

Remembering the Thomas Fire

VENTURA BREEZE

Your Hometown Paper

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REMEMBERING



VLT rented a crane and lifted Dan into a tree.
Photo by Adrienne Stephens.

REMEMBERING

Ventura Land Trust replaces hawk nest felled during Thomas Fire

Ventura Land Trust (VLT) recently replaced a Red-tailed Hawk nest that was knocked out of a eucalyptus tree after the Thomas Fire. Knowing that Red-tailed Hawks have nested in the same tree for decades, VLT Stewardship staff rented a crane and lifted it into a tree

close to the one that had been damaged. The goal was to offer the local hawks a new place to nest before breeding season kicks into full swing.

“Red-tailed Hawks generally mate for life and return year after year to the same nest or area to lay their eggs and raise their young,” said Kate Furlong, VLT Stewardship Director. “VLT is committed to wildlife habitat preservation and the goal of this project is to protect a wild place where the hawks can breed, hunt, and thrive year-round.”

The Ventura Land Trust, a nonprofit land trust operating in the Ventura region since 2003, currently manages 90 acres of permanently protected open space in the Ventura River watershed, and is in the process of purchasing another 2,100 acres of prime hillside property in Ventura. The mission of VLT is to permanently protect the land, water, wildlife, and scenic beauty of the Ventura region for current and future generations.

REMEMBERING

Thomas Fire recovery – 1 year later

by Jeffrey Lambert
AICP, Community Development Director,
City of Ventura

It was only a year ago that a fast-moving brush fire started north of Santa Paula and was pushed by strong Santa



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Ana winds through the City of Ventura. The fire burned for more than a month and scorched more than 281,000 acres. The impact of the fire in the City of Ventura was severe, with 524 houses and 100 apartments destroyed citywide.

Even as the Thomas Fire blazed through the city, the City Council began approving measures to help fire victims. City staff was directed to create the Thomas Fire Rebuild Permit Office at City Hall dedicated to help property owners reconstruct destroyed homes and structures. The office, staffed by a combination of City staff and contract services, has provided personalized service and one-on-one meetings for more than 475 homeowners and their design professionals.

The rebuild effort is a two-step process: first a zoning compliance

Continued on page 22

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Opinion/Editorial



Sheldon (Governor) Brown
Publisher-Editor

■ It is hard to believe that it has been a year since the fire raged through Ventura. From a previous news article; “On December 4, 2017 a fast-moving active brush fire that started

North of Santa Paula along Highway 150 and Bridge Road was pushed by strong east winds through the City of Ventura. The **Thomas Fire** burned 281,893 acres and was 100% contained on January 12, 2018. 1,063 structures were destroyed and 280 structures were damaged. In the City of Ventura, more than 100 structures have been identified as damaged and more than 500 structures have been identified as being destroyed.”

In this issue we tried to capture the feelings and hopes of those directly, and indirectly, affected by the Thomas Fire. It is amazing to me that there were no deaths in Ventura as a result of the fire. A tribute to our fire and police departments and to Venturan’s who listened and acted in a proper manner when told to evacuate.

I remember the midnight call from my daughter-in-law who said, “We have evacuated and need to stay with you.” When I asked “where are you” she told me “we are in front of your house. We didn’t think about calling you until we arrived here.” I responded, “Give me a few minutes so that I can put some clothes on (you don’t need to picture that).”

Eventually more of our kids and family (unusual that 4 of our 5 kids live locally) ended up at our house. Several stayed for a few days because the electricity was out – we were the Grand Hotel.

Once the family was in the house, my son and I immediately went back to his house on Aliso St. where we proceeded (with a couple of neighbors) to put out fires. Some of which could have been disastrous. During the night several cars stopped to help us - they didn’t live in the neighborhood or know who we were – that night brought out the finest in many Venturans. Mark and I also went back and forth to the house of Diane’s family and put out fires there.

If there was a funny part of this, at about 5am I looked at my son and said,

“You are wearing pajamas and slippers.” Which neither of us were aware of the entire night. He of course quickly changed clothes. And to think that he was stomping out fires wearing his slippers.

I spent the next several days going from fire to fire watching as helpless fire-fighters had to stand by as homes burned to the ground because there was inadequate water. Why **there wasn’t water** is still a mystery. The Breeze has not been able to get adequate answers about the water problem and has been told that the city cannot comment because of pending lawsuits. Hopefully this will be resolved before the next fire occurs.

I think one of the other reasons that there were no casualties is because we have an adequate street system. So, although there were challenges in certain areas, evacuees were able to exit without being overrun by the fire.

This, of course, was not the case in the recent **Paradise** fire that claimed an unknown number of lives. Perhaps areas like Paradise - without adequate streets and ways to exit – shouldn’t be allowed to rebuild until they have proper ways to evacuate.

I believe that our planning department and building & safety division have done a great job of handling hundreds of building plans that have been submitted. More plans than they would typically see over a period of many years. I know some people who lost their homes and they are not happy with the city, but even under “normal” times the permit process can be very daunting.

■ Kudos to the Ventura outdoor gear company **Patagonia** for giving the \$10 million it saved from tax cuts to non-profit environmental groups. The donation is in addition to 1% of sales it gives to these groups every year.

■ People have recently reported seeing a mountain lion in hillside neighborhoods in Ventura. The wildfires may have brought the animals into living areas.

Mountain lions tend to be solitary creatures and rarely attack humans. However, don’t try to pet them.

Bring small house pets inside during the evening and early morning hours until further notice.

If you happen to have an encounter

with a mountain lion, face the animal, make noise and attempt to look bigger by waving your arms to scare it away. You can’t outrun it.

Reminds me of the old joke. Two friends encounter a mountain lion and one says, “Run like hell.” The other says, “We can’t out run a lion.” And his friend says, “I just need to outrun you.”

■ You might not be able to fit it on your wrist, but physicists have created two clocks that are so accurate they won’t lose time in the next **15 billion years**. Obviously, the atomic clock uses an optical lattice composed of laser beams trapping ytterbium atoms. Big deal, will it tell you how far you have walked?

■ In a sweeping interview recently published in the Washington Post, President **Donald Trump** asserted that he had “very high levels of intelligence,” and as such, did not believe in the scientific consensus surrounding climate change. “One of the problems that a lot of people like myself, we have very high levels of intelligence but we’re not necessarily such believers,” said Trump. Hmm, what an articulate assessment.

Trump ripped into French President **Emmanuel Macron** in a series of tweets -- hitting him on everything from his low approval ratings, to the French surrender to the Nazis in World War II, and also suggesting U.S. wine is on par with the French product. I finally agree with Trump that our wine is on par with the French, so I guess he really told him. Don’t fool around with the United States. (opinions@venturabreeze.com)

■ **Farmers Insurance** has just cancelled my homeowner’s insurance because “The number of losses you have experienced exceeds our acceptability limits.” Claims paid to me; ash clean-up \$2,075 and damage to a deck from a tree that fell \$12,409. The total was less than \$15,000 for a company that has paid out hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars to people who lost their homes. Plus, the tree falling over will never happen again (or perhaps in 40 years when the new one is tall enough). Very shocking to me - why do we have insurance if it can be cancelled whenever the company unilaterally decides (there needs to be some reform with these companies).

Mailbox

Sheldon

Why can’t Carol have her own thoughts instead of lifting it from an article of CNBC? And thank you again Sheldon for considering my feelings. I didn’t realize the Breeze was to be one sided by others. My only hope is that we can agree to disagree and get some work done. If my candidate would have lost, I would have kicked off the dust and been supportive of ideas for all of our greater good.

Let’s hope we can move forward for our Veterans and homeless. Orange County is doing a really good thing in a short amount of time with industrial space to clean up their river trail. Great idea!

Thank you again for all you do. I’m sitting here with my coffee and Breeze now! Trudy Smith

Trudy:

Carol is, obviously not as brilliant as you, me and Trump. Hope you didn’t spill your coffee on the Breeze.

Sheldon

Dear Folk,

Yippee! They got him. They got him good -- by the cojones!

Cohen has confessed to lying and helping Trump work with the Russians.

And the Democrats have the House, so they can Impeach, unless he has that major stroke.

He looks so sick and terrified and the mouth doesn’t stop running. Never in my life have I detested anyone in this fashion. Never knew I could take pleasure in someone else’s pain.

This guy deserves everything that’s coming his way.

Let’s all go out in the middle of street and dance.....Yippee Yippy Ya Es and Les and Doggies, Ventura

Editor:

Here he goes again! Our Commander in Chief who insists he be treated with respect, loudly disrespects highly decorated military heroes. Didn’t Mr. Trump learn from his debacle of criticizing Senator McCain’s military service because “I like people who didn’t get captured”!

Now he dares criticize Retired Navy Admiral William McGraven because “he didn’t capture Bin Laden sooner”! And,

in the next breath, Mr. Trump boasts how he “supports” our military. What hypocrisy!

Judith A. Beay, Ventura

Letter to the editor

Re: Homeless at 81 (article in previous Breeze by Jennifer Tipton)

Continued on page 9

Cover Credits

Paintings by Tony Jankowski and Evin Brown.

Proposed home designs by Bruce Labins Architect, Martha Picciotti Architect, Chappell Architecture.

Photos by Richard Lieberman, Bill Green.

Because of the large amount of fire coverage, this issue’s horoscope, crossword, Sudoku, Harbor blotter and cartoons can be found at www.venturabreeze.com.

Those who think
they know it all
are especially
annoying to
those of us
who do.
– Harold Coffin

REMEMBERING



Anna Rios Bermudez, Tina Thayer, Karen Ayn Devera, Tim Callaghan and Sharon Campbell remembering the Fire.

REMEMBERING

Flames of Compassion

by Karen Leslie
Writer with heart

The fire and brimstone atmosphere that raged through California scorched not only land but has wreaked havoc with our psyches and emotional state of being. The aftermath and collective mourning of precious lives lost, houses and earthscapes are palatable. Venturi-an’s memories not long passed have re-kindled in the air thick as smoke.

On November 8, 2018 three fires broke out. The Hill Fire, Woolsey and Camp Fires combined scorching nearly 250,000 acres, displaced thousands, claimed more than 80 lives, destroyed 14,000 structures, 993 people are unaccounted for and it took 6,400 firefighters round the clock to slay the beasts. The 18-day Woolsey Fire alone impacted Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Chatsworth, Westlake Village, Agoura Hills, Calabasas and Malibu, torching 96, 949 acres.

Barely holding back tears, Paradise Town Council Member Melissa Schuster shares, “The entire town of Paradise is a toxic wasteland right now.” Paradise Hero, Kevin McKay drove 22 stranded elementary school students to safety

Affected was the Paramount Ranch in Agoura Hills known as “Western Town” where hundreds of movies and television shows, including HBO’s Westworld have been filmed. Amidst the devastation and tragedy heroes have emerged.

Hollywood Stuntman Ardeshir Radpour saved 300 horses from the Woolsey wildfires, but he doesn’t consider himself a hero. Radpour shares, “The horses feel what we feel and have a heightened sense of awareness. They don’t understand the noise and don’t have a voice for them-

selves. It’s just what we need to do as human beings to help each other out.”

Hearts are swollen with despair and aching from the abundant suffering in our own back yards, neighboring counties and globally. Yet, all walks of life are united and ignited with the flame of compassion! We have walked in their shoes, lost what they have lost and felt what they have felt.

From the many caring residents, business owners and heroes, their light of empathy burns brightly, snuffing out the fear with their generous optimism, support and helping hands of service so ultimately we can find healing within the unimaginable loss.

Local intuitive artist Sharon Campbell shares, “One candle can light up a whole room. It costs nothing to smile, say hello and make amends with people you love. We do adapt and we are stronger than we think.”

Tim Callaghan, founder and owner of No Limit Fitness, well-traveled and Veteran shares, “As a one year resident of Ventura, I have noticed in the wake of disaster, the hearts of this area are connected in a way where strangers are neighbors and neighbors are family.”

“Mo” owner of Silver Trends says, “We will never forget. With help comes change. Consoling with one another helps make our lives a little better. Our mentality and perspective needs to change from me me me, to we we we.”

Owner of Inner Soulstice Wellness Ayn Devera quotes, “When our energies are aligned we can produce anything. We must connect, share how we feel, lean in towards the discomfort, then we can empathize and from that space of commonality that we are the same

Continued on page 7

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On a beautiful Ventura evening the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony returned on Friday, November the 30th with the largest light display in Ventura history. Over 20,000 bulbs lit up Mission Park and the Mission's historical twin Norfolk Pines. Millions (fake news) filled Mission Park, Figueroa Plaza and Main as far as the eye could see. The celebration included live entertainment from local choirs and dance groups, bounce houses for the kids, FOOD Share can trees and vendors offering food and drinks. And Santa arriving by fire truck as the snow fell.

Ventura BREEZE

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Your Hometown Paper



REMEMBERING

REMEMBERING

Battling the Thomas Fire

by Sheli Ellsworth

Ventura City Fire Department serves a population of over 110,000. They do so with six stations, ten engines, one truck company (hook and ladder) and seventy-three sworn firefighters in fire suppression. That is one firefighter for every fifteen hundred people.

On December 4, 2017, Ventura City Battalion Fire Chief Doug Miser was driving to Ojai to visit his girlfriend. He noticed a red glow in the distance over towards Santa Paula and was immediately worried. A fire alert appeared on his phone at 6:24 PM. Low humidity, sustained winds in excess of 40mph, temperatures in the 60s—and it was the first day of a 5-day Santa Ana wind event, the situation did not bode well. A six-year drought had left much of the county's thickets and undergrowth dry as kindling.

By 6:30 PM, ten fire engines, two helicopters, two bull dozers and two airplanes and over a hundred fireman had been dispatched to what has become known as the Thomas Fire. By 8:30 PM almost all available off duty city fire department personnel were either showing up at stations or were on their way in. Less than an hour into the incident, 50 strike teams consisting of over 200 engines were requested from neighboring counties. "Spot fires immediately sprang up downwind from the initial blaze. Driven by 50 mph winds blowing toward the ocean, it didn't take long for spot fires to cause their own ancillary fires and take hold near Ventura." Miser says the fires consumed the parched boscage at about an acre per minute. Some of the engine companies initially placed into Santa Paula were quickly relocated closer to Ventura's urban interface as the fire leapt from one ridge to another, leaving unburned valleys to be consumed later. With very few resources, it became readily apparent that evacuation would be top priority, fire-fighters began knocking on doors and using their public address systems telling people to leave, helping people move cars, carrying the disabled

out of homes. "There is always a life-before-property obligation all emergency responders have."

At 10:00 PM, Miser, who has over 20-years of experience as a fireman, began evacuations in Ventura Heights. "The Police and Fire units were going through neighborhoods and announced on the PA system—telling people to evacuate immediately. The recurring problem was that people went to bed knowing there was a fire in Santa Paula, no one thought it would be in Ventura in a manner of hours."

As if the pressing problem wasn't enough, at 11:20 PM a 50-acre fire erupted in Grant Park which became known as the Cedar Incident. "Even though Grant Park is six miles away from the High Point area that was about to get the first wave of the fire about that time, it was obvious spot fires were fueling spot fires that were fueling spot fires—the fire essentially hopscotched across the Ventura back oilfields in a matter of minutes."

For the next 39 days, 8,500 fire fighters fought fires that had burned everything from Santa Paula to Ventura City, through Ojai and up into Santa Barbara, becoming the largest fire in California History, until this year. The fire eventually destroyed 440 square miles and 504 homes in the city of Ventura, according to the damage assessment report. An additional 140 were damaged.

"We were able to save many structures, but obviously lost many as well. We tragically lost one of our brothers, Cory Iverson who worked for Cal Fire 10 days after the start of the fire, which is when things usually begin to become manageable as far as wild-land incidents go. This fire, fueled by an unusually long Santa Ana event, would not quit, and consumed everything in its path. I think every firefighter I know remarked how blessed we were that no civilian fatalities happened in Ventura that first night. Given the degree of chaos and rapid pace of the fire, it was the silver lining of it all."

REMEMBERING

Thomas Fire homeowners have understandable anxiety

by Bruce Labins
Architect

We have a deep admiration for our Thomas Fire clients' strength, patience, and positivity throughout the design, permitting, and rebuild process. They have had the hardest of years, but in every instance have embraced the 'new vision' of their home and are looking forward.

Thomas Fire homeowners have understandable anxiety about rebuilding and meeting zoning ordinances, regulations, code upgrades, time delays and more. In every case, our clients have been able to rebuild not only what they had, but make sig-

nificant improvements to design, life safety, and energy efficiency of their home. City Planning and Building and Safety worked diligently to make these accommodations. That's our City.

City of Ventura Community Development Director, Jeffrey Lambert, partnered with his network of city planners and local design professionals to create the Planning Pre-Review submittal process. This significantly streamlines their review process upon submittal to plan check. With thorough preparation of submittal exhibits, our experience with the process and professionals involved has been 100% positive. That's our City.

City of Ventura Building Official, Yolanda Bundy, is likely the first building authority a Thomas Fire homeowner will meet. When we submit our drawings to plan check, Yolanda greets each of our clients with a direct look in their eyes, asking them how they are doing and reassuring them that the City will make the process smooth and timely. She gives



each homeowner a thoughtful touch on the arm or a hug. That's our City.

Yolanda Bundy initiated with her team of plan checkers a Thomas Fire expedited plan check procedure. She established a 14-day plan check turn around. Her Team have met or reduced that time in our numerous plan checks. During our re-submittal, Yolanda has personally reviewed our drawings on the spot to further expedite the permit. That's our City.

The Thomas Fire was unprecedented for Ventura. Our City has rallied and extended themselves in every department. They have worked incredibly hard with dedication, professionalism, and thoughtfulness. We are grateful to each of them.
805.641.2310
bruce@brucelabins.net
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REMEMBERING

United Way of Ventura County reflects on community support

December 4th marks the one-year anniversary of the Thomas Fire and United Way of Ventura County looks back on a year of loss, hope and recovery.

"This Anniversary is a solemn and painful one," said Eric Harrison, CEO, United Way of Ventura County. "While our hearts go out to so many that were affected in our communities, we were and are grateful for the opportunity to provide direct financial assistance to most of those impacted through the United Way Thomas Fire and Flood Fund."

Shortly after the blaze began, United Way of Ventura County established a fund to assist impacted residents and soon joined efforts with United Way of Santa Barbara County. The fund went onto be reestablished as the United Way Thomas Fire and Flood Fund and raise \$4.6 million.

"The response from near and far in support of the Fund was overwhelming and so meaningful," said Harrison. "People wanted to help in any way they could. We even received over 6,000 text and online donations through our mobile giving campaign."

In Phase I of disbursement, United Way distributed prepaid credit cards through American Red Cross \$375,000. Each prepaid card was for \$500 and went to residents whose homes were destroyed by the Thomas Fire, without any income limits.

As part of Phase II, United Way distributed \$779,520 to 281 applicants who requested individual hardship assistance and an additional \$300,000 in assistance via pre-loaded bank cards to 212 immigrant farm and service workers affected by the fire assisting more than 1,000 family members. Eligible applicants

for both were Ventura County residents, and household income limits were determined by family size of 120% AMI or less.

In Phase III, United Way sent \$1,500 from the Thomas Fire and Flood Fund to 527 households whose homes were destroyed or majorly damaged, as classified by FEMA and CAL FIRE. This phase could potentially exceed \$1 million.

In the current Long Term Recovery Phase IV, United Way is working with the Long Term Recovery Group and their case management process to assist households who do not have adequate personal resources for basic needs because of the disaster. This includes assessment and verification of need, planning to achieve recovery goals, advocacy, and connecting clients with community support.

"We know that the Long Term Recovery Group is best positioned, along with other partnering groups, to direct the disaster case management to provide the support needed in long term recovery," said Harrison. "We've designated approximately \$1 million from the Thomas Fire and Flood Fund for the Long Term Recovery efforts to address these needs."

Another \$1.1 million has gone to United Way of Santa Barbara County to assist in the recovery efforts of our neighbors.

Since 1945, United Way of Ventura County has advanced the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. Our focus is on education, income and health, because these are the building blocks for a good quality of life. We support local services and programs that are more than just 'stop gap' measures, but rather solutions that help create lasting change. We invite everyone to be part of the change by giving, advocating and volunteering. When we work together in common purpose, we live united. For more information about United Way of Ventura County, visit www.vcunitedway.org.

Flames of Compassion

Continued from page 5
creates change."

Tina Thayer owner of Paradise Pantry shares her feelings and people that arrived devastated and disheveled into the hearth and home vibe café, "I am trying to process the sadness and feel heartbroken for all the loss and happy to serve the weary travelers so they may rest, drop their shoulders and eat a meal."

Anna Bermudez, Ventura Museum curator quotes, "Preserve the history of Now" "Along with our exhibits, the museum has come to be so much more, a public community gathering place where people feel safe to reflect, remember and heal "

Musician and icon Neil Young who lost his home speaks out, "Hopefully we can come together as a people to take climate change on!"

Each of us has value in the lives around us! Shine on!



REMEMBERING

REMEMBERING

Revisiting the Thomas Fire - The Rebuild Process

by Dylan Chappell
Chappell Architecture

It's hard to believe that a year ago this month the Thomas Fire blazed through our city, leaving many feeling distraught and homeless. It is a year I will never forget as our family, my wife Danica and our two young children, lost our first family home. Every day since, there are subtle reminders of the things we've lost, but above all we are grateful to be rebuilding our home and continuing to hold onto the hope of creating another home for our children to grow up in. The losses we suffered will never compare to the love and support we received in abundance from friends, family, strangers, and the community.

As a local architect and as someone going through the rebuild process myself, I would like to give my praises to the employees at the City of Ventura who have taken a personal interest in helping us rebuild. I'm constantly dealing with the Planning and Building departments, and as many people know, this can be a long and arduous process even under normal building circumstances. My expectation was that it would be a similar experience working with the fire rebuilds. I can honestly say that even though I wished the overall process would have taken less time, I don't believe this to be the fault of the staff. My opinion is that they have done an exceptional job of responding to this crisis. For example, Veronica Ledesma, who is usually found at the front counter of the planning department, is always enthusiastic to help, provide knowledge, or answer questions. She is supported by Scott Kolwitz and

Dan Nielsen who work tirelessly to permit rebuilds as quickly as possible.

The most time consuming and difficult part of the rebuild process is getting a building permit. We have been more than impressed with the management and guidance of the Chief Building Official, Yolanda Bundy over the last year. She has done everything in her power to expedite the permit process. She is extremely efficient and has gone above and beyond to get our permits issued. In our last meeting, we showed up with four projects ready for approvals and Yolanda made it her mission to approve all four projects that very same day. I remember walking to the parking lot feeling thankful because we have people that really care and want us back in our homes as quickly as possible.

Other city officials have been especially helpful as well, such as Deputy Mayor Matt LaVere. He always offered support and frequently checked in on our progress. Finally, Jeff Lambert, The Community Development Director. Thank you, Jeff, for handling the most difficult decisions... your efficiency and concern for our community was noticed and appreciated.

As we look back, we are thankful that this year has passed and that we can focus on the future of this community. We look to the families that lost and the families that gave, with gratitude knowing that our little beach town can withstand anything. We are proud of this community, it's employees and most of all, it's perseverance.

REMEMBERING

Thomas Fire one year later

by Doug Halter
Halter-Encinas Enterprises and Landscape

As a professional landscaper, hillside resident and passionate Ventura resident, the Thomas Fire will always be major heartbreaking and unbelievable experience in my lifetime. To see the fire come over the hill and into mine and our neighbors' yards, then spread from house to house until it hit the heart of downtown left many of us speechless and in shock that still brings tears and emotions to many of us as the City that we love and our homes and memories were threatened by this horrific event. Many lessons were learned as we watched the flames leap from trees to house eaves, and our wood fences became highways of flames only to devour the next unsuspecting home owner and sanctuary.

As a landscaper, over the next several months, I had appointments with many of the people who lost their homes or some of the thousands that had damage and each day brought tears and memories of that horrifying night. Everyone had a story that needed to be shared if for no other reason than to help heal and know the horror we all experienced that night.

Now, a year later, I see many things that I would hope we can all do to prevent or minimize the impact of another wildfire.

First, I would make sure that vines, shrubs and trees are at least 10 ft from the house and not growing on or over it. Second, I would serious consider block walls and not wood fencing as many people called to thank me for the walls we created as they saved their house from being destroyed as my own saved our house. Third, we should consider solar power with battery backups to run sprinklers in our yard, and for some of us to, to run sprinklers that we can install on our rooftops.

From a City perspective I would hope that we would be better prepared with more redundancy on our water system so that our fire fighters have a chance at saving our neighborhoods. And lastly, I believe that we were allowed to grow our neighborhoods up the sloping hillsides without any consideration of a firebreak, green space or orchards that can help slow the fire.

Our persistent drought also added to the spread of the fire as many of our once manicured and green yards lay barren with dead weeds or grass. Many plants like Eucalyptus, Pine trees and Mexican sage exploded with flames and I would keep these specimens far from any house; still the embers may still blow into homes many blocks away. Perhaps part of the plan should be to use reclaimed water to keep the first 200 ft behind our neighborhoods green as a buffer.

Now, let's rebuild our neighbors, use smart yet water wise plantings and together make our community better than ever!

REMEMBERING

The Thomas Fire

by Patrick J. Treacy

The Thomas Fire started on the Fourth of December two thousand seventeen. It became the largest Venturans ever had seen.

The Santa Ana winds were hot and strong,
and swiftly moved the fire along.
Soon the canyons roared as trees buckled and swayed,
houses were burning and crashing down
and soon in piles of rubble lay.

Embers and cinders were flying hundreds of feet in the air,
then raining down like thunder, showers of red hail,
spreading the fire at a speed that was rare.

One lady died in her haste to get away,
as thousands were ordered to evacuate
and were rushing to centers where they would be safe.

The famous Poinsettia Pavilion was about to succumb to the flames,
Its caretakers Hector Andrade, Joanna Bondina, and Hector Junior, their son,
decided to stay. They battled all night and all of next day, ignoring the burns
and the blisters. They battled with hoses and shovels and spades,
as the soles of their shoes partly melted away.

And that is the stuff of which heroes are made.
The prize for their efforts-the Poinsettia Pavilion was ready for business next day.

The inferno on the mountain was a ferocious sight,
It looked more like a day time invasion of bombs and smoke
than a mountain fire on a winter's night.

The billowing smoke was a crazy red,
And nerves were shaken with fear and dread.
Animals were seen on the city streets hopping with pain on tender feet.

It was a challenging night for the elder, the weak and the frail.
Their young caregivers seemed anxious, nervous and pale.

Years of collections were lost on that night,
Like old photos of grandparents holding their kids.
Some lost photos of ancestors returning triumphant from war,
While others lost photos of loveds
returning in caskets draped with old glory
after giving their all.

Firefighter Cory Iverson died doing what he and all firefighters and police officers
do every day, risking their lives, others to save.
This young patriot died for the love of his family and commitments in life
He conquered his fear and died while on duty fighting the fire.

The Thomas Fire burned for forty days.
It caused death and destruction along the way.
Property worth billions of dollars were lost to the flames.

The brush and the fuel will grow back again,
The Santa Ana winds will always return.
Without new regulation, when conditions are right, more houses will burn.

Keep it simple- remove all the brush, dead wood and dry fuel
a safe distance from homes then the fire cannot feed.
Update the homes in the forest to be resistant to heat,
then all wildfire tragedies in Ventura and California will all disappear.

With all of the agencies working as one,
soon Ventura will all be restored,
this beautiful city between mountains and shores.

Many Thomas Fire survivors lost all their priceless belongings.
They have all disappeared like the smoke in the air and the glow in the sky.
Leaving an ache in their heart until the day they will die.



REMEMBERING



REMEMBERING

It was important that Elmer, Gracie Mae and Bandito accompany them.

Thomas Fire took their home but not their spirit

by James F. Gray

Thomas Fire victims, Christopher Means (52) and his wife, Gail (54) lost their Ondulando home, but are planning to rebuild. Their first priority after the fire was to find a rental that would allow their three large rescues, all Dobermans from the Dobie and Little Paws Rescue in Filmore (also greatly affected by the fire). It took two months of commuting from their mother's in Palm Springs to finally land at their current location in Oxnard with Elmer, Gracie Mae and Bandito accompanying them.

However, there are many bright spots, such as the support of family, neighbors and friends, old and new, and the potential to build their dream house.

The Means hired architect and structural engineer, Mark Baker, who lives two streets away, for their reconstruction. They had met his wife and dog previously on walks around the neighborhood. The delay in getting back to the area meant a significant delay in getting started as Mr. Baker was well booked up by that time, but they couldn't be happier with the choice.

The lot was unique, with an odd shape and many feet of fill over most of it. The city of Ventura, so far, has been fantastic, with every visit, request and even onsite consultations.

Their insurance has been wonderful, too—no issues there—they would highly recommend State Farm Insurance to anyone.

Although they have not broken ground yet, they are excited yet apprehensive about rebuilding costs, which may add an extra several hundred thousand dollars due to caissons, extra construction fees and building code changes. A new mortgage means delayed retirement, and the value of what it costs to build, plus the value of the lot could far exceed the value when complete. Being close to retirement, they are considering all options.

Still, the thought of the new home, spectacular location with amazing views, great neighbors and neighborhood, fills them with hope and excitement about the future.

Whatever happens, they plan to retire in the Ventura area, on a nice private area with their dogs and the ocean close.

Recently, Gail was caught in the

evacuation from the Woolsey fire, having to drive through with fire on the hills. Coming up on the year anniversary of the loss has been difficult emotionally for them, as they remember the past and feel empathy for those recently whose lives have been touched with the same disaster just over the hill.

REMEMBERING

Remembering the Heroics of Ventura's First Responders

by Deputy Mayor Matt LaVere

It is hard to believe that one year has passed since the Thomas Fire devastated our community. As I reflect on this difficult year, I am reminded of the overwhelming kindness and generosity I witnessed in response to this horrible disaster. I am also reminded of the intense community spirit that arose in many of us and which bolstered our resolve to rebuild. However, in recent days, given the heartbreaking news from last month's Camp and Woolsey fires (where over 90 people lost their lives and 196 people are still missing), I am reminded of something else: the absolute heroics of Ventura's first responders.

What started as a small brush fire in Santa Paula last December 4th quickly grew into a raging inferno barreling towards Ventura at speeds more than a football field-per-second. In the late evening hours, at a time when many Venturans were already asleep, the entire city then lost power just as we were learning about the nightmare heading our way. Against this backdrop, the men and women of Ventura's police department and fire department jumped into action.

Under the cover of darkness our first responders raced to neighborhoods across the entire City to begin evacuations, from the Westside to Clearpoint, and every impacted neighborhood in between. Often battling intense heat, flames and smoke, our first responders that night evacuated over 27,000 Venturans (nearly a quarter of our City's residents!) without the loss of a single life. As we learn more about the tragic loss of lives in other fire-ravaged communities, one can only conclude that what Ventura's first responders accomplished on December 4, 2017 was nothing short of a miracle.

The term "hero" should not be used lightly. But given the dire circumstances they faced and the fact that they risked their lives to successfully save so many of ours, it is important that we remember Ventura's first responders on the one-year anniversary of the Thomas Fire and recognize them as the true heroes they are!

Mailbox

Continued from page 4

Edison Electric Company in Ventura offers a medical baseline discount for people like myself. Once approved the bill does go way up the first month—using my oxygen concentrator in the first month. Month 2 the bill is shockingly low, month 3 on Edison provides a very good on going discount.

Thanks, so much Mr. Brown for publishing article. Many Ventura Breeze readers made reservations and attended Gabriel's house fund raiser. A grateful good thanks to them.

Joan Lucas

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Las Posadas

December 14th
at 6 PM

at Ventura First United Methodist Church

Messy Church is a once a month alternative church service that welcomes all people and their families!

Our December service will be a special event as we celebrate the journey Mary and Joseph made to find shelter for Jesus to be born.

Come as you are— fun for all ages!

Meet at the church at **6:00** for **appetizers and hand crafted espresso drinks**

We will walk our candles and carols into the community to knock at friendly church members' doors "seeking shelter" (Carpools available)

Return to the church by 7:15 pm for a **FREE tamale dinner and a piñata!**

Join us for other Messy Church worship services on the second Friday of every month at 6:15!

Upcoming Messy Church dates:

January 11 @ 6:15 PM
February 8 @ 6:15 PM

Ventura First United Methodist Church
1338 E. Santa Clara St.
805-643-8621
VenturaFUMC.org

For more information, email Alex at outreach@venturafirstumc.org



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REMEMBERING



Kat Merrick told her personal story on CAPSTV.

REMEMBERING

Thomas Fire documentary premieres at Museum of Ventura County

by CAPS Media

Over the past year, CAPS Media in collaboration with the Museum of Ventura County went into the community and spoke to many who were affected by the Thomas Fire. We interviewed over 70 people and let them share their stories. Neighbors, friends and First Responders were invited to various locations throughout the county and into the CAPS Media studio to record their stories. From these powerful stories we created a 90-minute documentary.

The Perfect Firestorm is our documentary film that chronicles these personal stories of survival and healing during and following the devastating Thomas Fire. Screenings of the film are free and open to the public with an RSVP required on Sunday, December 16 at 12pm and 3pm at the museum's pavilion at 100 East Main Street in Ventura. Due to limited seating, reservations are required. Email events@capsmedia.org and indicate the time of the screening you wish to attend.

The Perfect Firestorm was produced in cooperation with Ventura City Fire and Police, Ventura County Fire, Sheriff's, Office of Emergency Services and other agencies. The year-long project is based on dozens of first-person interviews with fire fighters, first responders, residents and others impacted by the tragedy. In addition to sharing their heartfelt, inspiring and at times tragic stories, the citizens of Ventura County provided CAPS Media with hundreds of photos and videos recorded during and after the fire to help tell the story.

The Perfect Firestorm is a companion production to CAPS Media's Thomas Fire Stories Project, the series of half-hour, first-person stories that airs every Friday night on CAPS Media. All the interviews conducted for the series and documentary air as stand-alone stories on CAPS Media and on KPPQ-LP at 104.1fm.

"CAPS Media is privileged to produce the series and film," said Patrick Davidson, Executive Director of CAPS. "and extremely fortunate to have the tremendous cooperation and unprecedented access to remarkable stories and supporting material for the project. We

have county and city media including video, photos and dispatch calls. The Ventura community responded rapidly by sending us hundreds of personal photos and video of their first-hand experiences. And, as this is a collaborative with the Museum of Ventura County, we have an equally special agreement with television affiliate stations to utilize news coverage of the fire."

Storytellers recounting personal stories include Ventura County Fire officers Chad Cook, Dustin Gardner, Vaughn Miller, John Spykerman, as well as County CEO Mike Powers, OES Director Kevin McGowan, City Fire Chief David Endaya, City Police officers Mike Brown and true citizen-heroes including Debbie Brokaw, Kat Merrick and her Local Love project, Jake and Jenny Dilbeck, Trevor Quirk and Upper Ojai Relief, Jason Collis and Dr. Susanne Lammot's World Kitchen/Chef Relief Project, Lance Korthals, Clark Tulberg of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Dr. Sean Anderson and many more inspiring storytellers.

All of us at CAPS Media offer our heartfelt thoughts and best wishes to everyone throughout Ventura County who suffered personal tragedy caused by the devastating fires of the last two years. We celebrate the extraordinary courage and sacrifice of fire fighters, law enforcement personnel and other first responders who tirelessly battled the devastating fires.

The Perfect Firestorm is a tribute to our entire community of heroes who, in the face of an overwhelming crisis, responded with astonishing calm and then opened their hearts, hands and homes to rescue neighbors and strangers and together rebuild their lives. We also thanks those in the media and support services who helped provide vital information to all of us in the community. Our community came together. Please contact CAPS Media at capsmedia.org or at 805.658.0500 for information about the screenings and about how to join and become a member. Our mission is to create an engaged and informed community through participation in electronic media.



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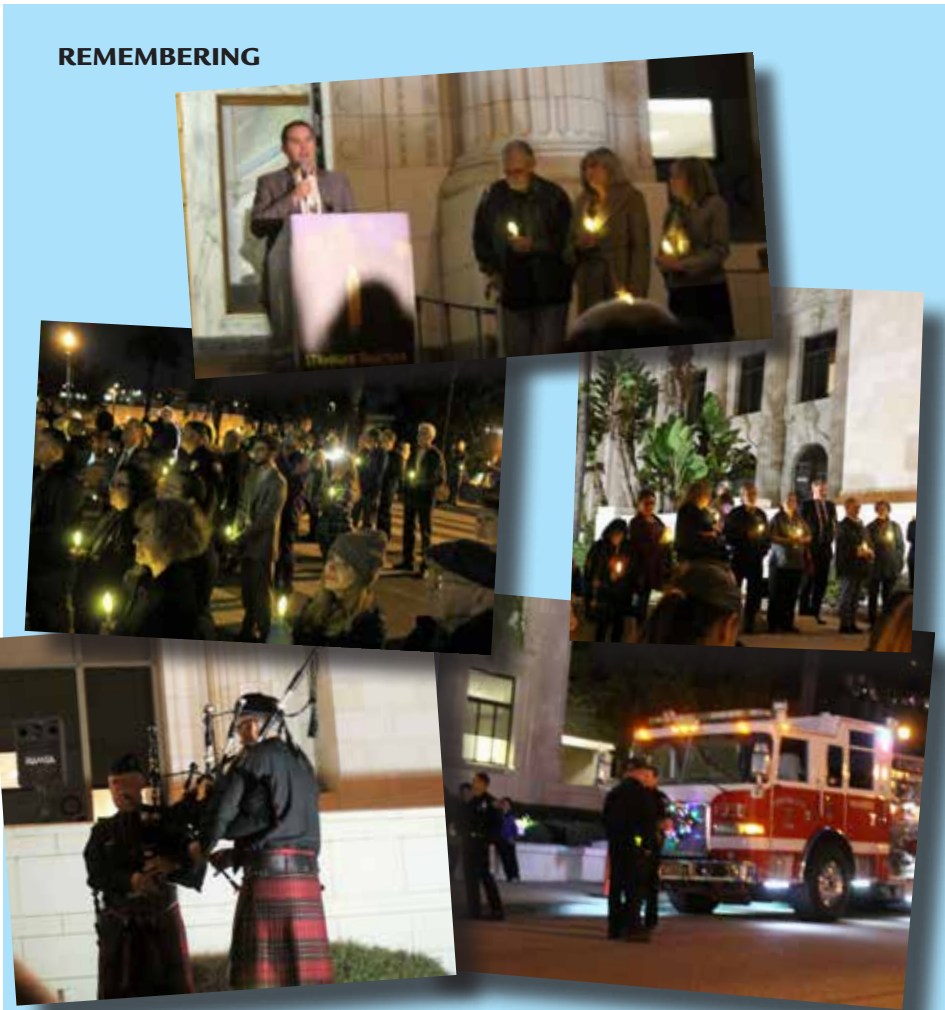
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Supported by the Ventura County Certified Farmers' Market Association. Funding for the Market Match Program is provided by the USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive.

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REMEMBERING



On Monday, December 3, the City of Ventura held a ceremony in observance of the one-year anniversary of the Thomas Fire. The ceremony was held on the front steps of Ventura City Hall preceding the regularly scheduled City Council meeting. Comments were made by Deputy Mayor Matt LaVere and Fire Chief David Endaya, followed by a moment of silence to remember those who lost their lives. Traditional bagpipe music was played by the Ventura City Firefighters Pipes & Drums Corps. Handheld battery candles were held to show support and reflect the strength of our community.

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“Look for the ANT on the Door!”

REMEMBERING



“Once we saw the image of the rearing horse in the flames we knew something unexplainable had been with us that night.” Christie Rice

Photograph by Terry Erickson



“The good that came from the fire was to witness the love, generosity and true compassion of our small community.” Duane Eells

Photograph by Norman Clayton



“Even in the resilience of mountains there lies vulnerability.” Lori Hansen

Photograph by Elizabeth Rose



A book about hope and connection and the coming together of the Ojai community

www.fromthefirebook.com



“The green coming back out of the ashes, that cycle of life-death-rebirth, it is a metaphor for life.” Paul Bergmann.

Photograph by Nathan Wickstrum.



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Should you update your will and estate plan?

by Jayson Cohen

American Legacy Solutions

Everyone should have a will; it ensures that your loved ones will receive the assets you wish them to have in the event of your death. To be clear, a will is a legal document that states how you want your property to be distributed and to care for any minor children. To ensure that your wishes are carried out as stated by you, a will must be written and signed by you and your witnesses.

Keep in mind; even though you have set up a will for your family; you may have several reasons to update your will, especially if your family situation has changed such as a birth in the family, an adoption, marriage or divorce. Another reason to update your will is if you have another child, a child you have after your will was created.

Most importantly, if your marriage ends, your estate plan will need to be updated. For example, if you divorce your spouse, you may not want to leave any assets to your ex. This would be a time and situation that you may want to discuss with your attorney; what changes you want to make to your will. You may also want to talk with your lawyer about how to protect your assets should your will be contested.

Another reason to update your will and estate plan is if your relationships have changed. Relationships, over time, change due to how you feel about people in your life. When relationships change or deteriorate, you may want to modify your will to either cut them out or readjust the distribution of property and monies.

In addition, adjustments to your will may need to be made if you move

to a different state. Keep in mind; each state in the U.S. has different rules and regulations; especially when it comes to estate taxes and property. It is important, once you move, to consult with a lawyer to ensure that your will is adjusted to your new state and that it is legal.

If you have had important changes made to your assets; especially if you have had an increase or decrease in the value of your estate, you need to update your will and estate plan. Examples of such changes might be, making a large investment and upping the value of your estate or a family member dies and leaves a substantial amount to you.

Or, maybe you change your mind about certain parts of your will. Perhaps there may be some in your life have emotionally turned away from you and your spouse and you want to adjust your will according to how you feel about that person or persons.

When it comes to updating a will, there are two options on how to make it happen; you can revise your will or create a new one. You can set up your own will; however, you may want to consult a lawyer if you have doubts about the content of your will, if you anticipate leaving a substantial amount of money to people not originally listed in your will or if you want to change the executor of the will.

Other reasons why you may want to consult with a lawyer are if you want to make arrangements for long-term care for a loved one, if you fear that someone will contest your will or if you wish to disinherit your spouse.



CHRISTMAS DINNER CELEBRATION

Thursday, December 20th • 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Spend the holiday season in the comfort and warmth of our beautiful home at The Palms at Bonaventure Assisted Living and Memory Care! Please join us for a delicious chef-prepared Christmas dinner, live entertainment, photos with Santa, and tours of our beautifully decorated community. This is one festive event you won't want to miss!

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Many senior centers have food pantries.

Senior centers are on the frontline to end local hunger

by Beverly Ferry

In Wabash, Indiana, the senior center is fully engaged in the war to end local hunger. Living Well Winchester Center's food distribution is our senior center's largest civic engagement program led by self-directed teams of volunteers.

Together, we fight the war on five fronts.

The center's pantry, the Community Cupboard, is part of the network of community pantries affiliated with Feeding America. It is an income based, client choice pantry for all ages providing Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Eligibility is based on income guidelines. Locally, food is procured through donations; local grants; gardeners, hunters and farmers; and contracts with national chains for donated frozen meat, fresh produce, and shelf staple food. The pantry serves

an average of 400 households monthly with at least one senior in 50% of the households. We also participated in the Voices for Food project with Purdue University. We opened our pantry to university observers conducting client surveys and inventory studies over a three-year period. Through this, we participated in a local food council, labeled food categories based on My Plate, and made the pantry more user friendly.

A second team packs and distributes monthly senior supplemental boxes funded through local grants. Our benefits volunteers use NCOA's Access to Benefits tool, BenefitsCheckUp®, to determine eligibility and to be sure seniors are using all the benefit programs available to them, taking a holistic approach to the individual's overall needs.

A third intergenerational team of 30 volunteers helps with a monthly drive thru distribution of food in front of the senior center. The regional food bank supplies a semi-truck of food which our volunteers put into people's cars as they come through the line. During the 2008 recession, the lines were three miles long, serving 800 households in two hours.

According to Feeding America "food insecurity measures the conditions that can lead to hunger." To address the root causes of food insecurity, a fourth team keeps the pantry stocked with new Scholastic books for all age ranges, funded through a local donor. Anyone using the Community Cupboard, including grandparents and non-custodial parents can select a book at each visit.

Our fifth effort is outside the senior center and is an outdoor little free pantry next to a free outdoor library.





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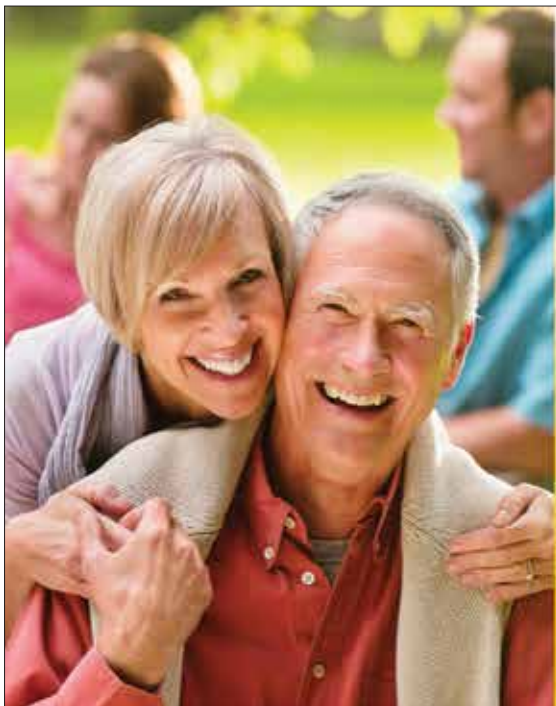
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Alzheimer’s Disease Neuroscience

Capitalizing on recent advances in neuroimaging and genetic biomarker research, scientists have been able to identify specific pathways by which tau and beta-amyloid, two proteins that are hallmarks of Alzheimer’s disease, accumulate in the brain over time. The NIA-supported researchers also found that the patterns of tau and beta-amyloid accumulation were related to specific genetic profiles, providing better understanding of Alzheimer’s disease risk and possible new avenues for diagnosis and monitoring of the disease.

Improved technology makes possible for intensive, side-by-side comparisons of how tau and beta-amyloid spread in the brain in distinctive patterns. Using this technology, researchers were able to reveal nuances into how, even in disease, the brain follows a dynamic and complex network of circuits and connections. The results were reported in the Oct. 29 issue of Nature Medicine.

The study was led by Dr. Jorge Sepulcre and Dr. Keith Johnson of The Gordon Center for Medical Imaging at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, and Dr. Reisa Sperling, director of the Center for Alzheimer Research and Treatment at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital and professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School. The team used data from the Harvard Aging Brain Study and the Allen Human Brain Atlas.

In a brain with Alzheimer’s disease, abnormal deposits of tau and beta-amyloid do not randomly appear, but instead show unique spatial patterns that follow the brain’s existing connected neural networks. To better understand how tau and beta-amyloid interact with and influence each other, the researchers looked closely at 3-D brain network and gene maps and found that both tau and beta-amyloid were associated with genes devoted to lipid

metabolism, and that the APOE E4 gene – a risk factor for Alzheimer’s disease – played a central role in the relationships of these genetic networks.

The scientists found common genetic background for the malfunction of both proteins. The findings showed that in addition to APOE, other variations in genetic pathways shared by tau and beta-amyloid could trigger their accumulation. The study also found that tau propagation was associated with an axon-related (parts of neurons that pass messages away from the cell body) genetic profile, while beta-amyloid’s spread was connected with a dendrite-related (parts of neurons that receive messages from other cells) genetic profile.

The researchers hope this new understanding of tau and beta-amyloid’s propagation patterns can be combined with a person’s genetic profile to help develop precision medicine approaches for improved diagnosis, monitoring and therapies for Alzheimer’s disease in the brain.

Reference: Sepulcre J et al. Neurogenetic contributions to amyloid beta and tau spreading in the human cortex. Nature Medicine. 2018 Oct 29 doi: 10.1038/s41591-018-0206-4.

How the midterm elections will affect aging policy

by Howard Bedlin

Democrats could pick up as many as 40 new seats, establishing an anticipated 234-201 margin in the House. That means, House Democrats can lose only 16 votes within their party to pass legislation. So, the 20-25 conservative Democrats, also known as “Blue Dogs,” who could represent swing votes, will likely have increased influence in the House.

It is not certain whether current Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) will be able to secure the votes needed to be the next House Speaker. Several candidates who won office, as well as several current Democratic members, have said they will not support her.

House Ways and Means Committee: Richard Neal (D-MA) will chair this committee that has jurisdiction over

Senior Living

Medicare, Social Security, and tax issues. The chair of the Health Subcommittee will be either Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) or Mike Thompson (D-CA).

House Energy and Commerce Committee: Frank Pallone (D-NJ) will chair this committee that has jurisdiction over Medicare and Medicaid issues. The Health Subcommittee chair will be Anna Eshoo (D-CA).

Appropriations Committee: The new chair will be Nita Lowey (D-NY), and the chair of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee will be Rosa DeLauro (D-CT).

Education and Labor Committee: Bobby Scott (D-VA) will be the new chair of this committee, which will oversee the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 2019.

Changes in the Senate

In the Senate, Republicans gained one seat for a margin of 52-48, and they may gain another, pending the outcome of the Mississippi runoff race today. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) will continue to be the Senate Majority Leader, with Chuck Schumer (D-NY) continues as Minority Leader. Moderate Republicans such as Susan Collins (R-ME), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Mitt Romney (R-UT) are expected to be key swing votes.

One important leadership change is that Chuck Grassley (R-IA) will take over as chair of the Senate Finance Committee which has jurisdiction over Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and tax issues, replacing retiring Orrin Hatch (R-UT). The Finance Committee.

With the Democrats in control of the House, fears about key programs being cut are eased. If Republicans had retained control of the House, Senate, and White House, many expected they would continue to try to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and significantly cut and cap Medicaid, which helps about 7 million low-income seniors. There were also fears that Republicans would attempt major cuts to Medicare, OAA and other discretionary appropriations, and potentially Social Security to help pay for the \$1.5 trillion increase in the deficit due to last year's tax cuts.

Leaders, instead, are expected to focus on several key health care issues, including reducing prescription drug costs, Medicare for All proposals, and stabilizing the ACA. Other priorities will likely include climate change, immigration, gun safety, voting rights, and infrastructure, as well as several investigations of the White House.

Some of these bolder House issues have little or no chance of passing the Republican Senate and being signed into law by the

president. However, some compromises can be made to gain bipartisan support and move through to final passage.

What you need to know this Medicare enrollment season

by Rick Beavin
California Market President Humana

It's that time of year when people with Medicare review their health insurance choices and enroll in a Medicare Advantage or Prescription Drug plan for the coming year.

People typically have a lot of questions as they research their Medicare options, which primarily include Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans, before finding the plan that best fits their needs.

Here are some of the most commonly asked questions Humana licensed health insurance agents get from consumers during the Medicare Annual Election Period: *When is the annual enrollment period to choose a Medicare plan for 2019?*

The Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan Annual Election Period takes place from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, 2018, for coverage that takes effect Jan. 1, 2019.

Do I have to re-enroll in Medicare every year?

You don't need to sign up for Original Medicare each year. However, you should review your Medicare Advantage or Prescription Drug Plan coverage annually, since Medicare plans and personal circumstances can change every year. If you take no action during the annual enrollment period, you'll typically automatically be re-enrolled in your same medical or prescription plan for 2019.

Does Medicare include coverage for my prescription drugs?

Original Medicare does not cover most prescription drugs. Many Medicare Advantage plans include prescription drug coverage, or you can sign up for a Part D Prescription Drug Plan separately. A licensed agent can look up your medications and tell you what the cost of each drug would be on a plan.

How are health insurers like Humana able to offer Medicare Advantage plans with no monthly premium?

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through programs like disease and chronic care management, which help people better manage health conditions and, in turn, reduce health care costs. Keep in mind that you still need to pay your Medicare Part B premium, which covers medical services and preventive care. You might want to use the additional premium dollars you save for out-of-pocket medical costs, such as co-pays. *How do I find out if my doctors, hospitals and specialists are in my Medicare Advantage provider network?*

Most Medicare Advantage plans offer easy-to-use online tools to help you find doctors and hospitals that are in the plan's network. A licensed agent can also help you look up hospitals and doctors to see if they're accepting a plan and taking new patients. *If I select a Medicare plan for the coming year, and then find I don't like it, can I drop it and choose another plan?*

The plan you select by Dec. 7 will be

your Medicare plan for all of 2019, with few exceptions, so it's wise to research your options carefully. If you sign up for a Medicare Advantage plan for 2019, and then find it's not the right fit, between Jan. 1 and March 31, there will be an Open Enrollment Period during which you can switch from a Medicare Advantage or a Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug Plan to another Medicare Advantage plan with or without prescription drug coverage, or choose Original Medicare with or without a stand-alone Prescription Drug Plan. Full information on 2019 Medicare health and prescription drug plans is available on www.medicare.gov, and for Humana plans at www.humana.com/Medicare. You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) (or TTY: 1-877-486-2048) 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or call Humana at 1-877-877-0714 (TTY use 711) 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time seven days a week.



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REMEMBERING



"We thought we would be back in our home in a couple of hours."

REMEMBERING

How one Ventura family lost their home to the Thomas Fire

by Richard Lieberman

"We had ten minutes to get out of there, we got out with our animals our family and our birth certificates and that was it" said Susan Bell. Susan and her family including husband John Bell her two children and grandchild safely evacuated their home in the Ondulando neighborhood in Ventura with just ten minutes notice to get out and escape the flames.

"We thought we would be back in our home in a couple of hours" said Bell.

The hardest part of that night was for this family finding a place to stay. The family went to the government center and attempted to secure a place to stay the night, but their efforts were unsuccessful. All the hotel and motel rooms were already booked. Finally, the family was able to find a single room for them all.

The Bell's lost everything that night one year ago. Four generations of photos, albums, memorabilia. "There was just nothing left" added Bell. "getting home from work I could see fire all around, I saw fire trucks rumbling up and down our street" Bell said. It was at this time clear that they needed to evacuate. Shortly police cars announcing on loud-speakers to evacuate immediately flooded the neighborhood. The family and pets made it out of the fire area safely.

With an uncompromising positive attitude and looking to re-build right away. They started the very next day December 5th. They were savvy enough to know what to do. File the claim, apply for the necessary permits, contact a contractor, get plans finalized and filed with the city. "We knew how to hound those we had to" Bell said. "

"We were very fortunate and we were the 10th on the list to be approved by the city for our re-build" added Bell.

The community was wonderful and shortly after settling into our hotel room that night, boxes of clothing and essentials began to arrive. "We received more than we needed so we started to disburse some of what we were given to other fire victims" Bell added.

Continued on page 22



News & Notes

Plaza Park gets sculpture from John Mahoney self-taught chainsaw sculptor

by Richard Lieberman

In August 2018, a very large pine tree in Plaza Park, 651 E. Thompson Blvd. (across from post office) had to be almost completely removed due to disease. John Mahoney from West Coast Arborist transformed the 20-foot high remaining tree into a beautiful sculptured art piece with a chainsaw. John also carved the two eagle sculptures at Arroyo Verde Park and the owl and bear at Camino Real Park. John is a true Michelangelo with a chainsaw.

The sculpting is part of the service from West Coast Arborist for removal and milling of the trees and will not require any extra cost from the City. The City of Ventura contracts with West Coast Arborist for tree maintenance. The company is environmentally conscious and reuses wood and trees that are cut down. John Mahoney came all the way from Laguna Beach to perform his art.

Years of drought have taken a toll on trees in and around Ventura. The city contracted with long time contractor West Coast Arborists to take out

dead trees in Plaza Park. During an evaluation one of the company's owners had an idea. Why not let John Mahoney, a self-taught chainsaw artist turn one of the trees into a lasting tribute to the fallen due to our long term draught conditions, which have killed hundreds of trees throughout the city.

Mohoney sent to the city samples of his work and offered an unbeatable price -free to the city.

This sculptor began the unusual career 45 years ago, when his then 18-year-old dad started West Coast Arbiters in Orange County. He followed his dad into the family business and many years later, drew inspiration while watching a TV show about chainsaw artists.

He got to thinking "There is only so many pieces of firewood you can make." he said. "At the intersection of power tolls and creativity. I found my path in life."

The next time that you are in the park, or at the post office be sure to admire this wonderful sculpture (and the others that he has done for Ventura).

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REMEMBERING

On a beautiful Sunday, Dec. 2 a dedication was held at Serra Cross Park located in Grant Park to celebrate the repairs made after the Thomas Fire destroyed the area. It featured great jazz by the Cabrillo Middle School Jazz Band and welcomes by Deputy Mayor Matt LaVere, Chief of Police Ken Corney, Fire Chief David Endaya and others. Citycouncil Member Christy Weir was the moderator and Councilmember Cheryl Heitmann was there to greet those attending as were other dignitaries. Fr. Tom Elewaut from the Mission San Buenaventura gave a blessing to the Park. Several painting by local artists were bid on at the silent auction to raise money for upkeep. New landscaping, and grass made the area look as good as it did prior to the Thomas Fire. Even though the area is now usable Grant Park remains closed, but, by reservation Serra Cross is available for private events.

The Serra Cross Conservancy encourages everyone to enjoy the park and welcomes events ranging from family picnics to educational field trips to weddings and memorial services. The site, with its unique character and spectacular views, is very popular for private events. If you are interested in holding your event at the Cross contact Amber Weir at info@amberweir.com.



A dead tree turns into a beautiful bird. Photos by Michael Gordon.

The Pet Page



Dedicated to Scamp

■ Razzle Dazzle some cat stole your photo so please send it to us again.
■ Therapy dogs Lola, Herbie, Livi, Posey, Molli and Jock currently visit the patients and staff

at CMHS twice a month. They meet at 11am in the lobby and visit patients who would like to see the dogs on the sixth floor and, if there are patients in Pediatrics on 7, they visit with them. They visit in teams of two. It brings such joy to patients, staff, families and visitors. Much more so than a human.

They represent the Dr Peter Gall Therapy Dog Program

■ On October 26, five new Search Teams were partnered at the National Training Center as the training team officially handed the Search Dogs' leashes over to their new firefighter-handlers. With nearly 100 friends, family, SDF staff and volunteers in attendance, they welcomed the newest teams to the SDF family: Mike Devine & Sonny and Ryan Greenup & Koda (both with Los Angeles County Fire Department/California Task Force 2), Michael Bruce & Cooper, Imelda Cordova & Knox, both Orange County Fire Authority, and Wade Haller & Dallas of Long Beach Fire Department (all with California Task Force 5). Congratulations to the new teams and a big thank you to everyone who helped these dogs and handlers achieve this first major milestone in their careers together!

■ By Hannah Beers

Cats and dogs may occupy similar places in people's hearts, but when it comes to the two species' hearts—and heart disease—there are a lot of differences. Dr. Ryan Fries, a veterinary cardiologist at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Urbana, explains some of these differences and how he is working to improve the prospects for afflicted cats.

Chronic valvular disease is the most common type of heart disease in dogs.

In it, the valves degenerate and become misshapen, causing the valves to leak. Occasionally cats are born with heart valve disease, but the development of degenerative valvular disease over time, as it occurs in dogs, is not seen in cats.

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, on the other hand, accounts for 80 percent of cases of heart disease in domestic cats but is rare in dogs. In this disease, one or several areas of the walls of the heart become abnormally thickened.

"Certain breeds, such as Maine Coon and Ragdoll cats, are genetically predisposed to developing hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, but any cat can develop this disease," says Dr. Fries.

Genetic tests are available for predisposed breeds to identify cats that carry the genetic mutation for hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Cats carrying this mutation should not be bred.

Restrictive cardiomyopathy and dilated cardiomyopathy are rarely seen in cats.

"Dilated cardiomyopathy was actually very common in cats before the 1980s. Then, veterinarians discovered that dilated cardiomyopathy was linked to a taurine deficiency in commercial cat food. Now that taurine is appropriately added to cat food, this problem is quite rare in cats," explains Dr. Fries.

Not only do the types of heart disease cats and dogs acquire differ, so do the clinical manifestations of heart disease. "Dogs almost always have an audible murmur, meaning it can be detected with a stethoscope by a veterinarian. This is not true in cats," he says.

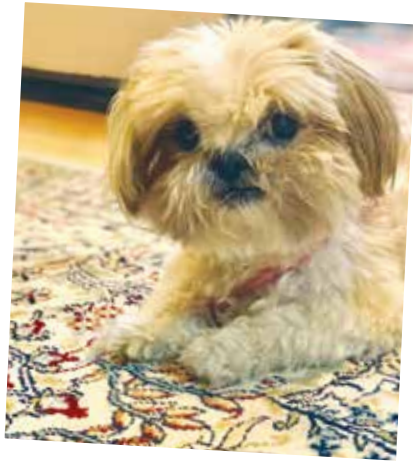
Radiographs (X-rays) of the chest are also commonly used to diagnose heart disease in dogs but are not as useful in cats. "We need an echocardiogram to definitively diagnose heart disease in a cat," says Dr. Fries.

Symptoms of heart disease in cats can be subtle and non-specific. Owners may notice that their feline friends are hiding more, are less interested in the food, or generally more lethargic. Cats are masters at hiding sickness, so any changes in behavior should tip off an

Scamp Club

(Scampclub pets are not for adoption.)

Hi: I'm Stella. I am a nine-year-old Shih Tzu (like the wonderful Scamp, who I miss) I love to take walks and eat chicken(I'm careful of the bones)! I have lots of toys but to be honest I would rather chase my sister cat, Cici around the house. That's so much more fun!



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owner that something isn't quite right. Cats may also show signs of respiratory distress, such as labored breathing, panting, and open-mouth breathing.

Because of changes in blood flow and enlargement of the left atrium, cats with heart disease are at increased risk for blood clot formation within the heart. Pieces of these clots may break off, being swept by the bloodstream to locations distant from the heart (thromboembolism).

The most common site for thromboembolism in cats is the back legs (saddle thrombus). This leads to acute weakness/paralysis and pain in these limbs. Cats showing signs like this should be taken to a veterinarian immediately.

"Bringing your cat for annual examinations and talking to your veterinari-

an when you notice any changes in your cat's behavior are the best ways to catch heart disease at earlier stages," recommends Dr. Fries.

"There are basically two stages of heart disease in cats, and each hold a different prognosis. In the first stage, the cat has confirmed heart disease and is at risk of developing clinical problems," says Dr. Fries. "In the later stage, the cat has heart disease as well as clinical problems, such as heart failure or thromboembolism. An echocardiogram with a veterinary cardiologist can determine which stage a cat is in."

"Heart health is just as vital to cats as it is to dogs, but heart disease is much more difficult to detect in cats. Regular visits to your veterinarian can help protect your cat's heart and overall health," says Dr. Fries.

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Five new Search Teams were partnered at the National Training Center.



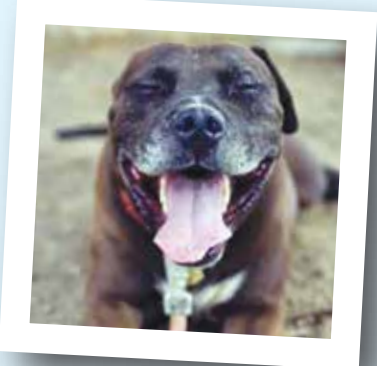
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The Pet Page

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This 'n' That Chanukah

Every year Jewish people around the world celebrate the holiday of Chanukah, the Festival of Lights. Chanukah begins on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, but the starting date on the western calendar varies from year to year. This year it started on sundown on Dec. 2 and ends on Dec. 10.

In the land of Judea there was a mean (boo) Syrian king, Antiochus. The king ordered the Jewish people to reject their God, their religion, their customs and their beliefs and to worship the Greek gods. There were some who did as they were told, but many refused. One who refused was

Judah Maccabee(hooray).

Judah and his four brothers formed an army and after 3 years of fighting, the Maccabees were finally successful in driving the Syrians out of Israel and reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem.

When Judah and his followers finished cleaning the temple, they wished to light the eternal light, known as the N'er Tamid, which is present in every Jewish house of worship. Only a tiny jug of oil was found with only enough for a single day. The oil lamp was filled and lit. Then a miracle occurred as the tiny amount of oil stayed lit not for one day, but for 8 days.

Jews celebrate Chanukah to mark the victory over the Syrians and the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple.

The Festival of the Lights, Chanukah, lasts for eight days to commemorate this miracle of the oil. The menorah candles are lit to celebrate the 8 days that the oil stayed lit.

The spellings of Chanukah has caused some confusion. Part of the reason for this confusion may be due to the fact there is no exact English translation of the Hebrew word for Chanukah. So to help clear up some of the confusion here are just a few of the different spellings one might encounter. They all celebrate the holiday.

Chanukah, Chanukkah, Hanuka, Hanukah, Hannukah, Hanukkah. In the United States it is most common to use the spelling Chanukah.





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Join Footworks Youth Ballet for their Family Educational Hour

Ventura's Footworks Youth Ballet presents its 15th anniversary performance of the Tchaikovsky classic, The Nutcracker. On December 8th and 9th, in two full-length performances, they will perform with the Footworks Community Orchestra and singers from the Carpe Diem Chorus at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center. Family-friendly matinees on both days begin at 2 p.m.

While Tchaikovsky's score remains the same, the live orchestra adds

dimension and individual flare as well as artistic director Kirsten Oakley's little twists to the story that provide freshness and whimsy each year. This year marks the first time a student will take the role of the Nutcracker Prince. Jonah Thomas, a 12-year-old Ventura Charter School student, begins the evening as Clara's nephew who eventually becomes the Nutcracker Prince. Regarding ballet and the role he is playing this year, Jonah comments, "I have been doing ballet for three years at the Oakley Ballet Center and I really enjoy it. The studio has really helped me grow as a dancer. The Nutcracker role is a really big step for me and I am excited to perform it."

Nicola Hammond, a 7th grader at Anacapa Middle School, takes the role of Clara this season and is joined by her father Chad Hammond who is in the role of Mr. Stahlbaum, Clara's father. It's the

This 'n' That

first father/daughter duo to hit the stage in quite some time by the Footworks Youth Ballet dancers.

Founded by Kirsten Oakley, Footworks Youth Ballet was created with the goal of providing a place for young people to thrive and grow through the joy of dance as they learn the art and discipline of classical ballet. Technique classes are offered through the Oakley Ballet Center in Ventura, for children ages 5-18.

In keeping with the mission of Footworks, many student dancers perform in principal roles such as the Sugar Plum Fairy or Snow Queen, giving young artists the opportunity to take on classical ballet repertoire at its best. As Oakley explains, "Even if a student leaves ballet after high school, they take with them a great appreciation for the classics, having explored the art form to its utmost and seen the results of their dedication and effort."

For each ballet production, Footworks Youth Ballet hosts a sold-out performance for over 3,000 school-aged children to see the ballet. Most of the tickets for the children are provided at the reduced fee of \$5.00 each, and many of the students qualify for free tickets.

Join Footworks Youth Ballet for their Family Educational Hour one hour prior to each show to learn about the production, costumes, ballet history and music. The Nutcracker, presented by Footworks Youth Ballet.

Sat. Dec. 8th, 2:00 pm

Sun. Dec. 9th, 2:00 pm

Oxnard Performing Arts Center

Tickets \$19, \$24, \$29

Call 486.2424 to buy tickets, or order online at footworksyouthballet.org

Historical Interpreters, a non-profit volunteer group, will perform scenes in period costumes. Refreshments will be served, live musical entertainment will be provided and the Olivas Adobe Gift Shop will be open for those wishing to find unique holiday gifts.

The Olivas Adobe hosts private and public events year-round. The Olivas Adobe Historical Interpreters make the history of the Olivas Adobe come to life by celebrating its Chumash, Old West, Rancho, and Latino heritage. For more information visit the Olivas Adobe website at www.cityofventura.ca.gov/olivasadobe.



GCCC is as much a community as it is a group of singers.

"When You're Singing, Everything Else Goes Away" (Ellen, GCCC member)

by Jill Forman

They enter the room gradually, a group of 80-90 everyday men and women, and take their places in a U-shaped arrangements of seats. Their leader steps on a podium, a few announcements, some preliminary chords from the pianist, they open their mouths to sing, and they are transformed.

The Gold Coast Concert Chorus' holiday concert is soon; they have been working on this program since the Monday after Labor Day. It is sounding good, and every singer is beaming with the joy of making music. Artistic Director Elizabeth Helms looks pleased.

Starting its 31st season, the GCCC is as much a community as it is a group of singers. Three members, Sylvia, Carol and Mary have been singing since its beginning; Mary has never missed a concert. The group has traveled to Italy, France, Great Britain, Eastern Europe... and Carnegie Hall, twice!

Rehearsal is well under way; they are running through everything tonight. Next week they rehearse in the actual venue with the bluegrass musicians. There are corrections, reminders, "Let's try it this way..." Lots of teasing and laughter. Jessica the accompanist, who is a choral director herself, chimes in with ideas. It is a collaborative effort.

The affection and respect the director and singers feel for each other is apparent. "The talent in this room is amazing," says Helms, bragging about two of her professionals who have arranged music for the group. And the members: "We can sing anything with the proper director," says Rose. "She keeps us challenged musically," from Scott. "We have a great conductor," says Dave.

Members are reminded about posture and proper breathing. "Singing is healthy," they tell me; their heartbeats

Continued on page 27



Docent Mary Thompson will give you a tour of the Adobe.

Candlelight Tours of Historic Olivas Adobe

The City of Ventura Holiday Candlelight Tours of the Historic Olivas Adobe will be held on Sunday, December 9. Attendees of all ages, looking to get into the holiday spirit, will enjoy this event while learning about life in the late 1800s. Located at 4200 Olivas Park Drive -the first tour begins at 5:30 pm. Tours are conducted in groups, which will be offered every twelve minutes. This popular event, with limited space available, requires reservations by calling (805) 658-4726.

Experience what life was like long ago at this expansive adobe home and courtyard built between 1847-49 by Don Raymundo Olivas. Visitors will take a step back in time at this California Historical Landmark as the Olivas Adobe

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Police Reports

by Cindy Summers

Police reports are provided to us by the Ventura Police Department and are not the opinions of the Ventura Breeze. All suspects mentioned are assumed to be innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Trespassing on Railroad Property and Resisting Arrest

On November 24, at approximately 9:45pm, the Ventura Police Department Command Center received a call from the Union Pacific Railroad dispatch reporting that a subject was on the roof top of the train and refusing to get off. The north-bound Amtrak train, which was occupied by numerous passengers, was stopped at the train platform adjacent to the Ventura County Fairgrounds.

Officers arrived on scene and attempted to make contact with the subject, later identified as 22-year-old Motaz Eljadaa. Eljadaa refused orders to climb down off the train and continued running back and forth on the roof of the train, in an attempt to elude officers. Before officers could access the train's roof top, Eljadaa suddenly climbed down and fled on foot, during which time he attempted to hide in a tree. Officers caught him and took Eljadaa into custody.

Amtrak employees reported Eljadaa boarded the train in Moorpark and had been causing several disturbances as the train stopped at each scheduled stop before arriving in Ventura.

Assault with a Deadly Weapon

On November 24, at approximately 3:40pm, the Ventura Police Department Command Center received a call of a family disturbance and reports that one of the family members, later identified as a 56-year-old male adult had been stabbed with a screwdriver. Officers, along with Ventura City Fire and AMR personnel, responded to the call and found the victim suffering from multiple non-life-threatening injuries to his upper body. He was treated at the scene by medical personnel and later transported to VCMC for treatment of his injuries. The suspect, identified as 31-year-old Ventura resident Andrew Ricardez, had fled the residence prior to officers arriving on scene.

During the investigation, officers determined the victim and Ricardez, who are father and son, got into a verbal argument. Ricardez armed himself with a screwdriver and stabbed the victim several times. Ricardez was contacted later at another family member's residence and taken into custody. He was booked into the Ventura County Jail for assault with a deadly weapon.

Possession of a Knife on a School Campus, Resisting Arrest and Warrants

On November 26 at approximately 2pm, the Ventura Police Department Command Center received a call from Gold Coast Transit reporting a subject possibly armed with a gun near the intersection of Telegraph Rd. and Palomares Ave. The information was second hand from a bus driver, who denied the subject entry onto a bus and said the gun was wrapped in a shirt.

Officers arrived on scene and observed the subject, later identified as 34-year-old Ventura resident Andrew Ortiz, walking near the YMCA on Telegraph Rd. As one of the officers was attempting to make contact with Ortiz, he fled onto the campus of Anacapa Middle School. The officer pursued Ortiz on foot and quickly took him into custody.

Traffic Pursuit with Arrest

On November 28 at approximately 1:30am, a Ventura Police Officer attempted to stop a Chevy truck on the 126 Freeway at Kimball Road for a traffic violation. The driver did not yield to the officer and fled.

Officers pursued the vehicle onto Telephone Road and into a neighborhood south of Bristol Road and Ramelli Ave. The driver was not familiar with the area and turned onto a dead end street. Recognizing he could not continue to flee in his vehicle, the driver exited and fled on foot. Officers initiated a foot pursuit and caught the suspect after a short distance.

The suspect, 44-year-old Oxnard resident Joaquin Cano, was a parolee at large and had thrown methamphetamine out of the window of his vehicle during the pursuit, which was recovered by officers.

Armed Robbery

On October 20, at approximately 1:30pm, the suspects entered a business at 1839 E. Main St. They approached the employee at the counter, pulled out their guns and demanded money. The employee gave the suspects an undisclosed amount of money and the suspects left to the business. The suspects were last seen driving away eastbound in a white four-door compact vehicle.

Major Crimes Detectives began investigating this incident and several other similar armed robberies that occurred around the same time frame. After analyzing video surveillance and following up on investigative leads, Detectives identified 29-year-old Ventura resident Ernesto Solis as one of the suspects in the H&H Liquor store robbery. Solis was also wanted for a PROS violation and for providing false information to a police officer on two different occasions allowing him to avoid being arrested for his PROS warrant.

On November 27, at 6:30pm, Detectives located Solis near his residence in the 1700 Block of Olive Street and took him into custody without incident.

Assault with a Deadly Weapon and Elder Abuse Arrest

On November 29, at approximately 9:45am, officers responded to multiple reports of a fight near the businesses in the 5700 block of Telephone Road. When officers arrived, they found the elderly male victim to the front of the businesses. He was suffering from multiple lacerations and other non-life threatening injuries. The suspect, 56-year-old Ventura resident Tod Koep, was also located nearby and detained by officers.

The investigation revealed Koep was unprovoked when he approached the victim and struck him numerous times with closed fists. Koep was arrested for the felony charges of assault with a deadly weapon and elder abuse.

Attempt Carjacking and Attempt Kidnapping Arrest

On November 29, at 7:50pm, the Ventura Police Department Command Center received a 911 call from a female victim advising the suspect had attempted to get into her vehicle forcefully, and she described the suspect. Ventura College Police officers who were in the area saw a suspect matching the description and detained him.

Ventura Police officers arrived and conducted the investigation. A brief moment after the female victim got in her car, the suspect opened her car door and grabbed her. He made a gesture that he had a gun in his waistband and told her to move into the passenger seat. The victim resisted and began honking her horn which caused the suspect to stop his assault and flee.

The victim identified the suspect who was detained, Anthony Figueroa, 18 years of Ventura, as the person who committed the crime. Through the investigation, it was determined the suspect was not armed with a handgun. No one was injured as a result of this crime. Figueroa was booked at Ventura County Jail for Attempt Carjacking and Attempt Kidnapping.

Community Events

Ventura events

by Ana Baker

Ventura Poinsettia Dance Club Monday nights 7:30 - 9:45p.m. Poinsettia Pavilion. Ballroom, swing, Latin and line dancing. \$10 members, \$12 non-members. Dance lessons 6:45 - 7:15 \$5 for couple \$3 for single. Call Rick 415-8842 for more information.

There will be a regular Ventura Discussion Group meeting at Main Street Restaurant 3159 Main St., Wednesday from 4 - 5:45 p.m. Several people usually stay for a drink and a bite to eat afterward. Bring an interesting topic to discuss if you can.

Ventura's ACBL Duplicate Bridge Club offers games for all levels of play. Learn the game, play with your peers, and earn master points while you are having fun. There is a game every day of the week. Check out their website at www.vcbridge.org

Country Western Line Dancing every Tuesday 7 - 9 p.m. Instruction every night. Located at the Moose lodge, 10269 Telephone Road. More information at countrylovers.com.

Cross Town Hikers join in on Wednesday nights for a moderate-paced hike that includes views of Ventura from the cross, a walk out to the end of the pier, and a stroll along the Promenade back to the Museum. Four miles with an 800-foot elevation gain. Meet at 7 p.m. sharp at the fountain across the street from the Mission. Join Facebook page for more information: www.facebook.com/groups/800215670039426/

The members of the Ventura Investment Group meet on Mondays for an informal discussion of recent economic events. Topics cover current events that affect stocks, funds, real estate, and interest-bearing investments. The meeting is from 10 - 11:30 a.m. at the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf at Telephone Road and Main Street. Visitors and potential members are welcomed. There are no dues or requirements to participate, and all levels of experience are welcomed.

First Wednesday, of each month, 6 - 10 p.m., Gold Coast Modular Railroad Club meets at the Murphy Auto Museum, Oxnard. Now exhibiting Saturdays and Sundays, 10 - 4 p.m. Visitors and new members are welcome. Member initiation fee \$10, monthly dues \$20, \$10 for Juniors. Murphy Auto Museum, 2230 Statham Blvd., Oxnard. www.gcmrc.com. For more information, call (805) 229-7429.

Retired men might enjoy a visit to a meeting of the Ventura Retired Men's Group at the Ventura Elks lodge at 11:30 a.m. on the first or third Tuesday of the month. Stop in and introduce yourself for a complimentary lunch, interesting program, and a relaxing good time with your peers. Give Bob Likins a call at (805) 587-1233 for details.

Musicians' Sober Support Meetup @ FIND (A Friend in Deed) every Monday night 7-9 p.m. Bring acoustic instrument(s) for jamming after sharing support for sobriety. Bell Arts-Studio 39-432 Ventura Ave. For further information Friend.In.Deed.Ventura@gmail.com.

Are you a stamp collector? The Ventura County Philatelic Society meet on the first and third Mondays each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of the Foothills, 6279 Foothill Rd. Admission and parking are free. Come for a great evening. They are a fun group. Contact: Bill Garner (805) 320-1601 or

sockonthenose@gmail.com

Mended Hearts of Ventura. Come share if you have had heart surgery or stent implant. Group meets the first Tuesday each month at Lemon Wood Mobile Park, 850 Johnson Dr. They have excellent speaker leading Cardiologists, Nutritionists, Dietitians etc. from our area. Contact Richard Hatcher at (805) 644-2733

When a child dies, The Compassionate Friends (TCF) can help a family move forward through the grief journey. This can take time and require added patience. The Compassionate Friends provides a safe and supportive place where grieving parents, grandparents and siblings over age 16 can come speak openly about their child, express feelings about loss, be listened to by others, and celebrate milestones. Meeting twice a month, on the first and third Wednesday from 7-9 pm at the Poinsettia Pavilion, in the Canada Larga room. On the following dates: Dec 5, Dec 19. For more information, contact Laura Lindsay, tcfventura@gmail.com,

Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDa) is a 12-step fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is recovery from codependence in the development and maintenance of healthy relationships. Every Friday at 6 PM at Kaiser Health, 1000 Hill Rd. 2nd floor lobby. Further information Deva (805) 814-5650.

Dec. 7, 8, 9: The 25th year of the Dudley House Holiday Boutique continues into December on weekends from 10 - 6 p.m. with a flea market added on Sundays. Come celebrate the spirit of holidays past at this historic 1892 farm house where you will find quality crafts, home décor, antiques and collectibles and a tearoom with refreshments, silent auction and bargain items. The Dudley House is located at 197 N. Ashwood Avenue on the corner of Loma Vista. Admission is free. Call (805) 642-3345 for information.

Dec. 8: You are warmly invited to attend an Advent Evensong on Saturday at 5 pm. This hour of meditation, led by the women's voices, will include the singing of carols interspersed with the gift of silence to welcome this season of hope. Patricia Lathrop-McPherson and Karen Sonnenschein are the soloists. Directed by Helen Farson. Ventura Seventh-day Adventist Church, 6300 Telephone Rd., Please call 805.641.9646 if more information is desired. Admission is free.

Dec. 9: Community Presbyterian Church Choir and Preschool Present a Family Christmas Concert and Caroling. 1555 Poli St at 4:30 p.m. All ages welcome, Christmas cookie potluck to follow.

Dec. 11: Pasajera, an evening of Flamenco at the WAV, 175 S Ventura Ave. at 8 p.m. Seattle-based Flamenco dancer, Savannah Fuentes brings her latest show to WAV. Savannah will be joined by two exceptional Spanish Flamenco artists; acclaimed Spanish-Romani guitarist Pedro Cortes and singer/percussionist/dancer Jose Moreno.

Dec. 13: Ventura Chapter, Holistic Chamber of Commerce upcoming Holiday Party on Thursday, from 6- 8 p.m. at the Harvest Café, 175 S Ventura Ave. Please bring a vegan or vegetarian dish for the potluck (the cafe has asked that no meat or fish be included in food); drinks will be available for purchase. Cost to members is \$5 and non-members is \$10 in cash to be paid at the door.



This 'n' That

Humana and Heritage Provider network team up

Humana Inc. a leading health and well-being company, has announced it has collaborated with Heritage Provider Network (HPN), an effective physician-led value-based care organizations, on a value-based agreement designed to offer a coordinated, patient-centered experience to help Humana Medicare Advantage members in Southern and Central California achieve better health.

Humana's Medicare Advantage HMO plan members in Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties, as well as Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan members in Kern and Ventura counties, will have in-network access to HPN's vast number of physicians and facilities throughout Southern and Central California.

The agreement with HPN is part of Humana's longstanding commitment to value-based care, which emphasizes:

More personal time with health professionals and personalized care that is tailored to each person's unique health situation;

Access to proactive health screenings and programs that are focused on preventing illness;

Improved care for people living with chronic conditions with a focus on avoiding health complications;

Leveraging technologies, such as data analytics, that connect physicians and help them work as a team to coordinate care around the patient; and

Reimbursement to physicians linked to the health outcomes of their patients rather than based solely on the quantity of services they provide (fee-for-service). (Watch video of Humana and AAFP's Value-Based Payment Study Congressional Briefing).

Under this new agreement, Heritage Provider Network's physi-

cians will also benefit by having access to new tools, real-time data and care support offered by Humana, which will maximize the time HPN physicians spent with their patients covered by Humana Medicare Advantage.

Humana has an extensive and growing value-based care presence. As of June 30, 2018, Humana has approximately two million individual Medicare Advantage members and approximately 130,000 Group members who are cared for by more than 52,000 primary care physicians in more than 1,000 value-based relationships across 43 states and Puerto Rico. Humana's total Medicare Advantage membership is more than 3.5 million members, which includes members affiliated with providers in value-based and standard Medicare Advantage settings. For more information, visit humana.com/provider/support/vbc.

Heritage Provider Network, Inc. (HPN) is one of the most experienced physician organization leaders of accountable care and continuous value-based healthcare delivery improvements. first. (www.heritageprovidernetwork.com)

Humana Inc. (NYSE: HUM) is committed to helping millions of medical and specialty members achieve their best health.

To accomplish that, they support physicians and other health care professionals as they work to deliver the right care in the right place for their patients, our members. Our range of clinical capabilities, resources and tools – such as in-home care, behavioral health, pharmacy services, data analytics and wellness solutions – combine to produce a simplified experience that makes health care easier to navigate and more effective.

have been sitting in Fire Dept review for about a month, All our old site plans must be redone (even though the homes are going with where they were and are the same sizes).

All the needed contractors for soil testing, site plans and more are backed up for months, prices have jumped and answers from them are slow at best.

The rebuild process has almost been as hard on us as the loss.

For me the only thing that has helped is to help. It is one of the gifts that came from all of this.

Market Match is California's healthy food incentive program

Both shoppers and California farmers are benefitting from the Market Match and the Cal-Fresh (SNAP) food programs offered by the Ventura County Certified Farmers' Market Association (VCCFM). Market Match is California's healthy food incentive program, which uses grant dollars to match or double a portion of the customers' federal nutrition assistance benefits, like Cal-Fresh (SNAP), for the exclusive purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables at their certified farmers' market.

The Market Match program is available at two Ventura Markets including the Midtown Ventura Certified Farmers' Market held on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pacific View Mall and the Downtown Ventura Certified Farmers' Market held on Saturday mornings from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon held in the City Parking Lot, at Santa Clara & Palm Streets. All Cal-Fresh SNAP and Market Match benefits are administered through a token system available at the VCCFM Market Information booths.

The markets also accept the WIC (Women, Infants and Child) food programs at each of their locations. "This is a win-win for both our famers and shoppers who benefit from the program," stated Karen Schott, Operations Manager for the VCCFM. "We are so delighted to join together in this public awareness health program," she added. For more information, call the Ventura County Certified Farmers' Market Association at 805-529-6266 or visit the website at www.vcfarmersmarkets.com.

How one Ventura family lost their...

Continued from page 16

"We have not been emotional at all. We have not had the time" The re-building project has taken all of our energy," Bell said. "It is beginning to get to me now" "Now we are getting to the end of this project, I feel I am getting a little screwy." She said. "It's like a delayed reaction," she added. "We have been helping other people out, by sharing and mentoring others on how to deal with the city and insurance companies, what to say and who to hound when necessary."

The Bell's house is now 80% complete on this one- year anniversary of the Thomas Fire. "The stucco is done, all our walls are done roof tiles will go in shortly, bathrooms and shower tiling will be completed soon" Bell said.

The Bells were fortunate that their insurance company paid exactly what they said they would. Insurance provided them with a four- bedroom home rental in Ventura where they have been residing since shortly after the fire. Being well insured has given them the edge in getting this project up and running and 80% complete in a year's- time.

Right now we have had to go out and buy a new Christmas tree. "It reminded me of what we had and I just cried" she said. "It's very emotional on a day to day basis."

"We love where we are at, we love Ventura and we love the people of Ventura, we never even gave a thought to leaving," concluded Bell.

Thomas Fire recovery - 1 year later

Continued from page 3

certification must be obtained from the Planning Division, and second, a building permit must be issued by Building and Safety Division. To date, 274 zoning clearances have been issued, 126 homes are in plan-check and 143 homes have received building permits and are currently, or soon to be under construction. In fact, 6 homeowners have nearly completed construction and expect to be in their rebuilt homes by Christmas. The first property owners to rebuild from the Thomas Fire are likely to receive a certificate of occupancy in December.

The Thomas Fire rebuilding process is a high priority and the City Council took several important steps to institute an expedited approach. The City Council adopted the following Thomas Fire Recovery Statement early-on to guide the process: The City strives to quickly rebuild our communities to be more sustainable, more fire resistant, and consistent with current building materials and designs. We will work together to build communities, seeking to ensure new homes respect neighbors and a wider community identity. We will balance the needs for individual home styles and preferences with this desire to create and enhance our existing community images. The City will ensure the communities rebuilding continue to be served with adequate infrastructure.

Rebuilding after the fire can be a big job and every victim's experience is different. To that end, the City of Ventura is committed to expediting the review process and helping each property owner with their unique needs. We have collectively learned a lot through this process and have noticed similarities in the property owners that worked their way through the system quickly: This process requires diligence, constant communication and a strong team that homeowners can rely on; homeowners who successfully navigated their way through rebuilding engaged a team of design and construction professionals that they enjoy and trust. To get through the process quickly, property owners with permits, stayed active in the rebuild process, attended meetings with City staff, researched features of the rebuilt home the wanted, were knowledgeable about their insurance and what it would take to complete the rebuild of their homes. Neighbors also learned from each other and spent time strengthening connections with other neighbors and the community at-large.

The City of Ventura remains committed to complete the rebuild of our community.

REMEMBERING

We could never have imagined that in a short matter of time the fire would come barreling straight at us

by Kat Merrick

A year ago today Chris and I walked the ranch checking irrigation lines and playing with the pups as we did almost everyday... As I stood on the hill looking at the amazing views, to my left the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands and to my right Ojai. I remember so clearly saying a prayer of thanks for being allowed to be in this very special place. Several hours later as I was finishing packing for my trip and double checking the last minute details I received a text from my dear friend Christine Law saying her house was on fire and she was evacuating.

I immediately started texting her

and friends in Santa Paula to see if they were safe and to offer refuge "Come to the ranch, bring the animals... we are here for you."

We could never imagined that in a short matter of time and in the early hours of Dec. 5th the Thomas Fire would come barreling straight at us taking everything we owned and cherished in the world.

No words can express the emotion of watching your life burn before you. to knowing hundreds of friends and Ventura County neighbors were suffering the same fate. I have learned that there really are no words to comfort and that the best thing one can do is simply I am very sorry for your loss and work to help when needed.

Our reality of recovery looks like this. 4 moves over the past 8 months and finally feeling the need to take control and move in the 5th wheel on the property. 3 to 7 Years for the trees to be replanted and producing again 6 months to even getting the modular home on site to live in. Massive loss of rental income for at least another year or two Stepping foot in our rebuilt home at least 2 years.

The process that the county (County on permits City on water) said is expedite does not seem to be the case for ranchers and farmers. We



This 'n' That



Surfrider engages community volunteers to participate in beach cleanups. Photo provided by Surfrider.

Sustainability Now News

Protect what you love: Surfrider engages and salutes community volunteers

by Maryann Ridini Spencer
(@MaryannRidiniSpencer)

“Protect what you love,” is one of Surfrider Foundation’s mottos underscoring the need for every individual to take a proactive stance to preserve and protect our ocean, waves, and beaches.

Putting that motto into action, Surfrider, through a powerful activist network, engages community volunteers to participate in monthly beach cleanups to help stop contributing to the now over approximately 5.25 trillion deadly pieces of plastic in the ocean. Their Ocean Friendly Gardens (OFG) program, which teaches CPR – conservation, permeability, and retention, is also a vital, growing contribution to aid in the health of our watersheds.

Other programs include a Blue Water Task Force, a volunteer-run water testing, education, and advocacy program that alerts citizens and officials about water quality programs whereby they can work together toward solutions. The Smartfin project allows surfers to become citizen scientists, turning wave sets into data when surfers wear a fin with sensors that measure important ocean properties.

“Ocean Friendly Restaurants, is one of our newer programs that is focused on reducing our plastic and water footprint,” said Bill Hickman, Southern California Regional Manager, Surfrider. “Volunteers help assist in educating restaurant owners how to make more sustainable choices by eliminating expanded polystyrene use (Styrofoam), recycling practices, using reusable tableware, no plastic bags offered for takeout or to-go orders, and providing straws and utensils for takeout only upon request.”

To promote community engagement and rally support, Surfrider holds monthly chapter meetings open to anyone who wishes to attend. “We listen to guest speakers who are experts in their fields talk about subjects vital to our mission as well as discuss chapter news,” said Hickman. “It’s a casual, social atmosphere and we provide light snacks and drinks.

At Surfrider’s December 4th Chapter meeting, the foundation held their second annual “Volunteer Appreciation” Recognition Ceremony where they presented 40 volunteers with certificates and a personalized thank you gift.

“Volunteers are the backbone of our organization, and we felt it important to honor those that go above and beyond,” said Hickman. “Our coast always needs protection. Our volunteers are the protectors. They are also essential in getting our voice and mission heard. More volunteers translate into more voice, and that voice is needed, especially when it comes to making a difference by crafting legislation to protect what we love.”

Surfrider holds Monthly Chapter meetings in Patagonia’s retail store, 235 W Santa Clara Street in Downtown Ventura the first Tuesday of most months from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. For more information on Surfrider and our calendar of events, visit: <https://ventura.surfrider.org/>

REMEMBERING

Thomas Fire One Year Later

by Responsible and Efficient Government (VREG)

In the weeks that followed the devastating Thomas Fire, several community meetings were held throughout Ventura. These meetings showed a united front of total cooperation and support of all City departments, County of Ventura, State of California, Cal Fire and every other state and local agency present. They committed to protecting our health and welfare.

There are hundreds of stories of the heroic efforts by individuals going above and beyond. This article is not intended to repeat the great deeds done. Ventura now needs to address the problems that became very apparent after the Thomas Fire.

One year into this rebuilding process Ventura reports that there are no families back in their homes November 29, 2018, 133 homes are approved for a complete rebuild, 410 repair permits issued, 135 rebuilt homes currently under plan check review and the city anticipates that four families will be back in their homes within the next month.

For some, this news will seem alarming. To others, this is not a surprise.

What was fact and what was rumor was challenging to sort out when it came to building guidelines, permits and plan approvals.

Sometimes doing too much can be as bad as doing too little

At one point, the Ventura City Council encouraged a fast, streamline rebuilding process which included homeowners would be able to rebuild and replace what they had. This became a misleading promise because few homeowners had plans on file.

Problems occurred when the City Council attempted to streamline the process. In order to to comply with the City Council’s desire to simplify the process, the city staff waived the need for a Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Report for units less than

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3,000 sq. ft. There was also public pressure to change height limits by many residences. Depending on where a homeowner was in the process of planning and design, confusion followed.

Some changes created the situations that some rebuilding projects were no longer in compliance. Any changes would likely cost homeowners’ time and money. This was contrary to the City Councils intent to streamline the process. For folks who just want to get past the nightmare and get back into their home, this became a cruel and harsh procedure.

The bottom line was that the professionals (planners, architects, and contractors) needed to be the ones to create this process. To build and occupy a custom home in one year is almost unheard of under the best of conditions.

More issues that need to be addressed

More issues need to be addressed and the sooner, the better. The November 2018 wildfires reminded Venturans that we remain vulnerable. The city needs to answer these questions:

What are the plans for more gravity flow storage water tanks for the hillside above Ventura?

What will it take to get working water pump generators working for better fire protection?

What is being done to address the lack of a better evacuation plan for the Ventura Avenue and hillside residences?

How many more firebreak roads will the city finish before the next fire threat?

Where was the local radio station that was to help direct the community on where to go and what was happening?



Volunteers are the difference between an empty and full kettle.

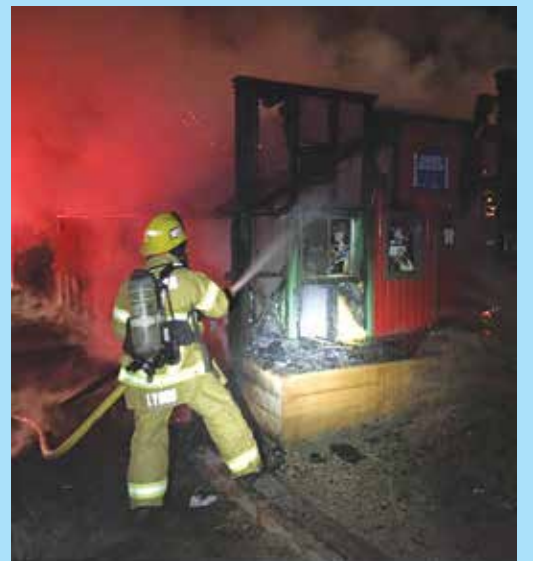
Look for the signature red donation kettles

The Salvation Army of Ventura has recently finished placing its signature red donation kettles outside several area stores. Now, it’s up to the community members to help the organization reach its fundraising goal of \$100,000. Community members can also donate through text message by texting HopeRings to 41-444. Volunteers are the difference between an empty kettle and one that raises about \$30 per hour – enough to provide a family with two bags of groceries or shelter an individual for a night.

Anyone interested in volunteer opportunity of ringing the bell, please call 805-653-3598 and ask to speak with Lt. Silvia.

Lt. Silvia Benetti Simoes stated “Through your generosity we will be able to fight hunger, give warmth, clothe the needy, provide housing services, fight natural disasters, and continue to do the most good. Your Donation Helps Change Lives For The Better.”

On November 20, at 9:50pm the Ventura City Fire Department responded to a report of smoke and flames at Golf N’ Stuff. According to the city of Ventura Fire Department the fire was determined to be arson. The fire was to the western themed façade used for one of the putting holes. The blaze was put out within 30 minutes.





REMEMBERING
by Jaime Baker

Join for an immersive evening at E.P. Foster Library with master dyer and textile artist, **Porfirio Gutiérrez**, and learn about the rich history of the craft in its cultural context. Recently featured in *The New York Times*, Gutiérrez is committed to keeping his family's traditional Zapotec practices and knowledge alive.

Gutiérrez and his family are masters of Zapotec weaving and come from a long line of weavers from Teotitlán del Valle in Oaxaca, Mexico. They are among a small group of textile artisans working to preserve the use of plant and insect dyes.

This special presentation will be hosted at E.P. Foster Library on Saturday, January 5, at 6 pm. This event is free and open to the public.

Ventura County Library is honored to host this event, made possible by funding received from the California Council for the Humanities Library Innovation Lab Grant for the project entitled "Celebrate Mixteco Culture," and partnerships with MICOP, CSUCI, El Rio NFL, and UCSB.

"Library Innovation Lab: Exploring New Ways of Engaging California's Immigrant Communities" is a new statewide competitive grant program offered by California Humanities. The program encourages California libraries to develop creative and innovative programs that will respond to the needs and circumstances of today's immigrants and immigrant communities and foster more inclusive communities within our state.

The Foster Library is located at 651 East Main St. Hours of service are 10am to 7pm Monday through Thursday, 10am to 5pm Friday and Saturday, and 1pm to 5pm on Sunday.



Holiday Cranes of Peace Saturday, December 15, 12 noon - 2pm
Buenaventura Gallery at the Bell Arts Factory
\$25 per person, includes materials

Holiday Cranes of Peace workshop will lead you through the process of making origami cranes. We will also be using text, working on individual cranes, and a group mobile as well. All materials included.

Come celebrate Peace with us!

Participants can expect to make at least 2 cranes to take home as ornaments or gifts, for family, friends or for yourself!

Ventura born, instructor **Dawn Reily** started showing and selling her art in the local gallery scene as a teenager and started her own jewelry design business at age 16. Reily graduated from Sonoma State with a Bachelors in Fine Art, teaching credentials, and Associate degrees with concentrations in 2-D arts, sculpture, gallery management, jewelry design, printmaking, metals, Chinese brush painting, and computer graphics.

Buenaventura Art Association Gallery
Bell Arts Factory, Studio 30
432 N. Ventura Ave.



The new CMH Ocean Tower (opening very soon) contains an outstanding permanent collection of over 600 pieces of art from 125 artists. They are on display on every floor. The Art Advisory Board Richard Amend, Barbara Hirsch and Susan Petty spent six-years in planning and assembling the art. Not your usual reason for going to the hospital but CMH welcomes you to view the collection.

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Show Time

A View from House Seats

Quirky Cinderella careens into Ojai

by Shirley Lorraine

The Ojai Art Center Theater has taken some risks this season in presenting infrequently produced material for audiences to enjoy. Humor, depth and artistry has been gracing the OACT stage all season. In a wild turn of events, and for just three weekends, the 2018 season concludes with a new and decidedly quirky version of the fairy tale Cinderella. For a complete reality escape, this high energy musical production certainly fills the bill.

First, the style. Forget what you may have seen before. This production is done Panto style, described as a highly exaggerated fractured fairy tale with about as many surprises as one can absorb in an evening. Roles are reversed, twisted and sliced and diced with abandon. There is little evidence of tradition here. And it is all in good fun.

The offbeat concept was originally conceived and directed by Paul Whitworth for the Shakespeare Santa Cruz company with book and lyrics by Kate Hawley. Directed here by Richard Kuhlman, the frenetic action sneaks in many local and theatrical references to tickle the funny bone. But listen and think quickly, or you'll miss it.

Most over the age of a toddler are familiar with the tale of poor Ella, who is misused and beleaguered by her evil step-mother and two less-than-dainty stepsisters. Her fairy godmother appears to help Ella rise above the cinders to catch the eye of an eligible prince despite many attempts to thwart her good fortune.

In this version, there is a side story involving Little Bo Peep and her band of sheep as well as a narrator-cum-activator character to assist the audience in fully appreciating the action by leading the audience to interact with the char-

acters. Think fairy tale meets a young Shakespeare meets the melodrama. Add vividly colorful costuming, greatly exaggerated movement and expert piano accompaniment by Andy Street and there you have it.

The cast includes Sindy McKay-Swerdlove as the Fairy Godmother, Anna Kotula as the ditzy Queen, Coree Serena Kotula as the King (this is one talented youngster). Poosy Holmes bursts onto the stage as Buttons, the audience liaison, Jodi Brandt takes on the role of Prince Charming, and Denise Heller gives life to Cinderella. Michael McCarthy takes on Peep with unbridled zest.

Marisa Miculian embodies the evil step-mother, with Marilyn Lazik and Sheila McCarthy as the wildly overdone step-sisters. Brett Baxter, Bodhi Bourbon, Don Gaidano, Lenny Klaif and John Valenzuela fill in as multiple personalities. Cinderella's father is credited to Tarrara Boomdeay (really?) who seems to be having a blast. In fact, they all are.

This is a production filled with slapstick action, continual audience wink-wink moments and an air of theatrical freedom that must be seen to be appreciated. In this difficult year of trials and tears, a true escape is sorely needed. This is it. Bring the whole family. There is something for everyone. Of course, there is a moral at the end but the bottom line is – just sit back and enjoy.

Cinderella continues through December 16. Show times are Fridays at 7:30, Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. \$20 general admission, \$18 for seniors and Art Center members, and \$10 for those 25 and under. The Ojai Art Center is located at 113 S. Montgomery, phone (805) 640-8797 or www.ojaiact.org



Breeze rating from 1 to 4 palm trees, 4 being best.

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald

by Victoria Usher

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald is a 2018 science fiction and fantasy film that is based on the characters created by J.K. Rowling. It was directed by David Yates. It was produced by David Heyman, J.K. Rowling, Steve Kloves, and Lionel Wigram. It was written by J.K. Rowling. The film stars Eddie Redmayne, Alison Sudol, Dan Fogler, Katherine Waterston, Johnny Depp, Jude Law, Ezra Miller, and Zoe Kravitz. The cinematography was by Philippe Rousselot. It was edited by Mark Day. The casting was done by Fiona Weir.

The production design was done by Stuart Craig. The costume design was done by Colleen Atwood. The set decoration was done by Anna Pinnock. The music was by James Newton Howard. The film was distributed by Warner Brothers Pictures. The film was officially released in cinemas on November 16th, 2018.

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald is the second part of the Wizarding World film series that was created by J.K. Rowling. This second part of the series was filmed in a specific and unique way that shows foreshadowing as being the most pivotal part of the film. When foreshadowing is written well and filmed right it can be the perfect thing to use in a film series or in a television series, as long as it is used in moderation. However, when it becomes hard to keep track of what the actual plot is because the film starts to become so heavily filled with foreshadowing and maybe only a sprinkle of plot every now and again then the whole film can very easily become boring and cause the audience to lose interest extremely quickly. The main three things that this film has that almost make up for the excessive amount of foreshadowing are the gorgeous visual effects, the spectacular acting from the cast, and the beautiful soundtrack. These three specific all wrapped together truly help to

VENTURA'S footworks youth ballet

The Nutcracker

Artistic Director, Kirsten Oakley

Oxnard Performing Arts Center
Footworks Community Orchestra and Singers from the Carpe Diem Chorus

Saturday, 12.8.18 - 2pm
Sunday, 12.9.18 - 2pm

Tickets: \$19, \$24, \$29
805-486-2424
www.footworksyouthballet.org

Elena Trevino Design • Photos: Michelle Pedraza

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carry this second film in a way that keeps the audience captivated and excited. (Rated: PG-13) (Running Time: 2h 14m)

“When you’re singing...” Continued from page 20 will sync up and endorphins kick in. Ivan, 85 years old, says the chorus “Keeps me singing, it’s good for the brain and body.” “We support each other.” Helms talks about last year when the concert was scheduled the week of the Thomas Fire and they had to decide what to do. They went ahead with it; even singers who had lost everything took part, though they had to go out and buy the proper clothes. “So happy to be doing something positive. It makes everything better being together.”

Singers are clear as to why they participate. “I love to sing,” from Dave and numerous others. “I was always told I couldn’t sing, but I can here,” says Donna. At the end of rehearsal Helms, a no-nonsense woman who is not effusive, takes a deep breath, smiles broadly, and says, “My friends...you are ready.”

GCCC does three concerts a year: a holiday concert in December, a classical show in March or April, and a pop performance in June. They would like more singers, especially tenors and basses. The male to female ratio is about 1:4. They rehearse every Monday at the Ventura Avenue Adult Center. To register to sing with them, check their website at www.goldcoastchorus.org. Gold Coast Concert Chorus Schedule Friday, December 7 at 8 p.m. Saturday, December 8 at 2:00 p.m. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 3290 Loma Vista Road, Ventura tickets@goldcoastchorus.org (805) 616-7269

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This 'n' That
Audubon Society December Program and Field Trips

December 11, 2018 Program 7:30 p.m. Tuesday - Poinsettia Pavillion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura. Sea of Grass, Sea of Ice: How Will 2 Iconic Arctic Birds Navigate a Warming Climate....with Karen Laing

We will explore the natural history and conservation status of the emperor goose and spectacled eider, two birds that live year-round in Alaska and Siberia. How will their dependence on high latitudes affect their ability to thrive as the Arctic rapidly warms?

Karen Laing grew up in Ventura and Santa Barbara. She was a wildlife biologist in Alaska for more than 30 years, working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. Since returning to Ventura Karen has been active in VAS by leading field trips among other things.

December 9, 2018 8:30 a.m. Lake Casitas. Leader: Adele Fergusson

805-415-4304

Join us for a walk by the lake, we will be looking for hummingbirds, grosbeaks, gnatcatchers as well as ducks, geese and waterfowl. Hopefully we will see a Bald Eagle.

December 13, 2018 8:30 a.m. Ventura Settling Ponds. Leader: Adele Fergusson 805-415-4304

Enjoy a morning of mostly waterfowl birding. Spotting scopes are always welcome.

December 22, 8:30 a.m. Camino Real. Leader: Raeann Koerner 805-701-1919

Camino Real is a grassy park surrounded by pines and eucalyptus and is an excellent place to see birds. Target birds will include Red Shouldered Hawk, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler and Townsend's Warbler.

December 29, 2018 8:30 a.m. Carpinteria Salt Marsh. Leader: Corine Barksdale 805-535-5173

The Salt Marsh Reserve on Ash Ave. is an excellent birding location due to the estuary, wetlands and upland habitats. Special birds of concern can be found here, including Belding's Savannah Sparrow and Clapper Rail.

REMEMBERING



For three days, Figueroa Plaza in Downtown Ventura was filled with hundreds of CAN-tree's at FOOD Share's 7th annual CAN-tree Drive. The 7th Annual CAN-tree Drive, held November 30th – December 2nd, is the most critical and largest food drive of the year. The highly unique and visual event drew crowds from all over Southern California to witness the building of an estimated 300 holiday trees - all constructed from between 600 and 800 canned goods sponsored and built by various community organizations, businesses, families, and service groups.

The day after the 2017 CAN-tree event ended, the Thomas Fire broke out. Many of the agencies and organizations that went right to work on the fire had just been at Figueroa Plaza the day before building their tree and supporting their community. This year, FOOD Share presented 'Hero Row' where organizations like the Ventura City and Ventura County Fire Departments, Sheriff & Police Departments, and many County agencies and more came out to build and decorate their own tree that FOOD Share is donating on their behalf.

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