloring books, small toys, storybooks, and downloaded shows on a tablet can provide hours of distraction. Rotating

activities throughout the trip can help maintain their interest.

Planning around a child's routine is also helpful. Whenever possible, schedule travel times to align with naps or bedtime. A well-rested child is generally happier and easier to manage during travel. Parents may also want to bring familiar comfort items such as a favorite blanket or stuffed animal to help children feel secure in unfamiliar environments.

Safety and flexibility should also guide travel decisions. Allow extra time at airports, rest stops, or attractions so children can move around and take breaks. Choosing family-friendly accommodations and researching child-friendly attractions at the destination can make the trip more enjoyable.

Finally, maintaining a positive mindset is essential. Travel with young children rarely goes exactly as planned, but patience and adaptability can turn challenges into meaningful family moments. With preparation, flexibility, and a sense of humor, traveling with young children can become a

(Continued on Page 9)

Community Service on the Westside

Santa Monica Elks Lodge Members Celebrate Memorial Day!



By Ilene Knebel

This past month the Santa Monica Elks Lodge held their annual installation of new officers. With over 70 guests in attendance, it was a wonderful gathering to celebrate the upcoming year and new officer corps. We are looking forward to a fun, fulfilling year and hope you will join us. (See Page 7).

What's coming up: The month of May has some exciting events including The Dan Rad Jazz Collective Big Band on May 17 and May 31. Join us for a contemporary jazz orchestra performance by world-class musicians from 2 p.m.-4 p.m. in a comfortable setting. Event is open to Elks in good standing and their guests. There is plenty of parking and it is ADA accessible. Cost is \$5 for non-

Elks/Free for Elks.

Mark your calendars for our Woodlawn Cemetery Memorial Day 2026 Programming. We have our annual flag placement on Saturday, May 23 at 11 a.m., Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday, May 25 at 10:30 a.m., and Flag Retreat at 3 p.m. on Monday, May 25. For more information on any of these events, call the Lodge office at 310-452-3557.

How you can get involved: We proudly support veterans, children's charities, and the underserved in our community. We invite you to visit our Lodge to tour our facilities. You can also view other amazing activities and find out about our event rental space on our website: <https://www.santamonicaelks-lodge906.org/home>. Call our office at 310-452-3557 to schedule a visit.

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



By J. Kingsley Fife

We Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions are very excited about and working hard in preparing for our big annual fundraising event.

It's a "Comedy Night" on Sunday, May 17, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., to be held at Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Avenue. It will feature the talents of the Crow Comedy Club. Six comedians will provide a fun evening of laughter and entertainment. Their names are Owen Smith, Jordan Conley, Scotty Cav, Esteban Gast, Jorge Lopez, and Karen Haber.

The bar will serve beer, nonalcoholic beverages, and a variety of snacks. General tickets are \$75

and VIP tickets are \$150, which include two drink tickets, sponsorship recognition, and VIP seating. Tickets may be purchased by scanning the QR code in the ad on Page 8.

We want all to know that 100% of the funds collected goes to helping our Club in our mission of supporting and assisting Westside public service organizations and non-profits such as Police Activities League, Santa Monica Boys & Girls Clubs, Fisher House, Santa Monica Salvation Army, Santa Monica YMCA, and providing scholarships to Santa Monica High School students.

Interested in learning more about Lionism? Be our guest at one of our dinner meetings. For further information, contact me at jkfife88@yahoo.com.

An Update From the SMBWC



By Patricia Webber

The latest edition of the Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club (SMBWC) newsletter announced our upcoming general election of Club officers. Members were invited to submit nominations to President Becky Upchurch by April 15. The list of nominees for each office was posted at the Club. The election will be held at the June Pass-the-Dish and business meeting. Nominees must be a Club member for at least two years.

Two board members of The General Federation of Women's Club attended the United Nations 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City recently. CSW70 convened at UN agencies, world governments, civil society organizations, and brought leaders to discuss the importance and commitment to advancing gender equality around the world. SMBWC members were reminded that the GFWC remains committed to advancing the rights

of women around the world.

Canasta anyone? This much-loved card game is enjoying renewed popularity. Although there are many, many versions of this game, the SMBWC canasta version is one of the easiest to learn. The Club hosts this every Monday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. SMBWC member Sue Price-McGough is the contact for questions. Please leave a message at 310-395-1308. Along with Sue, several other weekly players will also be happy to teach you.

Mahjong is also popular now and players meet at the club on Mondays for bridge, also. Again, for questions on joining for any of these activities please call 310-395-1308.

The Artists & Crafts & Conversation group meets each Tuesday from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. If you paint, draw, collage, embroider, sew, crochet, make jewelry, or create masterpieces in any of these activities, you are encouraged to bring your unfinished projects, or start a new one. Feel free to come and go as you like. For more information, contact Joan Temple at 310-395-1308.

Preparation is Key (Continued from Page 8)

rewarding and enriching experience for the whole family.

Scott Andrews, an experienced world traveler, is the Co-Host of The Cruise Dudes Podcast. You can listen to The

Cruise Dudes Podcast on major platforms, including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and YouTube.



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Make New Friends While Making a Difference in Our Community



By Mitchell Kraus

In a city as large and fast-moving as Los Angeles, it can be easy to feel disconnected. That is one of the great gifts of joining a Rotary club – it makes a big urban area feel smaller, warmer, and far more personal. At the Rotary Club of Santa Monica, members do not just attend our meetings.

They build real friendships, strengthen professional connections, and become part of a community that believes in service above self.

We often talk about the "three F's" of Rotary: friendship, fundraising, and fun. Those ideas are not slogans. They are part of what makes club life so meaningful. Friendships are built through shared experiences and common purpose. Fundraising allows members to pool their time, talent, and financial resources to support

important causes. And, fun comes naturally through the social side of the club – from happy hours and special events to the simple enjoyment of seeing familiar faces each week.

Our weekly lunches bring together people from different backgrounds and professions who share a desire to make a difference. Those regular gatherings create a sense of continuity and belonging that can be hard to find in a major metropolitan area. Beyond the lunches, members also roll up their sleeves for community service projects that put Rotary values into action.

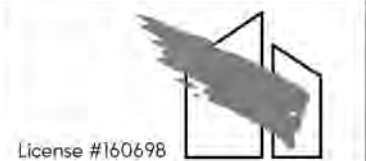
Rotary offers the chance to serve, to lead, and to belong. In a place as sprawling as Los Angeles, that kind of connection is more valuable than ever.

We meet most Fridays at the Hilton Hotel on 4th Street. Learn more at our website: www.rotaryclubofsantamonica.org.

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Lessons From the Fire (Continued from Page 1)

something we needed in that moment: stability and convenience. Within minutes, there are seven grocery stores. Errands are easy. Everything is accessible, efficient, predictable. After the chaos of the fire, that kind of order had real value. But convenience, as it turns out, is not the same as home.

Life along Admiralty Way comes with a constant soundtrack – traffic moving at all hours, punctuated by the frequent wail of fire truck sirens. Day and night, the noise rarely stops, and even inside there's a sense of motion that never quite settles. At the same time, the apartment complex next to us never truly goes dark. Bright exterior lighting spills into our space, turning what should be night into something closer to perpetual dusk.

Because what we missed most about the Palisades wasn't convenience – it was quiet. In the Highlands, the streets are still, and night actually feels like night. There's a calm that isn't manufactured or managed – it simply exists. And beyond that, there's something harder to define but impossible to ignore: connection. In the Palisades, you know people, you share experiences, and there's a familiarity that comes from years of living side by side. That sense of belonging doesn't disappear when you leave – but you feel its absence.

So yes, we are coming back with a deep sense of purpose, but also with clear eyes. This is not a return to the Palisades we left. Rebuilding is underway, but it is far

from complete. There will be construction, disruption, trucks, noise, and delays, simply part of the process.

Part of our decision is practical. Being closer to our property in Marquez Knolls matters. Rebuilding a home is not passive; it requires presence – meeting with contractors, coordinating with architects, navigating city processes, and making decisions in real time. Proximity allows us to move from waiting ... to participating.

But, the larger reason is simpler: we want to be here.

Marina del Rey offered ease. Pacific Palisades offers meaning. There may be fewer conveniences, errands may take longer, and life may be more complicated for a while, but it will also be more grounded, more connected, and more aligned with who we are and where we belong.

And, we are not alone in this. Across the Palisades, families are making similar decisions – returning not because it's easy, but because it matters. There is a shared understanding that what we are rebuilding is more than individual homes; it's a community.

Home, it turns out, isn't defined by convenience – it's defined by connection. While we are not yet returning to the home we lost, we are returning to the place that still feels like ours.

We're not just coming back – we're coming home.

Richard Lombardi is a Pacific Palisades resident, Real Estate Wealth International Realty, and 2nd Vice Commander of American Legion Post 283.

Historic Broadway Spotlight

Reading About Your Neighbors

By Michael Ano with
Carolyn Edwards

There is something quietly profound about a sentence like: "Sam Reed celebrated his birthday last month and cooked gumbo for a few friends." Or this: "Guests were served individual ice cream moldings shaped like baby booties."

These are the kinds of entries that filled the pages of *Glancing Magazine*, a monthly publication that circulated through Santa Monica in the 1950s, offering a portrait of community life that feels both distant and deeply familiar. These stories were not incidental. They were intentional. They reveal a community choosing to narrate itself through care, hospitality, and shared experience.

For many residents, especially within Santa Monica's Black community, the magazine functioned as more than entertainment. It was a form of recognition. To see your name in print, your home listed as a gathering place, or your recipe shared with neighbors was to be acknowledged as part of the fabric of the city.

There is a temptation to view these stories as simply nostalgic – signs of a simpler time. But that would miss what they truly reveal. *Glancing Magazine* was not merely documenting leisure or sentimentality. It was affirming dignity. The 1950s were not without struggle – far from it. These stories existed

alongside systemic inequities, exclusions, and tensions that shaped daily life in profound ways.

In a period when many mainstream narratives excluded or misrepresented Black life, this local publication offered a counter-archive: a space where everyday existence was worthy of record, celebration, and memory. People still want to feel seen by their neighbors. They still want to understand the texture of the place they live in – not just through data or development, but through stories of daily life.

What *Glancing Magazine* offers us now is a reminder of what storytelling can do when it is rooted in care. A city is not only its infrastructure. It is its stories. And in the quiet pages of *Glancing Magazine*, we are reminded that even the smallest stories – the ones that might otherwise be overlooked – are often the ones that hold everything together.

Oops, We Made an Error in our April Issue

Last month, we wrote a story about the Legacy of Lillian Hughley on Broadway. In the first sentence, Lillian's last name should have been Meshack, not Smith. She was from Smithville, Texas. We regret the error.

Paws and Claws

Why is Typhus a Public Health Concern?



By Dr. Frank
Lavac, MS, DVM

Q: What is Typhus and why is it a public health concern?

A: Typhus is a flea-borne illness that can cause serious infections in people. Typhus is caused by a microorganism called a Rickettsia. It can cause fevers, rash, and headaches in people and often requires hospitalization. There were 220 cases reported in L.A. County in 2025 with a recent

outbreak in Santa Monica. It is spread from pets or wildlife that carry the infected flea. It can be diagnosed with a blood test.

Prevent typhus by using proven flea control products on your pets. Keep pets away from stray animals and wildlife. Do not feed wild animals. Rats, opossums, and stray cats are common carriers of infected fleas.

Further information can be found on the websites for CDC and L.A. County Public Health.

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

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Planning Ahead

Creditor's Claims After a Death



By Lisa Alexander, Esq.

Twice in the last month I've had someone tell me they 'heard' (Chat GPT?) that after someone has died, if the credit card company does not file a claim against the estate within 120 days, then they don't have to pay the credit card debt.

That's only half true. When there is a Probate, there is an automatic 120-day "Creditor's Claims Period" that starts when the Court issues Letters Testamentary to the Executor. The Executor is required to give a notice to all the creditors the Executor knows about. The notice tells the creditor that a Probate has been started and the date by which a creditor's claim must be filed. A creditor must file a claim against the Estate before the end of the 120-day period. If no claim is filed, then after the end of the 120-day period, the creditor is cut off from making a claim. True so far.

Here is where it's not true. The automatic 120-day Creditor's Claims Period only applies to a Probate. In California, a Probate is only required when the total value of the deceased person's countable assets exceeds \$239,700. When the deceased person leaves assets with a total value of less than that amount, it is considered a "small estate," and there are other procedures available for the deceased

person's heirs and beneficiaries to claim ownership of the assets. In the case of a small estate, there won't be a Probate and the automatic 120-day Creditor's Claims Period won't apply.

Also, when all the deceased person's assets are held in a Trust, there won't be a Probate and again the automatic 120-day Creditor's Claims Period won't apply.

In addition to the 120-day Creditor's Claims Period, there is a one-year statute of limitations that applies in every case, whether there is a Probate, a small estate, or a Trust. If a person is legally liable based on a contract, a debt owed, or a harm or injury caused by the person, and if that person dies during the time when an action could be brought against that person based on the liability, then an action can still be brought against the person's estate so long as the action is commenced within one year of the date of death. After the one-year anniversary of the person's death, no action on the liability can be brought against the person's estate.

For credit card debt, the 120-day Creditor's Claims Period may or may not apply, depending on if there is a Probate. But the one-year statute of limitations will always apply.

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Santa Monica History Museum Names Anne Wallentine as Executive Director

The Santa Monica History Museum has named Anne Wallentine as its new Executive Director. Anne previously served as the museum's curator from 2023-2025, where she developed innovative exhibitions and community-focused programs highlighting the city's cultural and civic history.

Her notable contributions include the museum's first exhibition on LGBTQ+ history, a collaboration with the OUT-WORDS Archive; an interactive exhibition on the history of housing; and an exhibition on the city's treescape for Santa Monica's sesquicentennial. Anne's exhibitions thoughtfully connect history to contemporary issues, inviting visitors into active dialogue through oral histories and interactives – such as a 'game of housing' that illustrated the social inequities of housing history.

Beyond her curatorial work, Anne brings extensive leadership experience from senior roles at communications agencies, where she advised Fortune 500 companies and non-profits on narrative strategy and public engagement. Her appointment positions the museum to deepen its research mission while expanding its reach across Santa Monica's diverse communities.

"Anne combines deep historical knowledge with a profound commitment to community engagement," said Susan Potter, Museum President and interim Chair of the Museum's Board



Anne Wallentine is the new Executive Director at the Santa Monica History Museum.

of Directors. "Her knowledge of our institution, paired with her vision for participatory public history, makes her the ideal leader to guide the museum into its next chapter."

"I am honored to lead an institution dedicated to sharing the stories that shape Santa Monica's past and present," Anne said.

"The museum is a vital community resource, and I look forward to deepening our partnerships and expanding our programs to ensure every resident feels a connection to our shared history."

Come discover The Santa Monica History Museum which is open Thursday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum is closed Monday through Wednesday. Admission is \$5 for adults, while it is free for members, children under 17, students, seniors (65+), and military. For more information, call 310-395-2290.

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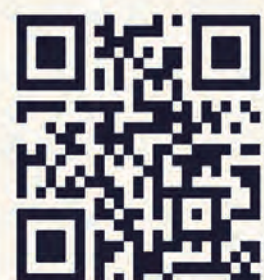
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