

THE SANTA MONICA STAR

*Also Covering
The Greater
Westside*

Volume XXV Number 6

Connecting You With Your Community

June 2026

How Do You Like to Celebrate Father's Day?



The Margolin men: Max, Dad Don, Michael, Keith Randazzo, and Jake



Eddie Guerboian, son Avo, and grandsons Lucas and Edward



Grandfather Jerry Dobkin with grandsons Evan, left, and Jonah



Hodge, Dad Hodge Patterson, and brother Mack



Dads Elad and Drew Dvash-Banks with twins, Aiden and Ethan



Jeff Jarow and his son Morgan



Elise and her Dad Kyle Knebel



Grandfather Richard Lombardi with grandson Leo

Celebrating the Pacific Palisades Annual 4th of July Parade on Sunset Boulevard

By Richard Lombardi

Even though the calendar has only just turned to June, anticipation for the Pacific Palisades Fourth of July Parade is already beginning to build.

In years past, it was not unusual to see lawn chairs quietly appear along Sunset Boulevard several days before the parade itself. Long before the marching bands arrived or the first flag waved down the parade route, the excitement had already begun.

For generations, the Pacific Palisades Fourth of July Parade has represented the very best of small-town America woven into the fabric of Los Angeles. Residents eagerly await the familiar sights each year – scouts carrying banners, local schools, youth sports organizations, classic cars, community groups, first responders, and the beloved Pacific Palisades Oom Pa Pa Band moving down Sunset Boulevard past cheering families and neighbors. For many residents, the parade is more than a holiday tradition. It is part of the identity of the Palisades itself.

This year, however, the anticipation feels different. In the months following the devastating Palisades

Fire, there were moments when many wondered what the future of the community would look like.

Thousands of residents were displaced. Homes were lost. Familiar streets changed almost overnight. Families scattered across Southern California while navigating insurance claims, temporary housing, debris removal, and the emotional process of rebuilding. In the aftermath of such profound disruption, community traditions suddenly take on a much deeper meaning.

Last year, because the Palisades could not host its traditional celebration, many beloved Palisadian groups participated in the Santa Monica Fourth of July Parade instead. Organizations including American Legion Post 283, Palisades YMCA, youth sports groups, and other community organizations marched together in a moving display of resilience and hometown pride.

For many Palisadians, seeing those familiar groups temporarily transplanted into Santa Monica was both emotional and reassuring. The community itself may have been displaced, but its spirit clearly was not.

(Continued on Page 10)

SMFD to Join Music Mends Minds Members and Musicians on June 11

Music Mends Minds (MMM), a Brentwood-based non-profit that provides free music programs for seniors living with neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and dementia will have a special joint event with the Santa Monica Fire Department. It will take place on June 11 at 2 p.m. at The Brentwood Presbyterian Church, 12000 San Vicente Blvd., corner of Bundy.

The Santa Monica Fire Department will arrive with a fire truck and ambulance to spend a Thursday afternoon dancing and singing with MMM's 5th Dementia band – a lively group of seniors who perform together weekly as part of MMM's music therapy programming.

The partnership grew out of an unexpected moment. When Santa Monica Fire Chief Matthew Hallock recently stopped by to wish 5th Dementia band member Francine a happy birthday, he stayed



Santa Monica Fire Department Chief Matt Hallock, stopped by to wish Francine a happy birthday. Left, Marc, Francine's son.

for the music, danced with MMM founder Carol Rosenstein, and left inspired. The upcoming event is the direct result of that visit.

"Music has an extraordinary ability to bring people together – and this event is proof of that," said Carol Rosenstein, founder of

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SMFD to Join Music Mends Minds Members and Musicians (Continued from Page 1)

Music Mends Minds. "We are so grateful to the Santa Monica Fire Department for their warmth and enthusiasm, and we can't wait to share this moment with our community."

Research shows that music engages areas of the brain that remain responsive even in advanced

stages of dementia, supporting memory, mood, and social connection. MMM's bands and drum circles provide seniors with cognitive conditions a joyful, evidence-based outlet for creative expression and community.

Music Mends Minds is a non-profit that strives to foster world-

wide communities among afflicted individuals and their families, friends, volunteers, and caregivers, all of whom can thrive on socialization and music-making. They create musical support groups for individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia, Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury,

PTSD, and other neurological disorders. This support has taken the form of 50 bands, drum circles, and other music groups in over 10 countries. Their goal is to restore the rhythm of life, reconnecting and empowering all individuals and communities suffering from neurodegenerative diseases and more through music.

For more information, visit www.musicmendsminds.org.

Orchestra Santa Monica Closes Their Season June 27

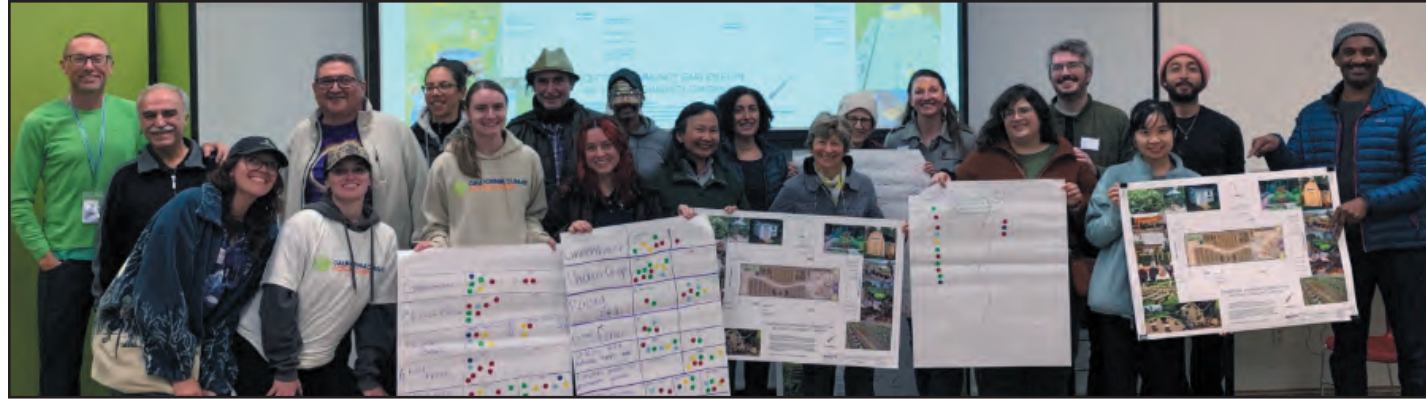
You are invited to reserve your free tickets for an OSM concert with Barber, Korngold, and Hanson music on the program. From Barber's intensity and Korngold's cinematic brilliance to Hanson's sweeping American romanticism, this season finale promises an evening of unforgettable music and emotion. They hope you'll join them as they celebrate the conclusion of another wonderful season together!

The program will be at the Broad Stage, 1310 11th St. Email the OSM office at office@OrchestraSantaMonica.com for details.



Happy June Birthdays to:

- David Trachtenberg,
- Michael Margolin,
- Frances McDormand,
- Wendy Navin, Sharon Gavin,
- David Rosenfeld, Rick Mateus,
- Rose Mann, Chris Baca,
- Brandon Murray,
- John Dravillas, Pat Johnston,
- Eric Jorgensborg,
- Bernadette Lucier,
- Steve Rosell, Clara Wright,
- Rufus Baker, Julia Abbott,
- Jeff Jarow, Charles Haskell,
- Elise Martin, Matt Lehman,
- Skip Rimer, Ruth Sperber,
- Toby Fulp, Maurice Jordan,
- Johanna Jenkins,
- Jane Franz, Kevin Erhart,
- Kalina Silverman,
- and Andy Gavin



Community members at a 19th Street Community Garden steering committee meeting holding up designs and feedback on the new garden space in December 2024.

Grand Opening of the 19th Street Community Garden

By Sarah Caso, California Climate Action Corps Fellow

To celebrate the opening of Santa Monica's seventh community garden, a block party will be held on 19th Street between Delaware and Pico on June 14, from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. The event is open to all and will have activities for all ages.

This garden is not only for the community, but designed by the community. The 8,000-square-foot property that the garden now occupies sat vacant for over 20 years. In 2023, the Community Garden Program began holding

meetings with neighbors of the property to create a vision for a garden in the space. Over the last few years, numerous workshops were held where participants worked on designing the space. Now, in 2026, the construction of the garden space is complete, and the block party is being held as the official opening of the garden to the public.

The party will showcase several local food vendors, who will provide small bites featuring fresh produce from the community garden, alongside food trucks with food for purchase. There will be

booths featuring a number of local organizations, including Grow Wild, the Great Park Coalition, Growing Hope Gardens, and activities including creating little planters from newspaper for seed starting.

There will also be a number of talks from master gardeners, a Ballet Folklorico performance, a game corner with mega size Jenga and Connect 4, and seed balls to craft. For a moment of peace, participate in a garden tour or join in on a sound bath.

To learn more about this event and others put on by the Community Garden Program, visit santamonica.gov/events.

One More Grandfather



Harmon Sieff with his grandson and new granddaughter.



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What's Happening on the Westside

Poker Night on June 27 to Benefit Underserved Deaf Children

No Limits announces its Poker Night, which will take place on Saturday, June 27 at the Santa Monica Bay Womans Club on 4th Street, below Wilshire Blvd. Proceeds from the event will benefit hundreds of underserved deaf children and their families in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties by providing essential services at no cost.

Celebrating 30 years, No Limits, a national organization, established its headquarters in Los Angeles and later expanded with its

Oxnard Educational Center over ten years ago.

The No Limits Poker Night fundraiser is spearheaded by No Limits board member Chad Gordon. The goal is to raise awareness and funds for the No Limits Educational Centers in Culver City and Oxnard. This is thanks to the vision and the incredible generosity of their wonderful poker committee, including members Judi Barker, Terri Decker, Donna Gentry, Chad Gordon, and Leigh Ann Michaels, and our community.

The event kicks off with a delicious dinner and bar service, followed by an exciting game of poker run by The Poker People. Players will get the opportunity to play, compete for great prizes, and enjoy the excitement of the game.

To get involved in the No Limits Poker Night, please visit Poker-WithNoLimits.com. Contact Destiny Golden at 310-280-0878, or destiny@nolimitsfordeafchildren.org for more details.



Discover More About Women's Health

Board-certified endocrinologist Dr. Gillian Goddard will be at Zibby's Bookshop at 1213 Montana Avenue on June 11 from 6 p.m.-7 p.m., discussing her new book, *The Hormone Loop*. It breaks down hormonal health at every stage of a woman's life.

Dr. Goddard is an adjunct assistant professor of medicine at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine. With more than 15 years of clinical experience, she is an expert in women's hormonal and metabolic health, with deep expertise across today's most talked-about wellness and medical topics.

She will be in conversation with best-selling author Cara Natterson discussing menopause, hormone transitions across the lifespan,

(Continued on Page 5)

Discover the Wonder of Plays Through No Limits Theater

No Limits was founded in 1996 by Dr. Michelle Christie. With what began in her one-bedroom apartment, the program has now grown into a powerful national model with Educational Centers in Los Angeles, Oxnard, and 63 satellite sites.

She is also the author of two books, including *Silent NO MORE: Life Stories by Individuals with Hearing Loss*, which became a powerful theater documentary

performed on renowned stages throughout the country, sharing real stories of resilience, courage, and advocacy.

Since its very first theater production in 1996, No Limits has created more than 275 original productions, using the power of the arts to help deaf children build communication skills, confidence, and leadership. That journey from a small community performance to a sold-out performance at Carne-

gie Hall demonstrates what is possible when deaf children are given access to opportunity, education, and community.

Reagan Library to Host "America 250" Exhibition Reflecting the American Story

A once-in-a-generation exhibition, on display through September 20 at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation (RRPF) in Simi Valley, serves as both a reflection and a celebration of America's story. In this exhibition, the American story is told through artwork, letters,

and historical objects, some displayed on the West Coast for the very first time. Highlights include:

- Paintings from John Trumbull's Revolutionary Series, including "The Declaration of Independence";

(Continued on Page 5)

Thoughts From a Second-Time Father

Being a Role Model for My Kids



By Michael Margolin

There are other milestones this year for our family as I am lucky enough to celebrate my thirteenth

Father's Day. Jake has reached double digits and Alexa will be a teenager next month. Along with that, Enjoli and I will celebrate our fifteenth wedding anniversary several weeks after Father's Day. So it has been just about 13 years since I first looked at Alexa's little fingers and little toes, and 10 since I did the same with Jake. I have wondered, and still do, where those little feet will take them and whose hands they will shake with those fingers.

A huge part of my job as a dad is to teach Alexa and Jake how to make good decisions and how to surround themselves with good people. So that those same appendages are generally pointed in the right direction. Alexa and I were talking about making mistakes the other day. And though there can certainly be much more to it, I want her to think about consequences before she makes decisions, and also learn from mistakes. Because certain choices can and will positively and negatively impact your life. I do not expect to make decisions all of the

time for my kids but I want them to know how to determine the best outcome when they are faced with future situations.

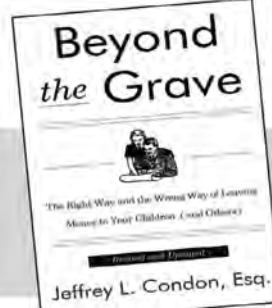
I am also a firm believer that leading by example can be an excellent teacher. I would hope that Alexa knows how she should be treated by a spouse by watching the way her father loves and respects her mother. The same would go for Jake in how he should treat any future partner.

I am lucky enough to have seen a role model in action. I saw my dad love, listen to, and support my stepmom – in the best of times and in life's most absolutely challenging times. There were times that are almost impossible to know about unless you have lived through them yourself. And, never was there a complaint. Whether he knows it or not, he set an incredible example.

Those examples have taught me how to be a hardworking, honest, and loving family man. And, for that I will always be thankful. Happy Father's Day to my dad Don, and all the other great dads out there.

Mike Margolin has been writing for us since his daughter Alexa was born 12 years ago and son, Jake, 10 years ago. He also coaches each child's soccer team.

Happy 15th Anniversary to Enjoli and Michael!



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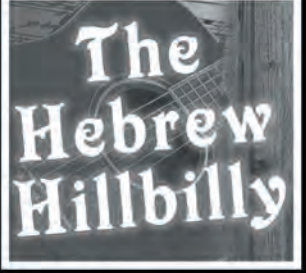


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Keeping Reading, Math, and Wonder Alive This Summer



By Cheryl Thode

By the time June rolls around, I am running on fumes. We are tired of alarm clocks, homework battles, rushed mornings, packing lunches,

and trying to keep everyone on schedule. Summer feels like a collective exhale for the entire family.

If you are like I am, somewhere between the excitement of Summer camps and beach days is also that little voice wondering, "How do I keep my kids engaged this Summer without turning our house into a classroom?"

I have been reading more lately about the "Summer slide," which is the very real learning loss many children experience over the long break, especially in reading and math. And honestly, it makes sense. During the school year our children are constantly reading, writing, solving problems, listening, discussing, and thinking critically all day long. Then Summer hits, and suddenly many kids spend hours each day on tablets, phones, gaming systems, or watching videos.

I do not say that with judgment. Believe me, I understand the temptation. Sometimes screens are the easiest option, especially when parents are working, juggling multiple kids, or simply trying to survive Summer. But I also think many of us feel that tension of wanting Summer to be fun and relaxing without allowing our children to completely disengage mentally for three months.

What I have learned is that preventing the Summer slide does not necessarily mean forcing worksheets and tutoring all summer long. In fact, I think most kids would shut down quickly if Summer started feeling too much like school.

What seems to work better – at least in my house – is finding ways to keep curiosity alive naturally. For reading, I have found that giving children choices matters a lot. During the school year, kids are often told what they have to read. Summer can be a chance to let them rediscover reading for enjoyment. I have stopped worrying so much about whether a book is "challenging enough" and started focusing more on whether my kids actually want to pick it up again the next day.

Library visits are a Summer staple. And honestly, it is not even always about the books. It is the process of wandering the shelves, discovering something new, participating in Summer reading programs, and creating space where reading simply feels normal and enjoyable.

Library visits are a Summer staple. And honestly, it is not even always about the books. It is the process of wandering the shelves, discovering something new, participating in Summer reading programs, and creating space where reading simply feels normal and enjoyable.

Math is a little harder to disguise, but I have realized how much of it already exists in everyday life when we slow down enough to include our children. Cooking together teaches measurement and fractions. Planning a day trip teaches budgeting and time management. Even having kids help compare prices at the grocery store turns into practical problem solving.

One thing I am personally trying to work on this Summer is not doing everything for my children simply because it is faster. It takes longer to let kids measure ingredients, count money, map directions, or help plan activities. But those are the moments where real learning often happens.

And, then there is science, which I think children are naturally drawn to when they are given the opportunity to explore, instead of constantly being entertained. Kids are wired to ask questions. Why does this float? Why do ants move this way? Why does the moon look different tonight? I sometimes think our children do not need more information as much as they need more opportunities to wonder.

This Summer, I am challenging myself to tap into my own inner child a little more. Instead of defaulting to screens every time when someone says, "I'm bored," I

want to come up with more family outings and activities that keep my kids creative, curious, and engaged. Not because I am trying to create some picture-perfect Summer, but because I genuinely think these moments matter.

Bike rides, beach walks, library trips, backyard games, cooking together, gardening, museums, camping, building something messy in the garage – these activities do more than prevent the Summer slide. They build confidence, conversation, creativity, and some pretty incredible family memories along the way.

Honestly, I am always looking for new ideas from other parents too. Because if there is one thing I have learned, it is that most of us are just trying to find the balance between giving our children a Summer that feels restful while also making sure they continue growing along the way.

This Summer, I challenge you to give yourself permission, time, and space to intentionally engage your children in the reading, math, and science naturally built into everyday Summer activities. It will not only help keep those foundational subjects alive in your children, but it will also build lasting memories, laughter, and connection for the entire family. God Bless!

Reflections From The East

Every Day Should Be World Hunger Day



By Qin Sun Stubis

Few Americans understand the torture of hunger these days. On the contrary, we are having the opposite problem of eating

too much, lured by ever-present food commercials and aromas escaping from eateries conveniently located all over our streets. At home, a well-stocked fridge acts more like a temptress, ready to offer us food even when we are not hungry.

Those who are starving could

only wish they had America's problem. In fact, hundreds of millions of people are unable to secure enough food for themselves every day. They come in all ages, genders, and colors, trying to survive wars, political turmoil, natural disasters, and more.

These people battle drought and flood or other events they cannot predict and have no control over. They are our earthly brothers and sisters, perpetually living in fear with empty stomachs. And, if we look more closely, we are bound to find plenty of our own down-and-out countrymen starving in the

shadows of our tall, magnificent skyscrapers as well.

Starvation is one of the worst challenges humans have to face, for without sustenance, we simply cannot live. I was born during the Great Famine in China in the early 1960s when millions of people lost their lives because of food deprivation. Luckily, I survived to tell the tale.

I will never forget how, as a child, I had to go to bed while the sun was still up way above the horizon, having eaten only a small bowl of plain watery rice. My mother told me that when I fell

asleep, I would not feel hungry anymore. Sometimes, I would wake up in the middle of the night wishing for food while I listened to my stomach making noisy complaints. I curled myself into a ball dreaming about my favorite foods.

Childhood hunger has forged my lifelong determination not to waste food. These days, I have a habit of carrying Ziploc bags in my purse just in case I need to take uneaten portions home. Having experienced the trauma of starvation, I cannot take my bountiful life

(Continued on Page 5)

Mini Message Bulletin Board



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Reagan Library to Host “America 250” Exhibition

(Continued from Page 3)

- Benedict Arnold’s Oath of Allegiance to the United States;
- Alexander Hamilton’s gold mourning ring containing a lock of George Washington’s hair (only on display through June 19, 2026);
- George Washington’s surveyor tools and glasses (only on display through June 19, 2026);
- An American flag that was flown on the Apollo 11 mission;
- William J. Stone’s engraving of the Declaration of Independence; and many more.



A cannon used during the Battle of Gettysburg.



Revolutionary War uniform of Jonathan Bancroft of Massachusetts

Beyond this exhibition, RRPFI is honoring America’s historic birthday through a year-long series of events. This includes specialized Reagan Education programming focused on the founding, an expanded annual Fourth of July celebration, and a commemorative America 250 Concert in partnership with New West Symphony on June 27.

To learn more about the exhibition and purchase tickets, visit the Reagan Library website at ReaganFoundation.org/A250.

Michael Szydluk Graduates From UC Berkeley



Michael Szydluk, second from left, welcomed his aunt Susan Potter, left, and right, his uncle Pat and cousin Bryan who flew to UC Berkeley to attend his graduation last month. Michael received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Media Studies. All the best to Michael!

Senior Care

The Emotional Challenges of Older Cancer Survivors



By Tim Petlin

When cancer treatment ends, many people expect relief and celebration. While that is often true, surviving

cancer is not simply a finish line, it can bring emotional and personal challenges that continue long after treatment.

Each year, the first Sunday in June marks National Cancer Survivors Day, a time to recognize those living with a history of cancer and acknowledge the struggles many survivors still face. Beyond medical bills and follow-up appointments, cancer survivors often face:

- Mental and emotional struggles
- Changes in personal relationships
- Fear that cancer may return

For older adults, these challenges may go unspoken. Many seniors grew up believing they should “push through” feelings of sadness or anxiety rather than ask for help. But emotional struggles after cancer are real and deserve attention.

• Emotional Effects After Treatment - For seniors, cancer recovery often overlaps with other life changes such as retirement, physical limitations, grief, or changing family roles.

Many older survivors experience anxiety or sadness after treatment ends. Some struggle with survivor’s guilt, wondering why they survived when friends or loved ones did not.

Treatment can also have lasting effects. Chemotherapy may cause memory problems or “chemo

brain,” while hormone therapies for some cancers can affect mood and contribute to depression.

• Relationship Changes - Cancer impacts more than the person diagnosed. It affects families and relationships, too.

Spouses or partners often become caregivers during treatment, and returning to normal life afterward may not be easy. Adult children may become overly protective as parents try to regain independence.

Friendships can shift as well. Some relationships grow stronger, while others fade, leaving older survivors feeling isolated.

• Fear of Recurrence - One of the most common struggles among survivors is fear that cancer will return. Follow-up scans, doctor visits, or even small health concerns can trigger anxiety.

This fear is understandable and common. Counseling, support groups, mindfulness practices, and open conversations with doctors can help survivors cope.

• Reaching Out for Help - Older cancer survivors experiencing depression, anxiety, relationship stress, or fear of recurrence should speak with their doctor. Support groups and mental health professionals who specialize in cancer survivorship can make a meaningful difference.

For loved ones, patience matters. The cancer journey does not always end when treatment does ... and emotional healing can take time.

Contact Right at Home at 310-313-0600, or email Tim at timp@rahwestla.com.

Congratulations to Halley Stubis



Halley Stubis, daughter of our columnist, Qin Sun Stubis, received a Masters in Museum Studies last month from Johns Hopkins Univer-



sity in Baltimore. Watching in the 95 degree heat were her aunt Ping, dad Mark, and mom Qin.

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OCTOBER 4TH

Discover More About Women’s Health
(Continued from Page 3)

thyroid health, cortisol and stress-related weight gain, metabolic health, and hair loss in aging women.

Dr. Goddard is also the voice

behind the popular *The Savvy Patient* newsletter (formerly *Hot Flash*), where she shares accessible, evidence-based guidance on women’s health.

Every Day *(Continued from Page 4)*

for granted.

World Hunger Day may pass by us quietly each year, but our awareness of starvation should not. For as long as others suffer without enough to eat, every day remains World Hunger Day.

You can learn more how to be part of the global initiative to battle hunger at www.WorldHunger-Year.org.

You can contact me at QStubis@gmail.com, or visit me at www.QinSunStubis.com.

Author of “Once Our Lives” Columnist for *The Santa Monica Star* and *Diplomatic Watch* Member, *The National League of American Pen Women*



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Santa Monica Family YMCA Opens Enrollment for 2026–2027 After-School Enrichment Program



By Araceli Alejandre

As families begin planning for the upcoming school year, the Santa Monica Family YMCA is opening enrollment for its 2026–2027 After-School Enrichment Program, serving students in Transitional Kindergarten through 5th grade across the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. The program supports families from Roosevelt, Franklin, McKinley, SMASH, Will Rogers, Grant, and Edison Language Academy by providing a safe and engaging environment for children after the school day ends. Care is available from school dismissal until 6 p.m., with optional transportation from participating schools to the YMCA offered for an additional fee.

Designed to balance academics, recreation, and creativity, the YMCA's after-school program gives students the opportunity to complete homework, enjoy healthy

snacks, and participate in outdoor play and group activities each afternoon. The program also places a strong emphasis on STEAM education by incorporating science, technology, engineering, art, and math into hands-on activities that encourage collaboration and problem-solving.

In addition to daily enrichment activities, students may also participate in a music program offered through a partnership with Music for Young Minds, giving children the chance to explore music education in a fun and supportive setting.

At the YMCA, providing working families with an affordable, yet reliable option for childcare is our priority. We are committed to providing a safe place for kids to learn, grow, and thrive!

Enrollment is now open for the 2026–2027 school year, and space is expected to fill quickly as families prepare for the Fall semester. Get more information by visiting www.ymcasm.org.

Teen Talk

Good Gift Ideas For Our Fathers



By Michelle Li

Father's Day falls on June 21 this year. This guide is perfect for teens struggling to find the right gift for their dads. Sometimes the budget is hard to follow, especially if you want to get a "grown up" gift. The secret to the perfect gift is to recognize the work that fathers do. Dads spend most of their time fixing things around the house, the WiFi router, and helping with driving lessons, so the most important thing is to make sure Dads feel that their work is appreciated.

A good gift can be an upgrade gift. You can replace a chipped mug, or replace an old wallet. This shows that you care and know what your Dad uses and needs. It shows that you have been paying attention to his routine and makes your Dad feel seen and respected. If you have a thin wallet, you can

consider a service gift. You can offer to wash his car, or give him a massage. Sometimes, acts of service can be more valuable to Dads than an expensive bottle of cologne.

Finally, quality time is also a good gift. As children get older, they lose their connection with their parents because they get busier and have plenty of outside activities. Spending time with family becomes rare and precious. Sometimes, watching your Dad's favorite movie with him and bringing him his favorite snack, or going on a hike is the perfect gift to make the day special. A handwritten note can also be special – especially if you list all your favorite memories with your Dad. Helping your Dad feel recognized and important is how you can give him a good Father's Day.

Michelle Li is a Santa Monica High School student.

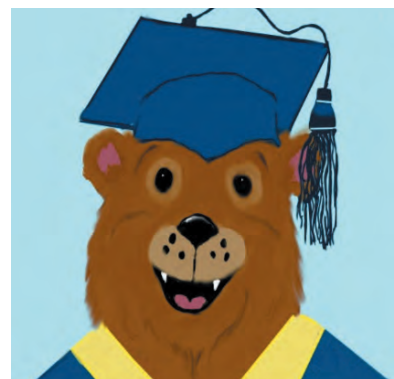
Congratulations to Santa Monica High Graduates



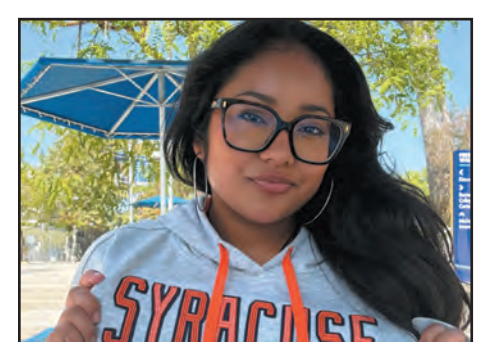
Jasmine Martinez will study Biological Engineering at UCSD.



Cameron Quon is planning to attend UCSD to study biochemistry.



-Joe Analco



Iris Cortez is heading to Syracuse University to study psychology.

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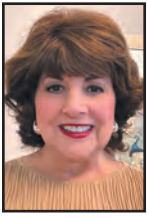
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Entertaining With Ease

Get Ready to Celebrate in June!



By Maureen Molé

June is party month! Graduations, bridal showers, weddings, first communions, confirmations, and various birthday

parties. Of course, hosting these events is a big task.

Invitations must be sent, hosts must decide on the location of the party, food to be served, will there be entertainment, decorations, and many other details. Here are a few tips to help make your party a success:

- When communicating the invitation via invite, phone, or written, be sure to let the guests know if the party is indoors or outdoors.
- Always give the guests an idea of food that will be served such as outdoor buffet, sit-down lunch, appetizers and desserts, or pizza and birthday cake.
- Be sure to discuss the chronology of the party with the guest of honor. Whether it is a birthday party for a preschooler, school-age child, teenager, or adult. They may very well have a specific plan in mind and may get very upset if the party does not follow their idea.

For children, what will be first – games and playtime, or the birthday cake. Will there be music and dancing, and will gifts be opened or not? I've seen many children have tantrums at parties, and my own children have told me that "the birthday girl" cried throughout the party.

- To create your own entertainment, you might ask each guest to prepare a toast or share a memory of the guest of honor. This can be a show itself and lots of fun. It goes well at birthday parties, bar mitzvahs, bat mitzvahs, and graduations. Of course, if any guest does not want to participate, that's fine. At the party, the host can distribute blank index cards and guests write their name on the card if they want to participate in the toast. Cards are collected and one by one, each person takes a turn to speak about the guest of honor.

- At bridal and baby showers, guests can speak of their best advice for success.

- If the party is outdoors, be sure to have a Plan B location if it rains.

- Situate the bar in a location that can accommodate the most guests.

- Don't wait longer than one hour to serve food.

- Guests love to leave with a "goodie bag." I mean adults as well as children, so be creative, even if it's a cellophane bag of candy, or bagel or muffin for the next morning's breakfast.

It's June, so let the fun begin.

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.

From the Santa Monica Pier

Now What? Pier 360 Beach Festival, That's What!



By Jim Harris

If you've been to our Pier 360 Beach Festival before, you already know – it's a grand affair. We're talking all-day beach volleyball competitions, paddleboard races, swim races, lifeguard competitions, skateboarding, roller-skating, a strongman competition, live music, Polynesian dancing, incredible food, and a pop-up Museum of Beach Culture. It is our annual "WOW" kickoff to Summer, and trust me, you don't want to miss it.

This event celebrates Santa Monica's singular role in creating and curating Southern California's beach culture. There's truly nothing else like it.

Looking back at how Pier 360 came to be still makes me smile. In 2009, the Pier was celebrating its first 100 years with a full-year of incredible events. When it was all over, we looked at each other and thought, "Now what?"

Well, standup paddleboarding was the latest craze, so in June 2010 we staged a paddleboard race, and it was beautifully grassroots, right down to one of the Pier's business owners showing up with a giant urn of home-made coffee.

A handful of retired Santa Monica lifeguards came out that day,

and two of them nudged us about an antique lifeguard dory sitting in a storage room on the Pier. A dory isn't a paddleboard, so we hadn't thought much about it, but we opened those doors, and the room was immediately packed. We knew right then – this event had the potential to be something much bigger.

In 2011, we added swim races and a pop-up museum celebrating Santa Monica's beach and lifeguard history. Volleyball legend Sinjin Smith showed up. The following year brought a beach volleyball competition. Then a half-pipe for skateboarders. Then a roller-skating rink. And last year, we added the spectacular strongman competition – a fitting nod to Santa Monica as home of the original Muscle Beach.

Today, Pier 360 is two amazing days on the last weekend in June that celebrate this city like no other event can. It all started because we dared to answer the question, "Now what?" and the answer just keeps getting better. We'll see you there.

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."

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Parenting Talk

Let Everyday Moments Build Lasting Bonds



By Frances Barry

Waiting in the school pickup line, your mind is jumping from one task to the next – dinner menus, doctor appointments, work deadlines, Summer camp options. When your child opens the car door, your mind instantly pivots to what they need to get done. Your first words are, "Did you finish your homework?" because the smooth evening you were hoping for may vanish if the answer is "no."

Without realizing it, the unspoken pressure to be productive has seeped into many of our most important relationships. The time parents spend with children has become another thing to optimize. Connection gets crowded out – not by indifference, not for lack of love, but by the relentless pull of the to-do list.

In last month's column, I shared how I view parenting as the daily practice of nurturing the relationship between parent and child. As a framework for myself, I apply a philosophy I call ORCA – Observe, Reflect, Connect, and Act. Connection can be the hardest to sustain because we tend to over-complicate it, waiting for the perfect moment or the grand gesture. But opportunities for connection can present themselves in small moments throughout the day.

The next time you pick your child up from school, experiment with just saying, "Hi" as the car door opens. Then pause. Notice what you're carrying into the moment. Once your child has settled, notice what they're carrying, too.

They may talk, or they may not, you are simply meeting them where they are. If you're struggling with the silence, try repeating, "I'm here. It is enough."

Connection can present itself when you least expect it. Some of my richest conversations have been over a game of *Uno*. One child, after a five-game winning streak, commented on how he was always lucky with unimportant things, never with what mattered. We kept playing – and talking. Without pressure to engage, children will often willingly share their thoughts and feelings.

This month, let the small moments find you – commutes, checkout lines, elevator rides, walking the dog. Initially it may feel as if nothing is happening – and that's okay. Think of these moments as deposits into a joint account you are building together. It's the consistency that counts. This is true even if your relationship feels strained or distant right now. Over time you may notice shifts – fewer eye rolls and shrugs, your child organically sharing their day. When there are tough conversations to be had, you'll be grateful for the security your joint account provides.

Wherever you and your child are right now, small moments have a way of quietly changing everything. Be patient with yourself and with them. The door is always open – sometimes it just takes a simple, "Hi" to walk through it.

Frances, a therapist, supports school-aged children. To learn more, visit www.FrancesBarry.net.

The Art of Traveling Light (and Stress-Free)



By Scott Andrews

Traveling light isn't just about saving space in suitcases – it's about simplifying your entire trip.

Packing less means less stress, easier mobility, and more time enjoying destinations instead of managing belongings. These three popular strategies can help master the art of minimalist travel: the Sudoku Packing Method, a Capsule Wardrobe, and the 5-4-3-2-1 Packing Method.

The Sudoku Packing Method uses a simple 3x3 formula: three tops, three bottoms, and three layering pieces. Because each item coordinates with the others, travelers can create up to 27 outfit combinations from just nine pieces. It's an ideal system for anyone who wants versatility without sacrificing style.

A Capsule Wardrobe follows a similar principle by focusing on timeless, interchangeable pieces. Choose neutral colors, simple patterns, and clothing which can easily transition from day to night. A pair of dark jeans, for example, can work for sightseeing, casual lunches, or an evening out with a simple change of top or accessories.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Packing Method offers another easy approach: pack five tops, four bottoms, three pairs of shoes, two dresses or

jackets, and one set of accessories. This formula helps prevent over-packing while still giving plenty of options for a variety of occasions.

Beyond clothing, smart packing habits can save even more space. Wear the bulkiest shoes while traveling, skip unnecessary items like hairdryers, and purchase toiletries at your destination. Packing cubes or compression bags can also help maximize luggage space.

When bringing only what is truly needed, you'll discover that less really is more.

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



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Community Service on the Westside

What Flag Day Means to the Elks



By Ilene Knebel

Every year in June, The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks celebrate Flag Day because honoring the American

flag became one of the organization's core patriotic traditions in the late 1800s.

In 1907, the Elks were the first national fraternal organization to require an annual observance of Flag Day. They promoted ceremonies focused on citizenship, national unity, and respect for the Constitution and the flag. Their efforts helped popularize Flag Day across the United States before it became an official national observance.

Congress officially recognized June 14 as National Flag Day in 1949, commemorating the adoption of the U.S. flag in 1777.

Why do the Elks emphasize Flag Day?

Patriotism and civic duty - The organization teaches respect for American ideals, democratic government, and community service. Historical tradition - The Elks adopted Flag Day ceremonies decades before Congress officially recognized the holiday.

Public education - The Santa Monica Elks Lodge hosts an essay contest for students in 5th - 8th Grades, and celebrates with a presentation about the history of the flag.

This year, our event will be on Thursday, June 11. Dinner (\$15) will be at 6 p.m. The Flag Day Program will begin at 7 p.m. RSVP by calling the Lodge office at 310-452-3557.

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



By J. Kingsley Fife

I'm extremely happy to say that we Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions just had a very successful annual fundraiser. It was a "Comedy Night Celebration" featuring seven hilarious comedians from the Crow Comedy Club providing us with an evening of laughter and entertainment.

All 100% of the funds we collected go 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 Club, Fisher House, Santa Monica Salvation Army, Santa Monica YMCA, and providing scholarships to Santa Monica High School students. Thanks everyone for making it the success we had hoped for!

On the last Monday of last month, Memorial Day, our Club had a very moving experience honoring the men and women who gave their lives for our country. The ceremony was sponsored by the Santa Monica Elks at Woodlawn Cemetery. We Lions were joined by other service clubs like the Rotarians and Kiwanans in a solemn wreath procession. There was a patriotic speech, music, and a full military color guard to highlight the experience. This national custom goes back to May 1868 when it was first enacted to honor those who died in the Civil War. To be able to participate today in this noble event is a great honor.

Interested to know more about Lionism? Perhaps an opportunity to enrich your life? Be our guest at one of our dinner meetings. Contact me at jkfife88@yahoo.com for further information.

An Update From the SMBWC



By Patricia Webber

It's almost Summer and the Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club (SMBWC) is already booking our facility for Fall

events. Please call 310-395-1308 to request available dates, prices, and other options. We pride ourselves on being one of the best and most affordable event rental locations in Santa Monica.

Last month, the SMBWC distributed funds earned from our rentals to various charities and organizations that support women, children, and local arts.

We gave funds to the following charities that benefit children: Free Arts for Abused Children, Upward Bound House, Step Up on Second Street, School on Wheels, My Stuff Bags, Happy Trails for Kids, and Baby2Baby. We also supported local organizations: Santa Monica Symphony Organization, Westside Food Bank, Beauty Bus Foundation, Fisher House Southern California, Heal the Bay, Meals on Wheels, and Red Cross - LA/Palisades Fire.

We continue to support UCLA

Next Generation Doctors, and the SMBWC Endowed Scholarship at Santa Monica College. Finally, in this list we continue to support the Santa Monica History Museum and SamoHi Music.

Also, last month the Club held a reception for our new members. For many, it was the first time visiting the Club and getting a chance to hear a bit of the building's history. Food was prepared in our kitchen by several of our Board members. The talented and generous women who made the evening such a success are Susan Barry, Denise Simon, Alicia Syres, Josanna Joseph, and Marcia Stein. We were reminded of the importance of women supporting women.

The Club hosts canasta and bridge every Monday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mahjong is popular now and players also meet at the club on Mondays. The Artists & Crafts & Conversation group meets each Tuesday from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For questions on joining any of these activities, please call 310-395-1308. The Walking Group is on hold for the time being.

Make New Friends While Making a Difference in Our Community



By Mitchell Kraus

While many people think of June as the beginning of Summer, for the Rotary Club of Santa Monica, it marks

the close of our Rotary year. Our leadership year runs from July through June, which makes this a natural time to reflect, celebrate, and prepare for what comes next. But, ending the year does not mean slowing down.

One of our most meaningful traditions takes place on June 5, when we host our annual Scholarship Lunch. At this special meeting, we recognize local students by awarding scholarships that help support their next steps in education. These students represent the promise of our community, and it is always inspiring to hear about their goals, challenges, and hopes

for the future.

Supporting education is one of the clearest ways Rotary lives out its commitment to service. We often say that Rotarians "think globally and act locally." Around the world, Rotary works on major issues like clean water, disease prevention, literacy, peacebuilding, and economic opportunity. Here in Santa Monica, that same spirit shows up in practical, local ways - supporting students, partnering with non-profits, serving meals, building community, and helping neighbors when needs arise.

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

June Holidays to Celebrate

June 1 - 30 - Pride Month - June 2 - National I Love My Dentist Day - June 5 - National Donut Day - June 11 - National Corn on the Cob Day - June 18 - National Fishing Day - June 19 - Juneteenth - June 20 - National Ice Cream Soda Day - June 21 - Fathers Day, First Day of Summer

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Celebrating (Continued from Page 1)

Now, the anticipated return of the parade to the Palisades represents something powerful – proof that despite tremendous loss, the spirit of the community remains very much alive.

Events like the parade remind people that they still belong to something larger than themselves. For displaced residents returning to visit friends and neighbors, the parade becomes a reunion. For families rebuilding their homes, it offers reassurance that the traditions that made the Palisades special are enduring. For children who experienced the fear and uncertainty of evacuation and loss, seeing familiar celebrations return helps restore a sense of normalcy.

I also find myself wondering how some of the parade's most beloved traditions may feel emotionally different this year. For decades, children have eagerly waited for the arrival of the fire engines, often among the loudest and most celebrated participants in the parade. This year, after the trauma and fear associated with the fire itself, the sight and sound of those trucks may understandably stir complex emotions for some residents.

Yet, perhaps their presence may also come to symbolize something else: courage, service, protection, and the extraordinary efforts of first responders during one of the community's darkest moments.

The Pacific Palisades has always

been a uniquely engaged and interconnected community. Local schools, service clubs, religious institutions, sports leagues, and countless volunteers have long helped create the civic culture that makes the area feel more like a hometown than a neighborhood within a major city. That culture matters even more now.

This year, the cheers along the parade route will likely carry a little more emotion. The flags may feel more symbolic. The reunions may last a little longer.

And perhaps that is because everyone understands a little more clearly now that communities are not ultimately defined by buildings alone. They are defined by people showing up for one another, preserving traditions, and refusing to let hardship erase the bonds that tie neighbors together.

This year, the parade is not simply a celebration of Independence Day – it is a celebration of the enduring spirit of the Palisades community.

Richard Lombari is a displaced Pacific Palisades resident, Real Estate Wealth Advisor with Sotheby's International Realty, 2nd Vice Commander of American Legion Post 283, Vice Chair of the Pacific Palisades Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG), The Salvation Army Santa Monica Board Member, and Santa Monica Family YMCA Board Member.

Santa Monica's Troop 2 Seeks Founding Leader to Launch New Girl Scouts Program

By Sarah McGregor

Santa Monica's Boy Scout Troop 2, a fixture of Westside Scouting for nearly eight decades, is preparing for an exciting new chapter – the launch of a girls troop.

To make it happen, the organization is searching for a founding leader who can help shape the first generation of girls to come through the program.

The new unit, informally called "T2G," will run alongside the existing boys troop and tap into the same deep well of experience, equipment, and volunteer support that has defined Troop 2 for years. The goal is simple but ambitious: give girls in grades 6 through 12 the same access to outdoor adventure, leadership training, and community service that Troop 2 has offered boys since the 1940s.

The timing follows a banner year for the troop. In the past year, more than 100 active scouts participated in dozens of service projects, traveled to Peru for a 10-day expedition, and sold more than 2,000 trees to the community at its annual fundraising Christmas Tree Lot. This Summer, the troop will spend more than two weeks on a camping and canoeing adventure in the Adirondacks.

That momentum has prompted a committee of Scouting leaders, parents, and supporters to study whether the program could expand. Their work was encouraged by Scouting America – formerly the Boy Scouts of America – which

now allows parallel programs for girls. Nearby communities, including Culver City and Pacific Palisades, have already done so.

"The foundation is already there," said John Matise, Troop 2's Scoutmaster. "What matters most is finding someone who believes in what scouting can offer young people, like leadership, responsibility, and confidence."

Troop leaders say the ideal candidate could be a teacher, coach, outdoor enthusiast, or community volunteer – someone who enjoys mentoring young people and believes in the value of the outdoors. No scouting background is required. The new Scoutmaster will step into a well-established program supported by experienced assistant scoutmasters. The role is open to all adults, though leaders prefer a woman to help provide girls with a visible role model.

The role requires about eight hours a week and several weekend campouts throughout the year. In return, leaders say, the founding Scoutmaster would help build something lasting – a program rooted in adventure, leadership, friendship, and service.

If you're interested in learning more about the founding Scoutmaster role or want to apply, you can reach the Troop 2 team at gwong@mortgcap.com; or Mike.IshlerDesign@verizon.net or kensleeper@gmail.com. Visit the Troop 2 website at: <https://www.troop2bsa.org/>.

Express your gratitude to those who do good work, for they will be thankful for your words and try to do even better work.

Paws and Claws

Best Care Tips for Parrots



By Dr. Frank Lavac, MS, DVM

Q: What are some good tips for care of parrots?

A: 1. Diet: Poor quality, seed-based diets are a leading factor in predisposing disease in parrots. Feed 70% pellet diets with approximately 20% dark green vegetables and a small amount of seed/nuts (approximately 5-10%). If you can't transition them to a pelletized diet, then purchase human-grade seeds

and nuts from a health food store. Purchase small quantities so that it is used quickly. Seeds or seed mixtures bought in pet stores do not have an "eat by" date. Extended storage can lead to spoilage of proteins and fats that are so important for health.

2. Cage sanitation: Bird cages are their microenvironment and detailed, routine cleaning is important. Pay close attention to the food and water bowls. Don't leave fish, fruit, or vegetables in the cage for more than two to three hours.

3. Environmental enrichment: Toys and more toys. Allow them to fly in a safe environment. Get a cage mate. Parrots are never alone in the wild. They have evolved to be social creatures and live in flocks.

4. Foraging enrichment: There are foraging toys that "hide" food items so the bird has to open the toy to get the food. This can also be as simple as wrapping high value food items in a paper cup or paper towel roll. This item can be great mental stimulation for them.

For more detailed information on these subjects, go to www.VeterinaryPartner.com.

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

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Planning Ahead

Talking With Your Children



By Lisa Alexander, Esq.
When it comes to finances and estate planning, the question of how much to share with your children has many answers.

For some families, money is just not something to talk about. Finances are private and held close. Some families are worried their children might be less incentivized to work if they knew how much they might inherit. Or, they worry about their children's spouses. Other families are very open with their children about their finances.

How much to share with your children is a matter of preparing them, even in the most basic way, in case something was to happen. For example, where do you keep your important documents? Who is your attorney and investment advisor, and any other professional contacts who should be notified? If you have named one or more children as your health care agent or power of attorney, do they know that? Do they know what will be expected of them?

The next level may be a general summary of your assets and the basics of your estate plan, without the need to share dollar amounts. Who will be in charge of settling your affairs? How will your estate be distributed? Will there be gifts

to charity or beneficiaries outside your immediate family? If family dynamics are an issue, avoiding surprises may also avoid legal conflicts.

If you are so inclined, you could think about inviting your children to a meeting with your estate planning attorney to review your estate plan together and give your children an opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns. The estate planning attorney can also explain estate and gift tax, property tax issues, and provide a high-level review of the responsibilities of settling one's affairs.

The next meeting might be with your financial advisor. Depending on your comfort level, you might "open your books" completely, or the review may be a higher-level discussion of your investment and retirement accounts without detail. The important thing is building trust and a relationship for the future.

Talking with your children may be a series of ongoing discussions rather than a single meeting. No matter what your family's approach may be, the goal is to prepare your children for the future, without sharing more information than you are comfortable with.

Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.
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JUNE 27
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Join the Quinn Research Center for an interactive workshop that explores the rich traditions of gourd making in Black communities across the American South. Participants will learn hands-on techniques for crafting and decorating gourds while delving into the cultural, spiritual, and communal significance of this historic art form.

Gourd making, rooted in African diasporic practices, has long served as a vessel—both literal and symbolic—for storytelling, survival, music, and ritual. In the South, gourds have been transformed into water vessels, instruments, and artistic expressions, often passed down through generations. This workshop uplifts these legacies, celebrating the creativity at the heart of Black cultural resilience.



RSVP HERE



Memories of the Santa Monica Breakfast Club Mad Hatter Tea Party

The Santa Monica Breakfast Club held its 9th annual Mad Hatter Tea Party last month at the Santa Monica YMCA. Proceeds from this eagerly-anticipated event go to support dental care for young students in the Santa Monica School District.

Members of the Club and the community turned out to honor Jim Harris, the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Pier, and to hear his stories about the amazing adventures he has experienced.

If you are interested in joining the group, contact Pam Brady at ptabrady@aol.com.

Photos by Kathy Shannon



Pam Brady and honoree Jim Harris



Dick and Char Lawrence with Loretta



Rev. Joe Metoyer, Gitta Morris, Monika White, and Pam Brady



Zach and his mom, Pamela Lawrence



Kathy and Don Checchi

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Love Links

A Promising Love Rekindled at the Right Time

Apple Mojica shares how she and her husband, Ivan Ilagan got together.

“Ivan and I met through a mutual friend last year. At the time, he was looking for work, and before we knew it, we were talking every single day. Little by little, our connection grew naturally. Without even realizing it, we had become an important part of each other’s lives.”

Apple had grown up in Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, as the eldest daughter of a close-knit family. She learned responsibility, helping at home, and caring for her siblings. Ivan grew up in Bacoor, Cavite, Philippines, also with younger siblings. He grew up being protective and dependable. Though they came from different cities, both Apple and Ivan’s families had known each other.

“Recently, our love story became unforgettable at LACMA. What started as a simple romantic date night turned into the moment that changed our lives forever. He surprised me with the sweetest question and asked me to be his wife. In that beautiful moment, surrounded by art, love, and the magic of the evening,” I said, “Yes.”

Apple completed her Bachelor of Science in Computer Science at Siena College before moving to the U.S. in 2003. She has built a career in the medical field and works as a case manager for Calipso Home Health. Ivan earned his Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management, but



Newlyweds Apple Mojica and Ivan Ilagan

currently is working in a family-owned hardware company where he plays an important role in supporting the growth of the business by managing daily operations.

“Our wedding was held on May 1 this year,” Apple describes. “The ceremony was intimate and filled with the love of our closest family and friends at the Van Nuys Courthouse. Everyone was having a wonderful time together. Afterwards we went to P.F. Chang’s to celebrate. The entire celebration felt warm, joyful, and full of good energy. It was everything we had hoped for and more.”

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