



VENTURA BREEZE

Your Hometown Paper

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Ventura Cardiologist, Alon Steinberg testified for the prosecution during the Conrad Murray manslaughter trial and stated "No skilled physician would do what Dr. Murray did."

Ventura Cardiologist testified at manslaughter trial

By Sheli Ellsworth

Ventura Cardiologist, Alon Steinberg, riveted television viewers when he testified for the prosecution during the Conrad Murray manslaughter trial. Dr. Steinberg testified he found at least six different deviations from customary standard care in Michael Jackson's death, "No skilled physician would do what Dr. Murray did."

First, the use of Propofol, a strong anesthetic for a sleep disorder, was outrageous. Second, the use of Propofol in a home setting without proper monitoring, equipment, medications or medical personnel was egregious. Third, Dr. Murray was unprepared for an emergency. Fourth, he performed and acted inappropriately during the attempted resuscitation after Mr. Jackson's arrest. Fifth was the inexcusable delay in calling 911. The sixth deviation was failure to keep records and obtain an informed consent.

Additionally, as a cardiologist, Dr. Murray did not have the background, training or experience to use Propofol, said Steinberg. "On top of this were multiple displays of unethical behavior...trying to hide the Propofol...withholding vital information with the UCLA doctors."

Dr. Steinberg says an estimated 48,000-98,000 deaths a year are due to medical error.

But when does medical error go
Continued on page 6

While driving your sleigh full of presents you can always catch up with the Breeze at venturabreeze.com



I'm proud to be the best buddy of Scamp, who writes for the Small Business of the Year, the Ventura Breeze. -Savana

Learn to keep your Christmas tree safe

by Kevin Rennie
Fire Chief, Ventura City Fire Department

Each year, fire departments respond to an average of more than 200 structure fires caused by Christmas trees. These fires cause an average of 13 deaths, 27 serious injuries, and \$16.7 million in property damage. By carefully choosing, decorating, and caring for your Christmas tree, as well as disposing of your tree properly, you can make your holiday season much more safe.

When placing your tree, ensure it is at least three feet away from any heat sources. Items such as fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or even lights can become an ignition source. Ensure that the tree is not blocking an exit that could be needed during an emergency.

If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure that it is certified or identified by the manufacturer as fire retardant. When choosing a natural tree, pick one with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched. Before placing the tree in a stand, cut off one to two inches from the base of the trunk. Add water to the tree stand right away and be sure to check it daily. Allowing your tree to become completely dried out is a recipe for disaster; keep it fresh by keeping it watered. When your Christmas tree begins dropping needles, it's time to get it out of the house. Dried out trees pose a significant fire danger and should never be kept in the home or garage. They should not be placed outside directly against the home. Check with your local trash service for tree recycling options.

The decorations you choose for your tree should be the safest possible. Always use lights that have the certification of an independent testing laboratory. Be sure to note whether the lights are for indoor or outdoor use. Replace any string of lights that has worn or broken cords, or that has loose bulb connections. Connect no more than 3 strands of mini-string sets, and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulb sets. Read manufacturer's instructions for the maximum number of LED strands to connect. Lit candles should be used with caution around the home. They should never be used to decorate

Continued on page 7



Cheryl Heitman, incumbent Carl Morehouse and incumbent Christy Weir have been installed as the new members of the City Council.

City Council appoints Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Ventura City Council voted to appoint Council member Mike Tracy as Mayor and newly-installed Council-member Cheryl Heitmann as Deputy Mayor during the regularly scheduled council meeting on Monday, December 5. Both will serve a two-year term in their

appointed roles.

Mike Tracy was first elected to the Ventura City Council in November 2009. He recently completed two years as the City's deputy mayor and will serve as mayor for the last two years of his four-year term. Tracy was a 30-year member of the Ventura Police Department and served as chief of police from 1999 to 2005.

Newly elected council member Cheryl Heitmann was installed on Monday night for a four-year term and was appointed by her fellow council members to a two-year term as Deputy Mayor.

This issue's Face of Ventura by Johanna Spinks is on page 12.



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Photos: Dan Harding & Peter Zuehlke

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City Council

Accepting my new role as mayor

by Mayor Mike Tracy

I want to thank my fellow council members for this vote of confidence and support. In particular, thanks goes to former Mayor Bill Fulton, who served as a mentor and advisor to me for the last two years. I also want to express appreciation to the many outstanding and dedicated city employees who have worked with me over the last two years, as well as my many family, friends, and supporters who are here tonight.

I recently read an article in the paper about a public opinion poll in the state of Illinois that showed a majority of the people in the state believed that the mayor of Chicago wields more power than the State's Governor.

I suppose that view of the big city mayor is partly why there is so much interest in who ends up being selected for mayor in our community. But it's important to note that Ventura operates under a city manager form of government. The council sets priorities and gives broad policy direction, and the City manager, who reports to the council, is charged with implementation. The mayor, as Bill Fulton used to say, is both the leader and servant of the council. The council sets the agenda, and then the mayor helps lead the council in accomplishing that agenda through the city manager. The mayor has opportunity to influence public

opinion, but essentially has equal power and authority as the other 6 council members.

Over the next month or two this council will review and set our agenda—confirming some or all of the city's current work plan and consider proposed changes. I'm not sure I can predict exactly where council members will land on the specifics, but I hope we find common ground and make real progress in some important areas:

- **Economic Development:** Focus on efforts that can safeguard our economic base and augment our revenue stream.

- **Safe and Clean Ventura:** Promote community pride, foster economic investment and prevent "broken windows" from undermining the public's confidence in our ability to maintain our public assets and keep them open to all community members.

- **Prioritize Public Safety—Restore the baseline of police personnel.** The elimination of our gang unit, special enforcement team, and reduced flexibility in the deployment of police resources is not sustainable and we are seeing the results. We must live within our means, but we can't neglect the first duty of local government—to insure safety.

And finally, we need to rebuild public confidence in local government.

Once again thank you all for your support, encouragement, and confidence. The next two years will be challenging, interesting, and maybe even rewarding. I'm certain that this council, with real community involvement and participation, can make the tough decisions ahead to move this community forward.

mtracy@cityofventura.net

Dear Venturans:

(an acceptance speech by Christy Weir)

Ventura's City Charter was written in 1932, is the "organic law" for our city government and stipulates that City Council elections are to be held in odd-numbered years. To change our City Charter requires a vote of the people. This year, turnout was 27% of registered voters, lower than the turnout for state and national elections which are held in even-numbered years. A few years ago the voters in Santa Barbara (SB's Charter is similar to Ventura's) turned down a ballot proposal to move elections to even years because of the fear of increased political party influence and the possibility that local issues would get lost in the larger state and federal elections. This tradeoff is something that the voters in Ventura would need to consider if we ever put a Charter change on the ballot.

In Ventura elections, absentee voters are now the majority. Some cities have instituted all mail-in voting to improve turnout and lower election costs. However, this is not currently an option for us since our elections are run by the County and not the City. (The countywide election system needs to be consistent for all cities.)

Our City Charter also establishes the City Council's compensation (it has been \$600/month for over 20 years, with no health or retirement benefits) and our form of government (seven council members who hire the City Manager and City Attorney and elect the Mayor for a 2-year term). Any changes to these policies require a vote by the electorate.

After serving this community on the City Council for two terms, I am extremely pleased and honored to be re-elected. The fact that both incumbents were re-elected is an affirmation that there is public support for the job we're doing. However, our re-election does not mean that the majority of the population is satisfied with city government. Our challengers represented varying ideas and viewpoints and received thousands of votes. This election has renewed my commitment to listen and respond to

community concerns and to remember that I was elected to represent ALL the citizens of Ventura. Please feel free to contact me any time—I can be reached at cweir@ci.ventura.ca.us. Christy Weir

Dear fellow Venturans:

(an acceptance speech by Carl Morehouse)

I want to take a moment to thank all of you who took the time and energy to exercise your right to vote. I'm sorry we didn't have greater voter participation citywide, after all of the effort made by so many, but I am particularly grateful for those who worked so hard on my behalf and who voted for me. I have always considered serving you in this capacity both an honor and a privilege. And, no matter who voted for me, I will still do my best to represent all Venturans and make sure that we fulfill the dreams laid out for our city by so many some 12 years ago now with the adoption of our Vision.

Ventura still faces some tough times ahead, but with your support and involvement, I believe our wonderful city will weather this economic storm and come out stronger and better. I promise to work just as hard the next four years as I did during the first four. And I will continue my commitment to developing a truly sustainable community that is economically strong, environmentally protective, and protects social equity for those with the weakest voices.

I wish to give special thanks to my lovely wife, Janna Minsk, who puts up with so much as a result of my political life. She has been my biggest supporter and advisor, and my fellow citizens owe her a great deal of gratitude for sharing me with you.

Again, thank you all who made the effort to vote, and especially to those who have continued to support me over the years. I will keep you in my thoughts throughout this next term.

Sincerely,
Carl Morehouse, Councilmember
654-7827 (Council number)
cmorehouse@ci.ventura.ca.us
(Council e-mail)
carl4ventura@aol.com
(Political e-mail)



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Correction...



In our last issue we don't think that we clearly identified these firefighters. Firefighter Preston Andreini is on the left and Captain Jason Kay is on the right.



VENTURA BREEZE

Your Hometown Paper

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Editor:

I have invented a marvelous way to do political campaigning without leaving the comfort of my recliner or spending a penny on long-distance calls.

During the holiday season, I receive many calls from solicitors. I'm sure you do to. As soon as the caller asks for me, I ask if the caller is a registered voter. Most say yes. I immediately ask if they vote. Again most say yes. Then I proceed with "are you going to vote to get those obstreperous congressmen out of their jobs and replace them with reasonable people?"

The caller may say something like, "I

Opinion/Editorial



Sheldon (Governor) Brown
Publisher

■ First I want to wish you all a very happy holidays, this is our last issue before Christmas and Chanukah.

■ A few words from the many readers that wrote to us regarding the Ventura Breeze being selected by the 750 member Ventura Chamber of Commerce as the Small Business of the Year which I certainly thank them for.

Congratulations!!! You deserve it! Thank you for all you do. Jim Duran, Executive Director, 1200 & 1220 Cypress Point Lane

Congratulations on being recognized as Small Business of the Year as well as to all other honorees! Well deserved! I should have thought of that nomination myself!!!

Glad to learn Staci will be returning shortly.
Mike Merewether

Wow!! Congrats, Gov! Good for you. I'm proud to know you!
Gaby

Congratulations, well deserved!
Susan Gerrard, Museum of Ventura County

Congratulations Sheldon!! You have worked very hard and definitely deserve the honor! I am sure Scamp is proud too!
Shannon Coyner

Bravo, you deserve it! We will be there to celebrate with you and your family.
Sandra and Jordan Laby

Our sincere congratulations on your Chamber award. It is much deserved.
Ivor and Sally Davis from Seattle

Wow, Sheldon, this is so exciting. What an honor, and how very very well deserved. I owe you one article, coming up, on why I miss Ventura. It's people like

you and businesses like the Breeze that make me miss Ventura. Consciousness employed on local levels, real human relationships, ya know.
For now, with love,
Sophia from China

Congrats Sheldon! And well deserved. This is great.
Warm Regards,
Rachel Morris, VCCool Executive Director

CONGRATULATIONS!! I have always found great information and interesting articles in the "Ventura Breeze!" You are most deserving of this honor as the Chamber of Commerce "Small Business of the Year".
Most sincerely,
Barbara Meister

Congratulations Sheldon! You deserve it!! Great job and thank you for doing it!!
Doug Halter

Congratulations Sheldon!!! Well deserved!
Donna Granata, Founder/Executive Director, Focus On The Masters

Congratulations! I'm proud to be a part of the paper. Some girl I met was so excited to learn I wrote the movie reviews for the paper, she said, Oh, I met a celebrity! It was cute.
Linde Carlson

What fantastic news! You and your staff deserve it! I'm so proud to know you...you help make Ventura a better place to live.
All the best,
Kim Castro

I want to congratulate you for the wonderful hometown newspaper we all share here in Ventura. Your unwavering commitment to bringing us the news is why the Ventura Breeze won the Best Small Business 2011 from the Chamber of Commerce. It has been my pleasure to work with you on my show Lyn Fairly and Friends. Thanks Sheldon, you

deserve this award.

Lyn Fairly

Congratulations! Well deserved.
Dr. Bunny Vreeland

Congratulations my friend – a well deserved honor.
Bonnie Weigel, President & CEO, FOOD Share, Inc.

Congratulations! You SO deserve this!
Christy Weir

Good for you and the Breeze, Sheldon. Thanks for your support of our community and CAPs!
Ed Wehan

■ On Dec.2 a wonderful party was held at the Executive Suites (located at 701 E. Santa Clara) to celebrate the wonderful portrait series (see page 12) Face Of Ventura by Johanna Spinks half-way celebration (one more year to go).

The celebration was wonderful with several hundred people attending. I want to thank the following for providing food, wine and wonderful music for the evening:

The Greek at the Harbor

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Tony's Pizzeria

Jaime and Ana Baker

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And a special thanks to:

The Executive Suites

Jerry English for hanging the

portraits

Lyn Fairly for publicizing the

event

Diane Brown for the delicious

chicken wings

Johanna Spinks for her wonder-

ful talent and being my friend.

The wonderful thing is that the portraits will be on display at the Executive Suites for several months so please go look at this amazing collection (they close at 5pm).

Mailbox

can't discuss politics over the phone."

My answer: "I'm very proud of you for being a registered voter and doing your duty by voting. Thanks heaps for calling."

Try it. You'll love it.

Esther Cole
Ventura

Hi Sheldon;

Just saw where you received "Small Business of the Year" award.

Many Kudo's to you! Hope your Holidays are Blessed!
Lynda Mors
DayLite Natural Lighting

Dear Garrett (Manager Harbor Von's):

I cannot tell you how happy I am that the Harbor Von's is now cleaning all of the carts before putting them back into service. I have told everyone and spoke at the Ventura City Council meeting last night. They are beginning the process of crafting an ordinance regarding abandoned carts. Since the meetings are televised I had the opportunity to let the larger community know of the changes.

Those most enthusiastic about the clean carts are the employees of that store. They were embarrassed by their conditions.

The city is beginning to take on the vagrant and homeless population, and the problems they leave in their wake. Posters are going up regarding not

giving money to panhandlers.

Since you got out in front of the unclean cart problem, I urge you to beat the legislation by requiring stores to lock up the carts when the stores are closed and to sweep the parking lots from one end to the other frequently to prevent the misuse of your carts.

Thank you for listening and acting on problems reported by your customers.
Carmel Whitman

Jim Spencer and Shirley Lorraine;

Thank you for taking time to attend and writing about our Ojai Art Center's production of It's A Wonderful Life. The cast/staff and I appreciate the kind words.

Hope you will attend other productions of OJAIACT.

Best for the holidays.

Gai Jones

Director of IAWL

Ojai

Ventura Breeze;

I was once again disappointed (but not surprised) by the Ventura city council's selection of next year's deputy mayor. The selection of deputy mayors and mayors in this town has degenerated

into a sophomoric popularity contest. According to our new mayor for one to get to be deputy mayor and then mayor "you have to round up a majority of the seven votes, and Neal has just not done that", in other words be a rubber stamp! My question is, why should he? The council needs to respect the wishes of the thousands of voters who have elected Neal Andrews for the past 10 years!

Ray Holzer

Ventura

Breeze:

This is why we need an elected mayor.

Hi Sheldon:

In addition to performing, I am a certified ESL instructor with 15 years experience. And so, I probably pay too much attention to grammar, etc. I find your paper usually meeting very high standards in this regard and in its (notice the usage of its) layout. I was disappointed that something got past your editor's eyes, i.e., the use of "it's" instead of "its" on page 8 of the Nov. 30th issue, in the title "Telephone Road will have it's fire station 4 reopened". Should be its, i.e., the possessive instead of contraction

Continued on page 7

A lot of successful people are risk-takers. Unless you are willing to do that, to have a go, to fail miserably, and have another go, success won't happen.
–Phillip Adams



City News

The benefits of city council service

by Tim Pompey

The elections are over and the dust is settling on the latest campaigns for city council. After all the money, time, and energy it has taken to eke out an election victory, you might ask why anyone would choose to work this hard for a city council seat in a small city like Ventura.

As most council members will tell you, it's certainly not financial. The pay is minimal. There are no health or retirement benefits. So, what's the point?

Of course, council members don't work for free. To examine the different ways in which they might benefit, it's helpful to know what compensation, small as it may be, that council members receive. The answer to this is not difficult to find. It's all listed on the city's website.

City council members do get paid. Most get an annual salary of \$7,200, or \$600 per month. The agreed upon mayor receives slightly more: \$8,400, or \$700 per month (even though this might change).

Some also serve as governing board members or liaisons to a variety of local, county, and regional agencies, organizations and projects. For this, they may (but not always) receive small stipends ranging anywhere from \$50 to \$150 dollars per meeting.

They also have an expense account of \$100 per month for authorized traveling and other expenses while on official duty.

If a council member wants to attend a conference or some other workshop, they have an annual budget of \$2,750 per year for all their expenses, unless another council member agrees to transfer part of their allocation.

That's it. Compare all of this to the salaries of top-level city officials and it seems pretty meager. City Manager Rick Cole, for instance, has an annual salary of \$174,161. City Attorney Ariel Calonne makes \$194,909. Police Chief Ken Corney makes \$195,156.

You might think of a city council seat as political capital. For some who have served on the council, it has become a stepping stone toward a broader candidacy for public office. Steve Bennett, for instance, went from city council to county supervisor. Now he is running for Congress. Current city council member Brian Brennan has decided to run for Bennett's

vacant supervisor office.

But for most council members, serving on the city council means long hours spent carrying out committee assignments, and it has nothing to do with higher political ambitions.

Neal Andrews is a good example. "Working the 30-35 hours a week on 'city business' is, in fact, only a very small part of what council members do for the community," he said. "Most serve on several committees of the council. I serve on five. Then there are the Mayor's appointments—the liaison work with so many of the organizations and other units of government around the county and regional. Every council member has several assignments. I have eight or nine."

For current city council members, multiply this time times seven and it easily tallies up to hundreds of hours per month.

So, an annual salary between seven and eight thousand dollars per year, no health benefits, no retirement benefits, thousands of hours of work. What then is the real benefit of serving on city council? For most, the answer boils down to two words: community service.

Christy Weir explained that for her, the real benefit was relational. "The true benefits are found in new relationships with community members and council members, working together for the public good, and the satisfaction of making a contribution to our city," she said.

There's also the challenge of solving a problem. For Weir, that challenge is a strong draw. "I've enjoyed the continual learning and problem-solving opportunities," she said, "understanding city government and how partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, and individuals can make a positive difference in our quality of life."

For Andrews, the benefit he receives is in being a vital part of his local community. He donates the money he receives as a council member to charity and pays for his own expenses for meals and traveling. "I believe that the community needs to have some among us step forward to offer the best we can to serve," said Andrews, "and I believe every citizen has the obligation to do so to the best of their ability and to the extent that their circumstances allow."

Neal Andrews appointed to Chair National Committee

Neal Andrews, Ventura City Councilman, has been appointed to Chair the National Policy Steering Committee on Community and Economic Development for the National League of Cities. This committee, one of the most powerful and effective committees of the National League, carries out an active lobbying effort in Washington each year to promote cities' interests in Federal programs that provide funding for municipal programs and economic development projects. In the current recession and budget cutting atmosphere in Congress, the Committee has been successful in recent years in reducing the cuts to city funding that would have been devastating to many Ventura projects, especially on the Westside of the City. Mr. Andrews has been a member of the committee for the last six years and served as Vice Chair last year.

The City of Ventura directly benefited from the work of this Committee as it carried the voice of cities to Congress throughout the last year. The City of Ventura received \$783,207 in Community Development Bloc Grant (CDBG) funds and \$497,973 in HOME funds at a time when Congress originally proposed cutting CDBG funds by 64% and eliminating the HOME program altogether.

Over the last several years Ventura has received \$1,278,549 in Federal CDBG assistance that has been used to fund public works projects.

In addition, the City received \$439,993 from the Federal Government to assist assorted other programs in the public safety arena, not to mention the most recent grant that will fund hiring the necessary firefighters to reopen Fire Station Four.

Andrews was responsible for bringing fifty members of the Committee to Ventura earlier this year for a three day meeting that focused on strategies to defend the CDBG program from proposed draconian cuts and on developing an approach in Congress to assist local community banks to make more funds available to support local economic development projects.

Mr. Andrews emphasized "I intend to focus the efforts of the Committee this year once again on defending the CDBG program from further cuts and pushing forward the banking regulation reforms that are needed to help local community banks make money available for economic growth. Those are core issues for cities."

Ventura Cardiologist

Continued from page 1

beyond malpractice and become criminal? According to Steinberg, "Showing a conscious disregard for a patient's safety by putting a patient in substantial and unjustifiable risk causing death or harm," as well as "behaving unethically and practicing significantly outside the standard of medical care." Steinberg also says criminal charges likely depend on

the community, pressure from family, and the district attorney's opinion. Dr. Murray would have been charged with manslaughter whether or not Jackson had been a celebrity. "His errors were so flagrant. What he did was outrageous, it was criminal."

An investigator for the medical board of California contacted Steinberg a few months after Jackson's death in June 2009 and asked the doctor to review the case. Steinberg said he did not have a strong opinion about the case before then. "A couple of detectives from Los Angeles brought me a very large binder that contained multiple interviews, ambulance records, medical records, phone records, pictures, pharmacology reports, the autopsy, etc. It was difficult to try and put all of the information together . . . I decided to focus my report on an interview that Dr. Murray gave to detectives two days after Mr. Jackson's death. All the information I needed was in this interview. Dr. Murray in his own words discussed and revealed multiple extreme deviations of standard of medical care and incriminated himself."

Since Dr. Murray was convicted, he will lose his medical license in California, Texas and Nevada. Steinberg says most state medical boards use the same criteria for licensing, so even if Murray applies to other states, "chances are zero that he would get one."

Dr. Steinberg is the current chief of Cardiology at Community Memorial Hospital. Steinberg states cardiologists are not allowed to administer Propofol at CMH in Ventura and St. John's Hospital in Oxnard. It is restricted to anesthesiologists who receive up to three years of special training, and emergency room physicians. Dr. Steinberg is familiar with the administration of Propofol. When he practiced in Upstate New York he would administer Propofol during a cardiac procedure called an electrical cardioversion, the only cardiac procedure he knows of that uses Propofol. He has never purchased Propofol himself.

Will the Conrad Murray case change medicine as we know it? Steinberg says it is certainly a reminder that celebrity patients need to be treated with the same standard of care as any other patient. "This case reminds me that we cannot sell our services to the highest bidder . . . also, that doctors need to practice within the boundaries of their medical specialty." Jackson should have been referred to a sleep specialist and an addiction specialist.

Dr. Steinberg says he received plenty of support from his colleagues at the Cardiology Associates Medical Group. "Everyone was enthusiastic about my day in court . . . I also felt a lot of love from the whole medical community." Steinberg says he is glad to get back to his routine. "I had been very distracted—obviously—for a few weeks". Dr. Steinberg's wife is Dr. Sabine Hazan Steinberg, who is a local gastroenterologist. The couple has two daughters, Skylar and Scarlett. Steinberg says his family was proud of his involvement in the case and the attention surrounding it for a short time. "I'm glad my life is back to normal so I can focus on family and patients."

Happy Holidays

Trash & Recyclables or Green Waste Pick Up Information for the Christmas & New Year's Holidays

Since both Christmas and New Year's Day fall on Sunday this holiday season, Harrison Industries will maintain its regular trash collection schedule during the weeks of December 25 - December 31 and January 7, 2012.

Residents may put out twice the amount of trash at no extra charge during the two weeks following Christmas. Please make sure the trash is in bags. We will also collect extra recyclables, but please make sure to flatten all boxes.

Remember to recycle your Christmas tree by removing the ornaments, hooks, lights, tinsel, bows, nails and tree stand. Cut the tree into sections no more than 4 feet long and place in the yard waste barrel on your scheduled pickup day. Note: Flocked trees cannot be recycled.

Harrison Industries serves the cities and surrounding unincorporated areas of Ventura, Ojai, Camarillo as well as the unincorporated areas of El Rio, Somis, Ojai Valley and Channel Islands beach communities as E.J. Harrison and Sons; Fillmore, and surrounding unincorporated areas as Santa Clara Valley Disposal; and Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park and surrounding unincorporated areas as Newbury Disposal.



Thank you and Happy Holidays
E. J. Harrison & Sons
647-1414

For information & to pay bills online go to www.ejharrison.com



News and Notes



Ventura happenings

by Elizabeth Rodeno

In celebration of the close of the 3rd Annual Ventura Film Society screenings, CAPS covered the event which featured a film and appearance by Malcolm McDowell. The highly respected working actor was the honored guest. Malcolm's first major feature film, "If", directed by Lindsay Anderson in 1968, was shown to an enthusiastic audience. After the screening, Malcolm shared his acting and life experiences with the crowd. He is very proud to be a Ventura County resident and loves the community. All of us at CAPS do too.

On Monday, December 5th, the new City Council members were sworn in at the City Council meeting. CAPS welcomes both Mike Tracy as the new Mayor of Ventura and newly elected Cheryl Heitmann as the Deputy Mayor. As a media outlet to Ventura's local community, we look forward to working more closely with Mayor Mike Tracy and Deputy Mayor Cheryl Heitmann in broadcasting information about our local government to the citizens. CAPS is here to help our local community become more connected with your neighbors and City government. Ventura residents, watch VTV Channel 15 to stay informed through our live coverage of various City meetings!

In our ongoing series "Meet the Board of CAPS", we would like to introduce Terry Wieser, a board member for 4 years with CAPS. Terry is the Digital Multimedia/Studio Instructor for the Ventura Unified School District's Technology Development Center. Terry has spent the last 33 years working for the school district and presently teaches Adobe and Apple software applications for TDC Studios. Several of our staff members went through the training program and rave about Terry and the program. His vast experience in film, TV, and commercial productions, as well as music videos benefits his students and TDC as a whole. Terry's latest project also won the coveted CAPPIE Award for Best Educational program this year. He traveled to Peru with a group of Doctors and documented their efforts in helping children in need of cleft palate surgery.

As a CAPS-TV board member, Terry is interested in seeing that our members continue to receive the highest quality training and equipment that is required to produce a local community television show. Don't forget, CAPS is a member-based non-profit providing the latest HD cameras, lights, and audio equipment as well as great training, for the low annual fee of \$25.00. A CAPS membership makes a great gift too. Check out our website at www.capstv.org for more information and to watch our programming, and on Facebook as CAPS-TV Ventura.

The Bully Letters Project

In 2010, Elaine Muray was given a grant by the Ventura County Museum of Art to develop a storytelling program on bullying. The Bully Letters Project, seeks to give voice to those persons of all ages, who have experienced bullying as a victim, an innocent bystander, an educator, a community member or as a silent onlooker.

The project, which seeks to gather stories from those that write in, guarantees 100% anonymity. A post office box has been set up and the project requests that details that reveal identity not be provided, e.g., name, location of incident and so forth. The letters will then be rewritten for a storytelling performance and presented by professional storyteller, Elaine Muray, in a public performance sometime next year.

To participate, please send your anonymous letter to Elaine Muray, P.O. Box 3164, Ventura, CA 93006-3164. Deadline for receipt of submittals is March 31st, 2012. For more information on Elaine Muray, please visit her website at www.embodiedvoicestoryarts.com

Ventura Auto Club welcomes a new Travel Agent

Come meet Sue Scofield, the newest travel agent at the Auto Club in Ventura at 1501 S Victoria Ave. on January 02, 2012.

Sue grew up in Santa Paula and went to Santa Paula High School, then continued her education at Santa Barbara City College.

Sue worked for Celebrity Travel in Santa Barbara for five years as well as Golden Odyssey Travel for twenty years. Sue joined the Automobile Club family in 2010 in the Santa Barbara Branch and will be sailing down the coast to the sandy shores of Ventura.

Sue lives in Ventura with her husband, daughter and her two Bengal cats. Sue loves to collect teddy bears.

She is looking forward to joining the 2010 branch of the year and its dynamic team of world travelers.

Please stop by and welcome Sue to the Ventura Branch.

Christmas tree safety

Continued from page 1
the Christmas tree.

Always turn off your Christmas tree lights before leaving home, or before going to bed. Have a functioning smoke detector on each level of the home and outside every sleeping area. Also, have a fire extinguisher in a readily accessible location. Test your smoke detectors monthly, and replace the batteries every six months. An emergency home evacuation plan should be created and practiced with all members of the family. Taking a few precautions during your holiday decorating, and taking proper care of your Christmas tree, will help you and your loved ones to stay safe and fully enjoy this holiday season.

For more information check our website, cityofventura.net/fire, or visit us at facebook.com/venturacityfire and youtube.com/VenturaCityFD.



Wondering what to do tonight?
Let Tom and Sandy tell you where to go!

We bring the 805 to life.

805favorites.com

As heard on KVTA 1520AM Saturday Mornings, 8-9

Mailbox

Continued from page 5

for it is. Thought you would like to know about it, as I know that many educators read your material.

In kind spirit,
Elaine Muray
Pacific Regional Director, National Storytelling Network

Elaine:

Its oaky that you korrekt us, we could taek it.

Sheldon

Breeze:

I really enjoyed your latest edition November 30 to December 13. I am glad you included the letter from the city manager, Rick Cole about crime in our city. I hope this will wake up the citizens of Ventura about our crime and maybe a new vote can be implemented to the

citizens to approve a tax rate increase to fund the police department.
Marsha Moreland

Johanna;

I want to take a moment to thank you for inviting me to the halfway point of your Faces of Ventura celebration on Friday night. I really enjoyed attending and the positive feedback I have received regarding the job you are doing is exceptional. I am indeed blessed and humbled to be included in your project. I have received numerous compliments on my portrait and that isn't even from my family who might tend to be biased.

Thank you again. I am indeed proud to be associated with such a worthwhile endeavor.

Anita Diaz
Westpark Community Center & Youth Programs

"A great foster care parent is somebody who has a warm heart and treats you like their own child."

- James, 12 years in foster care

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News and Notes

Ask The Chief

Holiday Crime – A message from Ventura's Police Chief

by Ken Corney
Ventura Police Chief

With the holidays upon us, many of us find our lives a bit more hectic as we do our holiday shopping and preparations. It's important to be prepared and to pay attention to your surroundings. It is even more important during the holiday season when we traditionally see an increase in auto thefts, thefts from vehicles, and identity theft.

Did you know in Ventura that on average:

75% of all thefts and burglaries from vehicles are a result of people leaving their valuables in plain sight.

50% of all thefts and burglaries reported are a result of people leaving their cars unlocked.

40% of all stolen vehicles had the keys left in them.

50% of burglary and theft victims subsequently become victims of identity theft. While these statistics are alarming, they can often increase during the holiday season as the malls, stores, and parking lots become more crowded. An unlocked vehicle door, gifts/wallets/purses left in plain sight, an unattended purse in a grocery cart while shopping, or mail left in an unsecured receptacle, are open invitations to thieves.

The vast majority of vehicle burglaries, thefts from vehicles, and identity theft crimes are often "crimes of opportunity". Perpetrators tend to look for the "easiest" target and prey upon those

who leave themselves, or their property, vulnerable. The good news however, is there are numerous crime prevention measures you can take to avoid being a victim. The simplest, and easiest, begins with common sense.

Top Vehicle Burglary/Theft from Vehicle Prevention Tips:

Pay attention and be aware of your surroundings

Lock your car and set the alarm if you have one

Always take your keys with you and do not leave them in your vehicle

Remove all valuables and personal documents from your vehicle and do not leave them in plain sight

Do not leave the keys in the ignition or your vehicle running, not even for a "minute". Vehicles are commonly stolen at convenience stores, gas stations, ATMs, etc.

Never hide a second set of keys in your car. Extra keys can easily be found

Remove your garage door opener from your vehicle

Park in well lit areas.

We hope these tips help you to combat crime. Additional information can be found on our website at www.venturapd.org, on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/venturapd, or by calling our Department 339-4400.

All of us at the VPD wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

want to encourage everyone to embrace their culinary creativity and give some meat alternatives a try. The majority of holiday hams and turkeys produced for our meals endure incredible amounts of pain and suffering from inhumane treatment in factory farms. By choosing plant-based meal options you are voting against animal cruelty, and saying yes to a healthier lifestyle. Since I do most of the holiday cooking in my family I am always sure to provide alternatives to the traditional fare (even if vegan tamales scare my uncles). I want to wish you all blessings of peace, joy and an abundance of love this winter however you choose to celebrate the holidays.

For alternative holiday recipe ideas and eco-friendly gift guide. Check out: www.compassionateating.wordpress.com.

Grape Expectations

The King of wine: Cabernet Sauvignon

By Eric Garnier

It seems like yesterday that I was writing a wine column about the wines best served with the traditional meals of Thanksgiving!

December jumps out and before we know it, Christmas will be staring at us. If your house is as crazy as mine during the holidays, there will be many days filled with family, food and wine.

I must raise my glass of wine and salute the king of wine, Cabernet Sauvignon. As much as I love to discover and taste new varietals, when it comes to my "back to

basic" wine, I always fall back to a good juicy, tannic, velvety, chewy cab. This varietal is grown in most major wine growing areas throughout the world, and in my opinion is best if from California (Napa Valley), Washington, and France (Bordeaux).

I call a cab the "meat lovers" wine. During the holidays, prime rib seems to be the meat of choice in most households. This is when the Cabernet shines best. The different styles of Cabernet Sauvignon from different regions can also influence how well the wine matches up with certain foods. Old World wines, such as Bordeaux, have earthier influences and will pair better with mushrooms. Wines from cooler climates that have noticeable vegetal notes can be balanced with vegetables and greens. New World wines, with bolder fruit flavors, will pair well with bolder dishes that have lots of different flavor influences. The wine can typically pair well with a variety of cheeses, such as Cheddar, mozzarella and Brie and what I call a variety of "stinky" cheeses.

While New World Cabernets are characterized as being drinkable earlier than Bordeaux, premium producers such as the Californian cult wines will produce wines that need time to age and could potentially develop for two to three decades. Overall, the majority of Californian Cabernets are meant to be approachable after only a couple of years in the bottle but can still have the potential to improve further over time.

Merry Christmas
Joyeux Noël
Kala Christouyenna
Feliz Navidad
Eric
Questions or comments
Wineoeric@gmail.com

What is a day without a bag?

A Day Without a Bag is an educational grassroots event started by Heal the Bay in Los Angeles and hosted by Surfrider Foundation Chapters along with local community groups throughout the country. Held the third Thursday in December shoppers and retailers are asked to forego single-use, plastic shopping bags in favor of reusable bags.

Surfrider Foundation, Ventura Chamber of Commerce Green Task Force and City of Ventura Environmental Sustainability Division staff and volunteers will be out front at the following locations from 4-6pm on Thursday December 15th handing out free reusable bags to shoppers:

- 1: Albertsons at Telegraph Rd. and Kimball Rd.
- 2: Vons at Main St. and Ventura Ave.
- 3: Vons at Seaward Ave. and Harbor Blvd.
- 4: Fresh and Easy at Thompson Blvd. and Seaward Ave.

The impact of single-use plastic bags in our communities is costly to retailers, taxpayers and the environment. Partnerships with retailers, community and civic groups help us educate our individuals with an important message about the harmful impact of single-use plastic bags.

The Surfrider Foundation is a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of oceans, waves and beaches through a powerful activist network. Founded in 1984 by a handful of visionary surfers in Malibu, California, the Surfrider Foundation now maintains over 50,000 members and 90 chapters worldwide.

Ventura Farmers' Markets holiday hours

The Ventura Certified Downtown Farmers' Market announces its holiday schedule for the upcoming season. The Ventura Farmers' Market will close on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24 and re-open on New Year's Eve, Saturday, December 31. The Downtown Ventura Farmers' Market is held every Saturday morning from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon at the City Parking Lot on the corner of east Santa Clara & Palm Streets.

The Wednesday, midtown Farmers' Market held at the Pacific View Mall from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., will remain open every Wednesday during December and January.

Gift certificates in any amount are available for the holiday season and can be obtained during regular Farmers' Market hours of operation at the Information Booth.

For more information on the Ventura County Certified Farmers' Market Association, call 529-6266 or visit the website at www.vccfarmersmarket.com. Follow the Farmers' Market on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vccfm.

WOW! Pass is available for Christmas gift-giving

There are 12 days of Christmas and there are 12 days of the Ventura County Fair. The Ventura County Fair can help you fill those stockings on the fireplace with 12 days of fun! At the Fair (August 1 – 12) you'll see geese a-laying, ladies dancing and jumpers jumping. You can even get 5 golden (onion) rings!

WOW! Passes are perfect gifts for Fair lovers of all ages. For only \$3 a day, your loved one can visit the Fair up to 12 days in a row, and never miss a single exhibit, contest, ride, show, or Grandstand concert.

Avoid Lines at the Fair! Buying the WOW! Pass for Christmas will save precious time by avoiding long lines at the usual presale time during the weeks before the Fair, and there will be no waiting in line at the admission gates at the Fair. WOW! Passes are on sale now until December 31 at the Ventura County Fairgrounds Administration Office.

For more information about the WOW! Pass please call 648-3376 or visit www.venturacountyfair.org.

Free joint replacement classes

Livingston VNA will be holding a Joint Replacement Class to prepare you for total knee or hip replacement surgery. Home preparation, exercises and information about your rehabilitation will be discussed.

December 21 @ 10:00 – 11:00
Cypress Place
1200 Cypress Point Lane
RSVP: Diana Davis @ 642-0239 x 739

News and Notes

Fulton: heading east

by Rebecca Wicks

Bill Fulton may have left his post as mayor of Ventura, but he's certainly not riding off into the sunset quite yet. In fact, he's heading the opposite direction in the new year – to Washington D.C. Next up for Fulton, 56, will be the role of vice president for policy and programs for Smart Growth America, an urban planning think tank.

"Urban planning and mass transportation have always been my profession," said Fulton who played a significant role on the Ventura City Council (2000-2008) through the city's expanding years when many discussions were had in regards to land use and planning.

In Fulton's new job, his focus will be on helping state and local governments with urban planning by updating and improving their policies. The organization advocates for better urban planning and what they call smarter transportation investments.

In addition to returning full time to the private sector, Fulton will also be returning to the coast on which he was born and raised. Fulton also earned his bachelor's degree in Washington D.C.

Fulton who suffers from retinitis pigmentosa, has seen his vision worsen in the past few years and has said it is a big part of the reason he is stepping down from the City Council. Fulton, who rarely drives on his own anymore, says he is relying on Washington D.C.'s mass transit system to help him continue to have a more normal lifestyle. He also has close family in the D.C. area.

Fulton and his then wife came to Ventura in the mid 1980s looking for, in his words, "a town that had a strong sense of community."

"Our move to Ventura was a quality of life choice," said Fulton who raised his family in Ventura. "I liked the fact that it was by the beach, and was an older town

with a great downtown and a sense of identity."

It's this sense of identity Fulton said he will miss most.

"I have a sense of belonging," said Fulton. "I feel very rooted in this town, I feel that everyone knows you."

Fulton founded Solimar Research Group in Ventura. The company, which has since gone through two mergers, is now part of The Planning Center/DC&E. According to Fulton who will remain affiliated with the firm, the company's Ventura office which employs approximately a half a dozen people will most likely be moving its offices to the Los Angeles area.

He will also continue as an instructor at the University of Southern California's Sol Price School of Public Policy where he teaches a class in smart growth.

Fulton who was elected onto the City Council during a time of strong economic growth, saw the city and nation fall into a recession during his tenure with the city. He had often been criticized along with other council members for making the decision to close the H.P. Wright Library due to lack of funding and approving the installation of parking meters downtown.

Fulton served as mayor of Ventura from 2009-2011. While elected to the City Council by the public, he was elected by his council member peers to the position of mayor. In Ventura, the mayor has no lawmaking powers above any other council member. The mayor's main duties include presiding over council meetings, and representing the city at official events. The job itself pays \$700 a month, a mere \$100 a month more than other council members.

Four prior mayors of Ventura currently serve on the City Council including Christy Weir, Carl Morehouse, Brian Brennan and Jim Monahan.

advocacy and information to family members and friends of those suffering with severe mental illness. Each person has an opportunity, if they wish, to share their current situation with the group. Since everyone attending has or is going through similar issues, everyone can offer understanding and comfort. Often group members are able to offer helpful ideas, suggestions and resources.

Each group is coordinated by a volunteer from NAMI Ventura County who has been trained as a support group facilitator.

Family Support Groups meet regularly as shown below. For more information, call NAMI Ventura County at 641-2426.

Ventura – Meets at 6:30 pm, the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at Bible Fellowship Church, Room 301, 6950 Ralston St.

SB Symphony Orchestra Association welcomes new board member

The Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra Association is pleased to announce Venturan David Chernof, M.D., as one of its newest Board

Community Events

Members. Chernof is Associate Professor of Medicine at UCLA School of Medicine. He graduated with honors from Harvard University in 1957 and attended Medical School at University of California, Los Angeles. He was a Captain of the U.S. Army Medical Corps from 1965 to 1967.

Chernof served as President of the Medical Staff of Northridge Hospital and later became President of the Los Angeles County Medical Association until 1991, when he accepted the position of Senior Vice President and Corporate Medical Director for Blue Cross of California.

He then served as the founding Medical Director for the Los Angeles Care Healthplan and as the Medical Director for the Ventura County Healthplan. Chernof has served on the Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics (SBNC) since 2002, and as Board Chair from 2005 to 2010. In 2007 and 2008, Chernof acted as the volunteer Chief Operating Officer of SBNC. He has served as a Board member of the Adventures in Caring Foundation since 2002, and has been Board Chair since 2005.

The Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra Association is celebrated for its unique ability to deliver brilliant orchestral concerts while maintaining a strong commitment to education and community engagement, through the Santa Barbara Youth Symphony and other programs for youth. More information and 2011-2012 season schedule can be found at www.thesymphony.org.

Ventura events

Dec. 16: 2-8 p.m., **Customer Appreciation Event.** The open door Coffee House, Wesley Center, First United Methodist Church of Ventura, 1338 E. Santa Clara Street offers an evening of yuletide cheer. Peppermint and Egg Nog Latte along with your favorite espresso coffee drinks, hot chocolate; apple cider or selected teas will be available. Take a break from holiday spending and leave your money at home. Beverages and treats will be provided as a gift in appreciation for the support loyal patrons have given this outreach ministry. For more information call 643-8621.

Dec. 17: The Ventura County Genealogical Society, Inc. (VCGS) will be holding their **Annual Potluck Lunch and Holiday Program**, Saturday, at noon. The program will be held at the Ventura LDS Family History Center, 3501 Loma Vista Rd. (at Mills Rd.). Guests are always welcome. For more information call Gwenda Tucker at 485-7930.

Guest Speaker: Beth Miller, San Buenaventura Heritage, Inc. and Dudley House. Subject: Toys & Games: A Trip Down Memory Lane

Bring a dish to share and enjoy a presentation on 19th and 20th century toys and games by Dudley House volunteer, Beth Miller. Beth will have with her some replicas of these historical toys and will tell us the stories behind them.

Dec. 18: 5-8 p.m. The open door Coffee House, Wesley Center, First United Methodist Church of Ventura, 1338 E. Santa Clara Street hosts an evening of **Christmas Caroling.** You are invited to participate in short caroling jaunts around the neighborhood or to sit and enjoy Christmas music in the coffee house's holiday

decorated, warm and inviting atmosphere. Peppermint and Egg Nog Latte along with your favorite espresso coffee drinks, hot chocolate; apple cider or selected teas will be available. For more information call 643-8621.

Dec. 21: The Libertarian Party of Ventura County will hold their **Annual Holiday Party** on Wednesday at 6:30 PM at the Aloha Steakhouse Banquet Room, 5800 Santa Rosa Rd, Camarillo. Our speaker will be Peter Foy, Ventura County Supervisor and State Chair for Americans for Prosperity. Mr. Foy's beliefs in fiscal responsibility, smaller government and fewer taxes are in line with our principles. Plan to attend and enjoy the company of your Ventura County Libertarian Team. The public is invited to attend. Please RSVP at ww.meetup.com/libertarian-422. For more information: www.lpvc.org or call 652-0290.

Dec. 31: Country Lovers Western Dance Club will be holding a **New Year's Eve celebration** on Saturday, from 7:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., at The House of Dance, 3007 Bunsen Ave., Suite E, in Ventura. Snacks and desserts will be served all night. Alcohol will not be served, but you can BYOB. Please drink responsibly. There will be plenty of coffee, water and soft drinks. Music will be by deejay Jammin' Country.

Cost is \$45.00 per person for non-members, \$35.00 per person for club members. Price includes entry for raffle prizes. Only 86 tickets will be available, so reserve your tickets now by calling Country Lovers Hotline 456-9067. www.countrylovers.com.



George Frederick Handel (1685-1759)

Channel Islands Chamber Orchestra

The Holiday Season is really getting into full swing now and how better to get in the mood than singing those favorite, familiar, fabulous choruses from Handel's Messiah? So dust off your Messiah scores, join in the sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church in Ventura, and let'er rip!

You are the chorus. You'll be accompanied by the Channel Islands Chamber Orchestra, KuanFen Liu, Artistic Director, and the solos will be sung by Sophie Wingland (soprano), Louise Lofquist (alto), Grey Brothers (tenor), and Michael Shasberger, bass.

On Sunday, Dec. 18 at 3:00 p.m. (If you want to run through the choruses, come at 2:00 p.m.) at the First United Methodist Church, 1338 East Santa Clara St.

Harrison announces special services

Since both Christmas and New Year's Day fall on Sunday this holiday season, Harrison Industries will maintain its regular trash collection schedule during the weeks of Dec. 25-Dec. 31 and Jan. 7, 2012.

As a special holiday feature, residents may put out twice the amount of trash at no extra charge during the two weeks following Christmas. Please make sure the trash is in bags. They will also collect extra recyclables, but please make sure to flatten all boxes.

Also, Harrison is making it easy for their customers to recycle their Christmas trees. All customers need to do is remove the ornaments, hooks, lights, tinsel, bows, nails and tree stand, then cut the tree into sections no more than 4 feet long and place in the yard waste barrel on their scheduled pickup day.

Please note, however: Flocked trees cannot be recycled.

For more information, call 647-1414.

NAMI Family Support Groups

"Care & Share" family support groups provide support, education,



This Holiday Season
 Give that special person
 a gift that will
 last a lifetime!
Health & Fitness
 at the
Pierpont Racquet Club

Now through December 25
 1 and 3 month
 Gift Membership Packages
 are available
 ranging from \$195 to \$595



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Pleasant Holidays.

TOP

DEALS of the WEEK

Week of DECEMBER 12, 2011

- **Maui:** **SAVE more than 50%** on rack rates and receive a \$75 dining credit at The Westin Maui Resort & Spa, Ka'anapali. Valid on air-inclusive vacations for travel through 12/18/11.
- **Maui:** **SAVE an additional 20%** at the Grand Wailea. Valid on air-inclusive vacations for travel through 12/31/12.
- **Oahu:** **Save more than 60%** on rack rates at the Pacific Beach Hotel. Valid for travel through 6/30/12.
- **Mexico Hot Deals:** **Save \$100 per booking** to Cancun, Riviera Maya, Puerto Vallarta, Riviera Nayarit and Los Cabos. Roundtrip air and three nights' accommodation at a participating Hot Deals hotel are required. Book by 1/1/12 for travel through 12/21/12.
- **Tahiti & Fiji Hot Deals:** **SAVE \$100 per booking PLUS receive a \$20 per night resort credit** in addition to FREE nights and meals! Roundtrip air, five nights' accommodation at a participating Hot Deals hotel and travel protection plan are required. Valid for travel through 3/31/12.
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- **New York City:** **Limited time "Winter Sale!" Save up to 20%** at the InterContinental New York Barclay. Book by 12/23/11 for travel 1/2 - 2/29/12.
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- **Costa Rica:** **SAVE up to 41% PLUS Kids 12 years & younger stay and eat FREE*** at the all-inclusive resort Allegro Papagayo. Book by 1/31/12 for travel 12/22/12. *Kids FREE promotion applies to travel 5/1 - 12/22/12.
- **Aruba:** **Pre-Holiday Offer-SAVE up to 50%** at The Westin Resort and Casino, Aruba. Book by 12/15/11 for travel 12/15 - 12/25/11.
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The Channel Islands Clipper Barbershop Chorus entertained at the Annual Candlelight Tour on Dec.11 held at the Olivas Adobe. Guided tours of the lovely rooms of the Adobe and docents in period costumes performed vignettes showing how the Olivas Family prepared for the holiday. Photo by John Ferritto



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The Ventura Breeze Presents The Face Of Ventura



Steve Robles

Portrait by Johanna Spinks

Steve Robles is the Santa Claus of Ventura.

Since he was 1 year old Steve Robles has lived in Ventura and lived on the west side of town in the "projects" with his mother. He attended De Anza Middle School and Mar Vista High School. As a youth he loved sports and would climb the hillside almost everyday with his friends to see who could get to the top of Grant Park first.

When he was young he loved to chase Santa on the fire truck as it passed the projects with Santa throwing out candy to all the children which he was to do later in life.

He loves to sing R&B, oldies and love songs.

In 1993, Steve's stepfather owned a cellular phone store called Padilla's Cellular on Ventura Avenue. His stepfather asked Steve to put on a Santa suit and stand in front of the store waving to passers-bys for promotions for the store. As he stood there, he couldn't believe all the honks, love and hugs from children that he was getting so he told his stepfather that he wanted to become Santa and could he borrow his Santa suit.

For 8 years he took care of the children but didn't have a name for his cause. Then one day, a lady told him, you need to name this so it can be spread around the world. Then he thought "Wait a minute, everyone helps me and donates to this, why don't I call it Out of our Hearts Christmas Charity" which he did and now it's in 6 states and going strong.

He finds children that are less fortunate so Santa goes to their homes, homeless shelters, river bottom and anywhere that children are in need. He lets anybody join him and enjoy this experience, including your children, and he will put elf hats on them and teach them how

to share as they will learn how lucky they are to have a Christmas!

To promote it even further he has a Christmas karaoke contest going on at the Star Lounge, in downtown where he has raffles to raise the money for toys for children which ends Dec. 22. If you would like to donate, please feel free to call Steve at 815-5840 or would like raffle tickets or to just say hello.

Steve has been self-employed with Yellowcab of Ventura for 18 years, and they help him every year by donating a big van to carry all his toys and elves. You have probably seen Steve in his painted beach art cab around town called the Cali-cab. If you have toys you would like to donate call 815-5840 or Yellowcab of Ventura Co. at 659-6900.

We asked him what he likes most about Ventura?

We have so much to enjoy here, we have the perfect climate, better than anywhere in the world, the beach is so great for our kids to enjoy and snow is minutes away in Ojai.

There is little traffic around the city that helps us get around smoothly, the people here are so nice! It's just a small town attitude where everyone enjoys everybody and our kids are safe!

And how was the experience of having your portrait painted by Johanna?

Well, it was a very good experience, she really shocked me by how perfect she painted me. She made it so easy to sit there for 2 hours with music and conversation that I was really surprised and would recommend anyone who would like to have a portrait done to go see her at the Bell Arts Factory on Ventura Avenue. I also met Sheldon, he's a great guy that makes you laugh. Thank you Johanna and the Breeze!

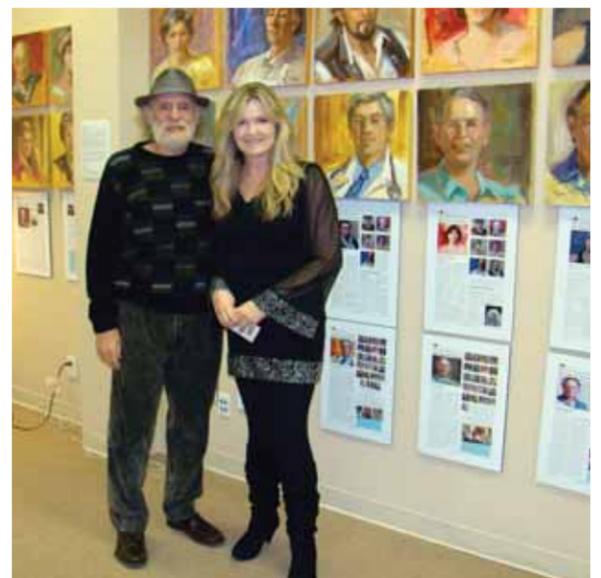
Face of Ventura by Johanna Spinks half-way celebration



On December 2 a wonderful party was held at the Executive Suites to celebrate the Face Of Ventura by Johanna Spinks half-way completion.

The evening was a wonderful success and I was touched by the kind words from so many guests about the project. I wish to thank all the wonderful folks who provided the food, wine and wonderful music for the event. They are thanked personally by Sheldon in his article in this issue of the Breeze. Be sure to go to the Executive Suites to see the portraits up close and personal...see you again in 28 sitters time!

-Johanna



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Saturday December 3, was a big day and night in downtown. A street fair, the wine walk, the tree lighting, music and even city hall was all lit up for the occasion. Singing on the mission steps were Daniel Brackett, age 11, Sarah Mehrnia, age 13 and Cassidy Craig, age 11 and on piano was mom Miriam Brackett.

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Senior Cone—nection

When mediation becomes a necessity (Part 1)

by Nanci Cone

More and more, as parents age and it is necessary to help care for them, arguments ensue among the children as to what constitutes the fair share of duties and costs. Other areas of conflict also include end-of-life issues and dispersion of financial assets. If one of the siblings feels that he or she is doing most of the work or paying expenses, problems ensue.

At least 43.5 million caregivers – nearly one of five adults – provide unpaid care to an older relative or friend, according to a recent survey by the AARP and MetLife-funded National Alliance for Caregiving. Of these, only one in 10 said the burden was split equally. Almost half felt they had no choice in the matter.

Brent Rosenbaum, a Ventura mediator, took time out of his busy schedule to talk about this issue and to offer some useful advice to help people avoid the pitfalls that often arise when dealing with a loved one's illness.

Brent, how did you decide to get into mediation?

Throughout my adult life, both in the personal and professional realm, it was as though I had a target painted on my back. I was "the go-to guy" for anyone who needed help trying to navigate an uncomfortable or difficult situation. Within the first hour of any new job – someone would approach me and it would result in dialogue, inevitably seeking my guidance on how to resolve his or her problem at hand. One night I was having dinner with a friend who wanted to sharpen his negotiation skills in dealing with highly emotional and irrational people. He told me of a "mediation" course he was taking. Well, I had my "epiphany over parmigiana" and not only took that course with him, but many more advanced and specialized courses after that.

Is mediation usually successful?

When you ask that question of other people, their idea of it being "a success" is gauged by "if there is a settlement." I view the mediation as being successful the minute the parties can hear my faint Brooklyn accent when I welcome them to the session. The idea that these warring and non-communicative family members are in the same room, at the same table, having good faith, transparent, and confidential conversation is a success in itself. I help them build further from that.

What happens if an agreement can't be reached?

There might not be total agreement after a session or sessions, but oftentimes consensus has been built upon single threads of commonality. Some items of contention are thoughtfully acknowledged. Sometimes the act of airing these issues and documenting them leads to an ongoing working family relationship with healing and positive outcome. A passionate and driven mediator never really lets go of a case and is available to

provide services until the timing is right to sign off on the remaining points.

For more information, call 746-5870 or visit www.rosenbaummediation.com for more information and look for Part 2 in the next edition of The Ventura Breeze.

Happenings at the Ventura TowneHouse

As part of the ongoing Community Continuing Education Series, nurses and medical staff will be at the Ventura TowneHouse from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 19 for a free stroke screening health event open to the public that is designed to catch any heart-related health problems before they take hold.

"We will educate on the signs and symptoms of stroke, do bilateral blood pressure readings, rhythm checks for atrial fibrillation (abnormal heart rhythm) and measure oxygen in the blood (pulse oximetry)," said Andrea Ricketts RN, MSN, ACNP, the HEALTHAware manager for Community Memorial Hospital.

The two-hour event is co-sponsored by CMH and MediTech Health Services and hosted by the Extended Learning Academy and the Ventura TowneHouse, located at 4900 Telegraph Rd., across the street from Ventura Community College.

Participants will also have the option to choose a more in-depth testing that would include an EKG and cholesterol analysis, and information about the CMH Stroke Support Group, which meets monthly.

At the beginning of the session, Ms. Ricketts will give a brief presentation about stroke screening and will take questions from the audience.

The community is also invited to the Ventura TowneHouse's annual Holiday Open House event from 5-7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 15.

The open house will showcase the amenities that make the TowneHouse unique and the oldest operating independent senior living facility in Ventura, since 1963.

Complimentary hors d'oeuvres, wine and holiday treats will be available at the several food and information stations on the seven story high rise with its phenomenal ocean views.

For more information, contact Andrea Ricketts at 667-2818 or Suz Montgomery of the ELA at 258-8000.

Families of wartime veterans and surviving spouses

On Saturday, December 17 join Cypress Place Senior Living for a free discussion regarding the Veterans Long Term Care Benefit and how it may help you maintain the level of care you deserve. This little known VA administered benefit can help pay for increasing medical costs associated with aging.

Seminar topics will include: What is the Veterans Long Term Care Benefit? Who is eligible for this benefit? What are the qualification requirements? How does

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the application process work? There is no charge for this service.

The free seminar begins at 10:30 a.m. at Cypress Place Senior Living and is open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

Cypress Place Senior Living is located at 1200 Cypress Point Lane in Ventura. Seating is limited so please call to reserve a seat. For more information or to RSVP, please call 650-8000. To learn more about Cypress Place Senior Living of Ventura, visit their web site at www.cypressplaceseniorliving.com.

Grief support groups

Livingston Memorial VNA & Hospice conducts various adult grief

support groups to help those who have experienced a loss. Explore and express feeling, understand the grief process and receive emotional support. Free of charge, all are welcome. The groups are held weekly: Wednesday; 3:00 – 4:30 pm @ The First Presbyterian Church, 850 Ivywood Drive, Oxnard; Wednesday; 6:30 – 8:00 pm @ Livingston Memorial VNA, 1996 Eastman Ave (#106), Ventura

Bi-Monthly: 2nd & 4th Tuesday; 3:00 – 4:00pm @ The Ventura Townhouse, 4900 Telegraph Rd, (7th floor), Ventura

Monthly: For the newly bereaved; the second Tuesday; 6:00 – 7:00 pm @ Livingston Memorial VNA, 1996 Eastman Ave (#106), Ventura

For more information call: 642-0239



On Dec. 9 the Victoria Care Center, located at 5445 Everglades St. held a Victorian Christmas Open House with appetizers and fine music including the wonderful Victoria Care Center Glee Club Caroling nurses entertaining the residents and their guests. It was also the opening of their newly decorated Transition Rooms. Photo by Barbie Lange



A star is placed on one of the trees, located at the Pacific View Mall each year for each former hospice care patient when the family contributes \$25.

Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Hospice a nonprofit organization that uses these funds to provide care to the terminally ill regardless of a recipient's ability to pay.

Training for Hospice Volunteers begins January 25. For more information contact mhazard@lmvna.org or 642-0239 x775

A few of the many volunteers present that evening were Doug VanBogen, Joan Anderson, Sandi Biggs, Randall Lamberson, Barbara Mendeas and Averi James. Photo by Bernie Goldstein.

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Professor Scamp, Ph.D

(Pretty Happy Dog)



Professor Scamp
Ph.D

■ With the holidays coming up I asked my friend Shannon Coyner, RVT, CPDT (dog trainer and veterinary technician) for some holiday advice.

Dear Scamp,

I hope you are enjoying this holiday season! I want to make sure you and Savana stay safe during all of the festivities.

There are going to be a lot of food and treats around. These tasty items are okay for the people but can make you very sick. Make sure to stay away from any alcohol (including things like rum cake), chocolate and bones (like turkey and chicken). These things can make you sick and you may end up at the pet hospital!

If you have a Christmas tree it can look like a lot of fun but be careful! Savana, if you try to climb it, it could fall. The water for the tree may seem like a convenient place to drink, but it is full of sap and needles that can give you a tummy ache. Use your own water bowl instead. Make sure your mom or dad sweeps the needles off the floor, they can hurt your throat if you try to eat them. The tree will be decorated with lots of ornaments and pretty lights, try not to play with them. Tinsel can make you very sick, even cause you to have to have surgery!! Your mom and dad should avoid putting tinsel on your tree.

Other decorations that people like to have during this time of year are holiday plants. Many of these plants can make you sick. Be sure to stay away from Holly, Mistletoe, Poinsettias and Lilies.

On New Year's Eve, it may be very loud with noise makers and parties. You should be kept in a safe place inside, so you won't try to run from the noise and leave your yard! Make sure you are wearing your name tag on your collar and even better that you have a microchip with your accurate address.

The holiday season can be fun for both pets and people, we just all need to stay safe.

I wish you (and all pets) a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

Your Friend,
Shannon

Scamp;

Can't I even have one egg-nog?

■ Thanks to a canine officer (that's a dog) doing a routine inspection at a big rig

checkpoint, 14 tons of marijuana destined for Los Angeles was seized by authorities in Salton City early this month. The 1,110 bundles of marijuana, with an estimated street value of \$22.6 million, were hidden in crates inside a big rig. (I hope that the dog makes 10%)

■ San Jose has recently voted to do away with doggie bags and the staff that stocks them at nearly 200 parks throughout the city, saving the city around \$110,000 a year. San Jose has been looking to get rid of unwanted waste within its city budget for the 10th year straight, and after laying off police and cutting library hours, decided it was time to do-away with the doo-doo bags. Now they got rid of salary waste and added dog waste (maybe they are the same thing).

■ A new study finds that children exposed to dogs and cats may reduce the risk of developing allergies. The study, which followed 565 children from birth until age 18, found that boys who lived with an indoor dog during the first year of life had around a 50% less chance of becoming sensitized, compared to boys who were without a dog in their first year. Teens who lived with a feline were half as likely to become allergic to their felines versus teens who didn't have a cat before their 1st birthday. Even another reason that us animals should be part of every household (besides being cute and adorable).



My friends Tom and Carrie Richardson, owners of Cameos Pet Salon (and doggie day care) have just moved to a larger facility (from Seaward) located at 2494 E. Main St. So I went to visit Maverick, Borla and Brie and to check the place out. And they even gave me a really big dog treat.

Forever homes wanted,



Hi: I'm Keala, which means "Path" in Hawaiian, a sweet female Pit Bull Terrier mix and I'm only a few months old. Our mom was found pregnant running around in the desert by a good Samaritan. They were able to catch her, but not the male who was with her; probably our dad. Since we're just puppies, children in the home must be 6 years or older. Puppy classes are a great way for us to socialize and learn right from wrong. We can bond as we learn new things together. We know our breed gets a bad rap, but we think you'll fall in love with us if you give us a chance. We can't wait to have a family and home to call our own. Stop by and meet us, we'll be waiting.

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Hi: I'm Mosa a poodle mix from Cabo San Lucas. I immigrated to this country in October, along with one of my friends. I am about 1-2 years old, 14 pounds with beautiful apricot-colored, non-shedding hair and I love to play and romp or just chill by your side! Take me home for the holidays!? (And I even speak Spanish!)

Ventura Highway Luxury Boarding for Dogs @ 4692 Ventura Ave. Contact 643-3647



Scamp Club

My name is Mugwai and I live in London and I'm a pug. Sometimes people that live in England do things a little backwards and I'm no exception.

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Animals of all sorts can join the ScampClub. Email me your picture and a little about yourself, including your address, to Scampclub@venturabreeze.com. You will be in the Breeze and become world famous.

Police Reports

by Veronica Johnson

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.

Robbery

On Monday, November 28th, at 7:39 p.m., both victims were walking through the Pacific High School campus when they were approached by a large group of males and females. One of the males offered to sell drugs to the victims and inquired as to whether they had cash. The males attacked the female victim and threw her to the ground, stealing her purse. The victim chased the suspects, trying to recover her purse. Several times, she was thrown to the ground and punched by the suspects. The suspects removed the victim's cell phone and fled.

The victim sustained minor injuries to her face and body as a result of the attack. She was released at the scene. The male victim was not injured.

At 9:18 p.m., a sergeant detained a group matching the robbery suspect de-

scription in the 2600 block of Main Street. Cody Taylor, Christopher Cruz, and a 17-year-old male were arrested and booked at VC Jail and Juvenile Hall.

A fourth suspect, a sixteen-year-old male, was cited and released for a probation violation after he fled during the stop on Main Street and discarded a knife he was concealing on his person.

Structure Fire

On Saturday, December 3rd, at 3:30 a.m., Ventura City Fire units responded to investigate a report of smoke in the area and a fire alarm sounding in the 4900 block of Thille Street. Units discovered a fire in a three-story condo unit and initiated a coordinated attack. Aggressive actions by firefighters helped to quickly extinguish the fire and keep it confined to the condo where it was discovered. Two adjacent units were protected and only sustained minor smoke exposure. The condo involved in the fire was unoccupied at the time. No injuries were reported.

Residential Burglary

On Saturday, November 3rd, at 2:30 p.m., a resident in the 2200 block of Mandrill Avenue returned home from running errands. She went to the side of

her house to look over her fence. As she did this, the suspect climbed over her fence and had a face-to-face encounter with her. The suspect ran.

The victim called the VPD to report her home being burglarized. Officers found the suspect as he was running away from the area. They took him into custody without incident.

Officers checked the path the suspect took when he fled the scene. They located property belonging to the burglary victim. The suspect was later lodged in Juvenile Hall. The victim was not harmed during this incident.

Assault with a Deadly Weapon

During an argument with family members, Daniel Cruz armed himself with a knife, threw the knife at his sister, Sarah, and then punched his mother before fleeing on foot. Margie Cruz suffered minor injuries during the attack. The knife did not strike Sarah. Family members contacted the VPD. Responding units checked the area but were unable to locate the suspect. On Sunday, December 4th, officers continued their search for the suspect locating him in the 400 block of East Main Street. The suspect was taken

into custody without incident.

Multiple Vehicle Thefts

On Sunday, December 4th, at 7:29 p.m., the VPD received a call from KD Doughnuts at 3855 Telegraph Road reporting suspects who had smashed out his business window with a baseball bat and fled the area.

At 8:22 p.m., 911 was dialed again, this time to report suspects seen running from a residence in the 100 block of Redwood Circle. Suspects were believed to be involved in vehicle burglaries.

Suspects were seen inside victim's vehicles removing property. 3 out of the 4 vehicles broken into had the ignitions punched in an attempt to steal the cars.

A responding officer located 2 subjects matching the description and conducted an investigative stop. Both suspects admitted to all of the crimes.

One suspect was booked at Juvenile Hall. The other was arrested and released to his parents.

Ventura High School Fire

On Tuesday, December 6th, at 11:43 a.m., Ventura City fire units responded to a reported structure fire at Ventura High School. Fire units were met by campus

Police Reports

security personnel and directed to two separate locations where fires had been intentionally set. Both locations were bathrooms and campus personnel had already begun extinguishing efforts. Firefighters extinguished the fires and assisted in cleaning up the damage. A fire investigator at the scene determined that the fires were intentionally set and was coordinating with the Ventura PD school resource officer assigned to the school to determine who was responsible. No damage occurred to the buildings. No injuries were reported and classes remained in session uninterrupted during the incident.

Battery Arrests

On Tuesday, December 6th, at 9:16 p.m., the three suspects and a fourth friend were consuming alcoholic beverages at the Good Bar, on 533 East Main Street. All four became rude and argumentative toward patrons and staff at the business. One of the suspects moved a security video camera, pointing it toward the ceiling.

When security attempted to escort the group toward the door, the three suspects simultaneously rushed the lone security officer. The suspects punched and wrestled with security until other employees rushed to his aid. Eventually the suspects were pushed out the front door. A passing patrol sergeant detained the suspects.

All three suspects, Francisco Evangelista, Jeff Attenberger, and Christopher Fortuna were booked into VC Jail. The security officer suffered only minor injuries.

Harbor Patrol Blotter

Just a few of the things the Harbor Patrol tends to.

11-28 1:02 p.m. Patrol released an inflatable to its owner after its owner signed a citation for Mooring without Permission for tying the vessel to the City Dock. Patrol had impounded the vessel a few days earlier at the request of the City.

2:03 p.m. VIM reports a massive oil spill at C-dock. Patrol responded and found

significant amounts of oil trapped at C-dock. Patrol notified the Coast Guard Marine Sanitation Detachment, who also responded.

11-29 7:00 a.m. Efforts to contain and clean-up the oil spill (hydraulic fluid) continued. The Coast Guard opened their "Super Fund" to pay for clean-up. Patriot Environmental Services arrived on scene at noon to take care of the spill.

12-1 11:23 a.m. Patrol contacted a vessel for non-contrasting CF numbers. While in the contact, Patrol discovered that the person was on probation and also had some "seal bombs", in violation of the terms of parole. He voluntarily surrendered five seal bombs. Patrol issued a written warning for the non-contrasting CF numbers.

12-2 11:40 a.m. Just for Dreamers reported one of its paddleboats was stolen last night. Just minutes earlier, a citizen reported the boat on the beach by the Sand Trap. Patrol towed the paddleboat to Just for Dreamers and released it.

12-3 5:55 p.m. Patrol observed a disabled vessel in the Main Channel, took the vessel into tow and released it at the launch ramp.

12-4 7:45 a.m. FCC dispatched Patrol and other agencies to a difficulty breathing call at VIM. Patrol administered oxygen and took vitals. AMR transported the patient to the hospital.



Construction accident

Ventura City Fire, Police and AMR ambulance responded to a construction accident involving an overturned cement truck doing preliminary work for the new Community Memorial

Hospital. A fully loaded cement delivery truck was operating near an open 8-foot deep trench in the parking lot between the 99 Cent Store on E. Main St. and the CMH parking structure when a sidewall of the trench collapsed under the weight of the cement truck. The pavement under the rear wheels collapsed as well, causing the truck to roll onto its side.

No injuries occurred as a result of the accident. A small amount of hydraulic fluid was released from the truck, however it was quickly contained by firefighters and construction personnel. None of the truck's load of cement spilled from its container.

Free Children's Story Time and Book Signing

Reading stories to children is a cherished holiday tradition, so bring your family on Sunday, December 18 between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m., for the Museum of Ventura County's special free story time and book signing. Local children's book authors and illustrators, including Venturans Kathleen Contreras, Jody Fickes Shapiro and Amada Irma Perez will read and sign their books. Admission to the museum is free all day.

Children can also have fun with interactive elements in Simms Taback: Making Pictures For Children, an exhibit featuring original illustrations by this artist and author of more than 50 books, including the Caldecott Medal honor book "Joseph Had a Little Overcoat."

The Museum of Ventura County is located at 100 East Main Street in downtown Ventura. Hours are 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. For more museum information go to www.venturamuseum.org or call 653-0323.

Chanukkah - the Jewish festival of lights

by Nanci Cone

Most people have heard of the Jewish holiday called Chanukkah that commemorates the rededication of the holy Temple in Jerusalem around 165 B.C.E. Antiochus, the Greek King of Syria, outlawed Jewish rituals and ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods. In 168 B.C.E. the Jews' holy Temple was seized and dedicated to the worship of Zeus. Some Jews were afraid of the Greek soldiers and obeyed them, but most were angry and decided to fight back.

The fighting began when a Greek officer and soldiers assembled the villagers, asking them to bow to an idol and eat the flesh of a pig, activities forbidden to Jews. The officer asked Mattathias, a Jewish High Priest, to take part in the ceremony. He refused and he and his five sons and the other villagers then attacked and killed the soldiers forcing his family into hiding in the nearby mountains, where many other Jews joined them. Before he died, he placed his son, Judah Maccabee, in charge of the growing army and after three years of fighting, the Jews were victorious, despite having fewer men and weapons.

The Maccabees entered the holy

Temple only to find many things missing or broken, including the golden menorah. They cleaned and repaired the Temple, and when finished, decided to have a big dedication ceremony and to light the menorah, but found only a small flask containing enough oil to light the menorah for one day. Miraculously, the oil lasted for eight days which gave them enough time to obtain new oil to keep the menorah lit. Today Jews celebrate Hanukkah for eight days by lighting candles in a menorah every night, thus commemorating the eight-day miracle.

Another popular tradition is spinning the dreidel, a four-sided spinning top with a Hebrew letter on each side - nun (nothing), gimmel (all), hay (half) and shin (put in) which stand for the Hebrew phrase "Nes Gadol Haya Sham" that means "A great miracle happened there." Depending upon which letter lands facing up, the players either get nothing, get everything, receive half or end up having to put in money. Children begin playing at a very young age, usually playing with foil chocolate in the shape of coins also known as "gelt," the Yiddish word for money.

Dreidels were thought to originate during the rule of Antiochus when Jews were not free to openly practice their religion. When they gathered to study Torah they would bring a top with them and, if soldiers appeared, they would quickly hide what they were studying and pretend to be playing a gambling game with the top. Soldiers assumed they were lazy and stupid and would leave them alone. Once the soldiers departed, the dreidel would be put away and studying would begin again in earnest.

In addition to lighting the menorah, families celebrate the holiday by giving and receiving gifts, decorating the house, entertaining family and friends and eating special foods such as potato latkes (pancakes). It may be a minor holiday but it sure is a fun one! This year, the first night of Chanukkah falls on Wednesday, December 21st.

Chanukkah at the Harbor

The Chabad Jewish Centers of Oxnard, Ventura and Camarillo invite the public to their annual Chanukah Festival on Monday, December 26th from 2:00-4:30 pm at the Ventura Harbor Village. The event is free of charge and open to the public. The Chanukah Festival has been made possible by a grant from the Jewish Federation of Ventura County.

This year in addition to live music, hot Latkes and a Judaica boutique, we will be having real snow for the children and an exciting tightrope show by "The Amazing Chris"! It promises to be a day of fun for the entire family!

"The significance of Chanukkah today is a reconfirmation of faith and hope," said Rabbi Dov Muchnik, Director of the Chabad of Oxnard Jewish Center. "The public Menorah lighting proclaims the universal message of religious freedom and tolerance, so critical in light of today's world situation. We look forward to welcoming everyone at a warm and happy celebration."



Ventura Girl Scout Troop 61060 donated toys to Toys for Tots. The girls sold nuts, a Fall Fundraiser for the Girl Scouts, to earn money for their troop. After a vote, they decided to use some of their money for disadvantaged families. "We met at Target. It was really hard to choose because there were so many good toys", Elena Franco stated. "But it was really fun." The girls paired up and had to agree on how to spend their money. Target also donated a \$20 gift card to purchase additional toys. The toys were dropped off at a local fire station. Their next service project will be collecting pet food for homeless animals.

Scamp says "My kind of fundraiser."



School Dictionaries for children

by Nanci Cone

According to the website, www.dictionarproject.org, in 1992 Annie Plummer of Savannah, Georgia, gave 50 dictionaries to children who attended a school close to her home. The children were so appreciate she continued to make this a yearly project. Early on, her project attracted the attention of Bonnie Beeferman of Hilton Head, S.C., who began a project of raising money by selling crafts to buy dictionaries for the schoolchildren of Hilton Head and the surrounding communities.

By 1995, Bonnie was getting so many requests from local teachers to be included in the project that she wrote a letter to the editor of the Charleston Post and Courier explaining the project and asking for someone to help meet requests from the Charleston area. Mary French, who was already an active school volunteer even though her two children were still of preschool age, read the letter and she and her husband, Arno French, formed a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Association in 1995, along with a Board of Directors and The Dictionary Project was born. After The Wall Street Journal published a story about the project in March 2002, the Dictionary Project took on a national purpose and expanded its mission to include students in the 50 United States.

When Rotary Club of Ventura heard about this a number of years ago they decided this was one of the projects they wanted to implement here in Ventura.

Last year, almost 1,400 dictionaries were distributed to third grade children in the area - something many of the families would not be able to otherwise afford. Since children typically learn how to use a dictionary in the third grade, it's an ideal time to distribute them. The dictionaries are a gift for the children to keep and can be used throughout the rest of their lives.

Chairwoman of the project, Margo Byrne, says, "We've heard from many people that children no longer need dictionaries thanks to the internet. However, there are hundreds of families who do not own a computer in Ventura. By handing out these dictionaries, children learn how to use them, grasp the nuances of the English language and have a handy reference guide right at their fingertips when writing papers."

Dr. Todd Binkley is also involved with this project and he notes, "I can't begin to stress how important it is for children to have a dictionary they can take home for their own use. For children who view English as a second language, this is an item to be treasured and treated with respect. We hear from teachers and principals about how grateful they are when the dictionaries arrive at their schools and how much care the children take when they receive them. I'm really proud to be part of this project!"

This year, the dictionaries will arrive in mid-January and they will be delivered to the Ventura public schools right after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. If you are interesting in learning more about this project or about the Rotary Club of Ventura, please visit their website at www.venturarotary.com.



Aimee French and Bou teach students the proper care of animals

Promoting responsibility with animals

by Inga Dahlstedt

A class of third graders in Ms. Bartsch's classroom at Pierpont Elementary school was treated with a surprise when they discovered a dog sitting in their classroom when returning from recess. Bou, a ten-year old rescue stayed sitting on his bed as the students eagerly filed in. Aimee French, Bou's owner and a part of the Humane Society of Ventura County quickly started her hour long interactive lesson plan. French teaches the education program of the Humane Society to schools in Ventura County, the education program reaches over 12,000 students per school year and ranges in all grades. The program aims to teach students about the many responsibilities taking care of a pet can create as well as safety with animals, kindness, overpopulation, abuse and cruelty and the differences between wild and domesticated animals. The program ties in with the California State Content Standards and tends to have a lesson plan that incorporates what the students are learning in school. Each grade has a unique lesson but has the overall theme of the importance of taking care of animals and safety when dealing with animals.

With the third grade class, French stressed the importance of sympathy for animals and the significance of treating animals with kindness and respect. She shared her story of adopting Bou and the promise she made to take care of him. She explained that every person must make that promise when taking in an animal and if for some reason they cannot keep their promise they take the animal to a place where someone can keep that promise, like a shelter. Bou demonstrated tricks he knew and each child was able to pet him in the correct and gentle way. She also explained the importance of safety with animals and the need to pay attention to the animals in your surroundings. Whether they are being mistreated, are wild, or homeless, each situation calls for a different course of action that the students learned.

Bou wasn't the only surprise animal the students got to see, French also brought a blue-tongued skink, a tree frog, and a corn snake. As each student got to observe the wild animals French explained the importance each animal had in their

ecosystem and that it was crucial they not be taken from their habitat in order to keep it functioning and thriving. This tied in with what the third grade class was learning about habitats and ecosystems. She taught them to "look, learn, and leave them alone" and the best observation is through eyes and ears only.

With every lesson, no matter what grade French hopes that each student takes the knowledge of the responsibility they have when it comes to taking care of animals, and the importance in treating every living thing in a respectable way. She notes that you "don't have to be an animal expert in order to know not to hurt them." Knowledge and spreading the word is key for the humane treatment of animals to be increased and for the public to know about the responsibility they have with animals.

For more information about the Humane Society or the education program please visit www.humanesocietyvc.org

High school receives prestigious grants

Pacific High School, Ventura's continuation school, is proud to announce that a life skills program initiated and developed at Pacific, Its My Life, has received 2 prestigious grants. The Institute for Teachers and the National Education Association Foundation have awarded grants to Its My Life to conduct school-based research and expand the program to other schools, initially in Ventura Unified and, hopefully, on to other districts.

The program titled Its My Life was created when a teacher, Chip Fraser, continued to notice that students in high school and even in the last year of middle school, were unfamiliar with what will be expected of them once they reach the area known as "adulthood". Fraser continued to add lesson plans as more needs arose and essential questions were left incomplete. In the last year Brian Jaramillo, a fellow educator, became Fraser's partner in Its My Life and brought with him a strong technology component and a mindset geared to critical thinking and active student participation.

"This is a life skills program but it goes further, because Its My Life opens the door to a myriad of potential subjects and issues" Fraser explained. The daily lesson plans are "presented" via discussion, journaling, vocabulary, writing, role-playing, filming, and project development and completion.

Fraser and Jaramillo, from decidedly different backgrounds, have brought various elements to the program, yet both agree that our students are bombarded and overwhelmed with life as it is. Skills are required to handle the immense pressures of growing up.

If each student is to transcend this invisible barrier, he or she must be equipped for the future and Its My Life is wonderful tool!



Don't be a victim this holiday season!

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This message brought to you by the Ventura Police Department.
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Non-Emergency
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Business Line
805•339•4400

www.venturapd.org

www.facebook.com/venturapd

Youth



Tutor Bjorn McMillan discussing a homework assignment with his student. Photo by Barbie Lange.

Ventura's School on Wheels volunteer of the month

by Barbie Lange

"Teaching is a second passion," says Bjorn McMillan, the School on Wheels' volunteer of the month. As current president of Ventura College's (VC) Honor Society, he has a large role in organizing community events for members. He encourages them to participate in School on Wheels because he knows how fulfilling it is as they help lift younger students up. He is currently tutoring a freshman student in Ventura on a weekly basis. "It is a privilege to be able to tutor students like mine. I consider myself fortunate to have the ability to give back and make a difference in someone else's life." McMillan has tutored his student for the past year and they have met in three different locations. His student says having a tutor is very helpful. "I have elevated my math grades from F's to B's. I never had that high grade before." She says she wanted and needed to get good grades, especially in math.

McMillan says his student is very smart, very kind and they share similar life experiences. "She is definitely a strong personality and I love that." "My relationship with him is like a brother," says his student. "He takes an interest in my school life and my family."

McMillan had an extremely turbulent childhood living all over Ventura with his mother, who was ill most of the time and he had a huge role in raising himself. While in high school, he petitioned the court for legal guardianship. Upon winning the court case, he moved to Manhattan Beach to live with his aunt and uncle for his last two years in high school. "Those years were

not easy, feeling like I was torn between two worlds."

Upon graduation, he moved back to Ventura to attend VC and has been a student for the past two and a-half years and is currently attending Moorpark College as well. He says, according to statistics, "People such as myself and my student who come through a situation like this are not expected to go to college, and are not pushed in the same manner to go to college. It is much more of a self-driven experience." The first semester at VC was the toughest, working 40 hours a week as a night crew stocker while being a full time student. McMillan chose mechanical engineering as his major after his first year at VC. "My goals for college are simply to graduate with a BS in ME, this is important to me being I'm the first person in my family to go to college."

In addition to tutoring, McMillan is an outdoorsman/track and field athlete, earning two-time SC finalist in Javelin in 2010-2011 at VC. "I love sports because it has been a channel I can tune into whenever there has been something negative happening in my life." McMillan also earned the scholar athlete of the year award in 2011.

The mission of School on Wheels is to enhance educational opportunities for homeless children from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The goal is to shrink the gaps in their education and provide them with the highest level of education possible. If you would like to learn more about School on Wheels or apply to volunteer, please visit their website at www.schoolonwheels.org. Linda Huddle and Yadira Melgoza are the Regional Coordinators for Ventura County and can be reached at 641-1678.

Winter Writing Camp

by Dallas Woodburn

Due to some very sweet emails from parents and young writers, I am excited to share with you that I will be holding a special one-day Winter Writing Camp when I am home for winter break this year! It is going to be held Saturday, Dec. 17 from 10am to noon at Jensen Design & Survey at 1672 Donlon Street in Ventura.

In the spirit of the season, the special holiday rate for this session is \$20, half the price of a day of writing camp during the summer. You can sign up on my website: <http://writeonbooks.org/festivalofwriting.aspx> or you can email me at

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dallaswoodburn@gmail.com and I will send you a PDF of the registration form.

In addition, a number of parents have asked if I do any writing workshops during the school year. I am currently living in Indiana, going to graduate school for Fiction Writing at Purdue University, but thanks to the Internet I am pleased to be able to offer "Guided

Mentorships" for young writers across the country.

Dallas Woodburn author, speaker, freelance writer instructor at Purdue University founder of Write On! For Literacy and Write On! Books editor of Dancing With The Pen: a collection of today's best youth writing



Helping sell tickets and give directions to the Ventura Winter Wine Walk held on Dec. 3 were the wonderful City Corps kids and a few not so kids helping out.

Arleen, Valorie, Matt, Mario, Geovany Jones, Ryan Bugayong, Ian Taylor and Arthur Brunbender.



Pierpont Elementary School held its first ever Jog-A-Thon on Friday, November 18th. The school's goal was to raise \$20,000 to help fund the music and art programs at the school as well as pay for facility improvements. All the parents, kids and staff want to thank the amazing surrounding community and the generous sponsors, including the Ventura Breeze for making the jog-a-ton a tremendous success.

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

5	1	9	8	6	7	4	3	2
8	2	3	9	4	5	6	7	1
4	7	6	2	1	3	9	8	5
9	3	8	4	5	2	7	1	6
6	4	2	7	8	1	5	9	3
7	5	1	6	3	9	8	2	4
2	6	7	1	9	4	3	5	8
1	8	5	3	7	6	2	4	9
3	9	4	5	2	8	1	6	7

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

T	U	T	U	F	I	E	A	C	H	Y	
O	V	E	N	O	D	E	C	H	O	U	
M	E	N	S	R	O	L	L	C	A	L	
B	A	D	E	G	G	S	I	R	R	E	
			A	L	I	T	S	U	I		
R	O	L	L	O	V	E	R	E	S	S	
E	R	A	B	E	N	E	S	M	I	L	
V	E	N	T	R	O	L	L	B	A	C	K
			C	A	P	R	A	U	L		
E	R	E	B	U	S	P	R	O	N	T	O
R	O	L	L	B	A	R	S	W	O	O	
O	B	O	E	R	O	E	U	N	T	O	
S	E	T	S	A	D	D	P	E	E	R	

Show Time

Music Calendar 12/14 to 12/27

For more events go to Fun-in-Ventura.com

Andre's Wine Bar
1575 Spinnaker Dr.
805-642-9463

Live Music every Tues, Thur & Fri

Blackbeards Seaside BBQ
1591 Spinnaker Dr. #115
805-650-7773

Karaoke every Wed 6-9pm
Blue Grass Jam featuring: The Bottom Feeders every Thur

Fri 12/16 - Alastair Greene Band 7-11pm

Sat 12/17 - Jodi Farrell and the Front St.

Prophets 6-10pm

Sun 12/18 - Blue Stew 2-6pm

Fri 12/23 - Donna Greene 7-11pm

Bombay's Bar & Grill
143 S. California St., 805-643-4404

All Star Blues every Wed

Local Live Music every Thur, Fri & Sat

Afternoon Concerts every Sun 4pm

Fri 12/16 - DONO Christmas Extrava-

ganza featuring the Ramonas

Sat 12/17 - The Shoemaker Bros 5:30pm,

The Reall Deall Band 9:30pm

Sun 12/18 - R&B Bombers

Fri 12/23 - Kissmas (Kiss tribute band)

Cafe Fiore
66 California St., 805-653-1266

Live Bands every Tue thru Sat

DJ in the TreeHouse Lounge every Fri & Sat

Wed 12/14 - Big Adventure

Thur 12/15 - Coso Live

Fri 12/16 - Copy Cats

Tue 12/20 - Bernie Meisinger

Wed Big Adventure

Thur Bongo Town

Fri 12/23 - Scott Cartter

Tue 12/27 - Frank Barajas

It's All Good Bar & Grill
533 E. Main St., 805-641-9951

Open Mike Night every Wed

Majestic Theater
26 S. Chestnut St.

Fri 12/16 - David Archuleta

Tue 12/20 - Streetlight Manifesto, Reel

Big Fish

Watermark On Main 598 E., Main St.
805-643-6800

Intimate Acoustic with Dano every Tue

Jazz at the Mark every Wed

W2O Rooftop Lounge
598 E. Main St. (above Watermark)
805-643-6800

Friday Dance Party every Fri 9pm

Thur 12/15 - Mighty Cash Cats

Fri 12/16 - 4 on the Floor

Sat 12/17 - La Soul Project

Sun 12/18 - Bloody Mary Monday

Thur 12/22 - Shawn Jones

Fri 12/23 - Legalizers

Sat 12/24 - The Bomb

Zoey's Café
185 E. Santa Clara St., 805-652-1137

Songwriter's Round every Wed 8pm

Wed 12/14 - Peter Case 8pm

Thur 12/15 - Nathan McEuen with Salty

Suites 8pm

Fri 12/16 - Birdfeeders, Bakersfield &

Aarrghh 8:30pm

Sat 12/17 - J.R. Richards Holiday Show

8pm

Sun 12/18 - Ellis Paul, Peyton Tochter-

man & B. Willing James 8pm

Mon 12/19 - B. Willing James & Freinds

8pm

Wed 12/21 - Dead Winter Carpenters &

Christopher Hawley 8pm

Thur 12/22 - Delaney Gibson & Jamie

Drake 8pm

Fri 12/23 - The White Buffalo (solo

acoustic) 8pm

Mon 12/26 - B. Willing James & Friends

8pm

Tue 12/27 - Blue Grass Jam 6pm

Where The Music Flows

Shows here, shows there...

by Michael Kohli

One Friday night, recently—I decided to go downtown to see some of my favorite local bands play. Only problem was they were all performing at the same time at various clubs. So, I parked my car behind Bombay Bar & Grill and started my night by watching one show, then in between set-up band changes, I walked to the other venues: Good Bar & San Souci. Realized how much I love this town! That three different shows were in walking distance, and I was able to see all three! And, got to run into so

many people I love within our music scene. You can't get this kind of closeness down in LA or other over-saturated markets. Here, I walk in one venue—hugs all around. Go to next venue, more! I really dig our scene and the people involved! Thank you to 8Stops7, Army of Freshmen, New Liberty, Alexandra & the Starlight Band, Golden Ghosts, & Daniel Ash for an amazing night.

Latest rock album I've been getting into is the new masterpiece from, Alice Cooper. I crossed paths with him outside the Majestic Ventura Theater years ago, and always dug his style. Welcome 2 My Nightmare is probably his most eclectic album yet! It's very retro-theatrical-sounding approach with a modern kick-ass bite to it. I think it is the best rock album of 2011. "I Am Made Of You", "Caffeine", "Last Man On Earth", & "Something To Remember Me By" are among the stand out tracks that make the album a perfect companion to it's original! Need a Christmas gift idea? Got a rock musician in your family? Might make a good stocking stuffer!

Michael Kohli

VenturaLiveWire@gmail.com

Kohlismusicpit.com

PS: Happy Holidays from DJ Kohli Rocks!

The Entertainment Report

Silver screen

by Linde Carlson

Hello Ventura, I'm baaaaack!

There are so many great movies out right now, it's hard to pick just two, but the two I have really enjoyed in the last two weeks are J. Edgar and The Descendants.

J. Edgar



It's hard to believe, but members of the FBI actually have a human side, which is proven in the riveting story of J. Edgar Hoover, one of the most influential figures of the twentieth century noted for the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a role that Leonardo DiCaprio knocks out of the ball park.

In this biopic drama directed by

Clint Eastwood, the longtime FBI director Hoover has a secret, which becomes apparent about the middle of the film. Rumors swirl around the agency and suspicions arise when he becomes too close to his protégé Clyde Tolson (Arnie Hammer). It does get intense, and portrayed in a very real light.

This compelling portrait, a unique character in American history tackles personal relationships and political ambitions forming a tapestry of secret love for his secretary, (Emma Watts) and adoring love for his mother (Judy Dench).

DiCaprio's understated sepia toned, 30's era performance provides depth and subtlety alongside rage and hidden feelings. A must see!

Rated R Running time 137 minutes

The Descendants



I have a new found love and admiration for George Clooney in this touching family comedy-drama. Clooney is actually real in this film, relaxed in his own skin and in his own hometown, and it shows.

The Descendants take you to Hawaii, one of the most beautiful tropical places on earth, and I have a special connection to Hawaii, so I was enthralled by the scenery.

George Clooney plays a land baron, the trustee to hundreds of acres of land on the island of Kauai.

When Clooneys wife is hurt in a boating accident and falls into a life threatening coma, Clooney is forced to mend a fractured relationship with his two daughters, and come to terms with a secret love affair his wife has, which he finds out from his eldest daughter.

Determined to find out who he is, he sets out on a quest with his daughters, to find closure. In the meanwhile, his cousins are urging him to sell the precious land he inherited, but there is a catch, if he sells, his wife's lover is subject to make a handsome commission as the broker.

The movie takes you on a roller coaster ride of emotions and is captivating from the minute it starts till the end. I loved it. A must see!

Rated R Running time 115 minutes



Chamber recognizes Ventura's finest

The Ventura Chamber of Commerce's mantra, is "We're taking care of business." The 15th Annual Poinsettia Awards, held last Thursday, December 8, was an excellent example of the

Chamber's commitment to not only take care of local business, but their dedication to recognize the good deeds of business and business people in Ventura County. The prestigious attendees included City of Ventura and state dignitaries, Ventura Unified School District representatives, local government officials, City, Fire and Police employees and Chamber members.

Business of the Year awards were presented to Ventura Breeze (Small Business), ServiceMaster by T.A. Russell, (Mid-Size Business), Players Club (Large Business). Non Profit Service Organization of the year was awarded to Turning Point Foundation. Draganchuk Security Systems was awarded the Jewel Key Award for their renovated facility. The Greek at the Harbor received the Innovation Award for changes made not only to the interior renovation of their business, but their newly renovated menu as well. AutoLube Care won the Environmental Service Award for their commitment to an impressive EcoQuality program.

Yvonne Knepper was named Ambassador of the Year as the standout Chamber of Commerce Ambassador.

Citizen of the Year, based on community activism was given to Marie Lakin, known for putting volunteer power into public projects. Ann Deal, well-known local entrepreneur was chosen for the Philanthropist of the Year. Mel Sheeler, owner and operator of Sheeler Moving and Storage, Inc. and Sheeler Records Management was awarded the Hometown Hero award. This award is saved for an individual who has served the community beyond that which is required, through volunteer services that specifically strengthen the community and improve the lives of others within the community.

Female Student of the Year was awarded to Jessica Miranda Bustamante, a local student known not only for her academic prowess, but her involvement in the community as well. Guillermo Rosales, Male Student of the Year was recognized for his perseverance through extreme difficulties, determined to succeed for his family. "Whoever said I was going to be a nobody, I am proud to say, 'I am someone.'"

Ventura Unified honored Linda Brug, for her service to VUSD for over 35

years. City Staff Person of the Year, Anita Diaz, was honored for her steadfast commitment as Community Service Coordinator for youth programs. Derek Donswyk, Police Officer of the Year and Luis Manzano, Firefighter of the Year, were commended for their public service above and beyond, protecting our community.

Surprise Awards were also given to Matthew Graczyk, Coupeez, Inc., for Volunteer of the Year, who has tirelessly served the Chamber; and Shining Star Award was presented to Lynn Mikelatos, Greek at the Harbor for her steadfast commitment in serving numerous community service organizations this past year.



The Lighter Breeze

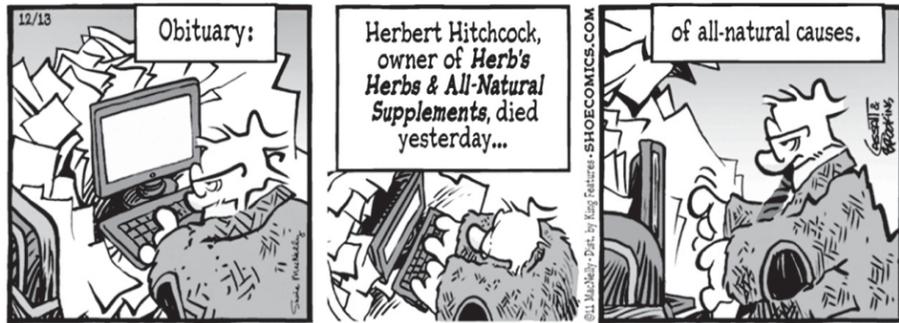
Zits



Mother Goose and Grimm



Shoe



Moose and Molly



Arctic Circle



Crock



Solutions on page 19

	1			7	4		
8			4				1
	6	2				8	
9			5		7		
	2			1			3
	5		6			2	
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	9		5			6	

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging
★★★ HOO BOY!

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Solutions on page 19

King Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19			20					
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42	43				44		45			46	47	48
49						50				51		
52						53				54		
55						56				57		

ACROSS

1 Ballet skirt
5 "A pox upon thee!"
8 Sore
12 Microwave, for one
13 Praise in verse
14 Comrade of Mao
15 Clothing store section
16 Attendance check
18 Wolf in the henhouse?
20 "Yes" or "no" follower
21 Settled down
23 — generis
24 Com-mand to Fido
28 Being, to Brutus
31 Historic time
32 Elaine's surname on "Seinfeld"
34 Wire measure
35 Air outlet
37 Price reduction
39 Baseball hat
41 Actor Julia
42 Antarctic volcano
45 Now

DOWN

1 Grant's —
2 Eye layer
3 Be inclined (to)
4 Open
5 Let-bygones-
49 Race drivers' protectors
51 Lumber
52 Reed instrument
53 Fish eggs
54 "Do — others ..."
55 Collections on "Seinfeld"
56 Do sums
57 Equal

be-bygones type
27 Got sick again
6 Wedding words
29 Bracketed notation
7 Morays and congers
30 Wapiti
8 Accumulate
33 Insult
9 Special appeal
36 Restaurant furniture
10 Aperture
38 Enlarge a photo
11 Christmas
40 Saloon
17 Fleur-de-
42 Love god
19 Amorphous mass
43 Pajama cover-up
22 Male voice
44 Poet
24 Churchly title (Abbr.)
46 Zilch
25 Raw rock
47 Carry
26 Trusted knight
48 Smell
50 Scepter

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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) I know, dear Lamb, that you don't like anyone trying to take charge of one of your projects, but try to be a bit more flexible. A new idea could help hasten a positive result.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) I'm sure, like the time-thrifty Taurus that you are, that you've done much of your holiday shopping. But don't relax yet. Wrap those gifts now to save yourself lots of unwanted pressure.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Be receptive when a family member or friend asks to confide in you. Your positive reaction could ensure that he or she will have a happy holiday experience.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Don't be rushed into wrapping up that workplace problem. Consider leaving it until after the holidays. This way you'll have the facts you need to reach the right resolution.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) You'll get news that will make you glow brighter than the lights of the holiday season. Be sure to use what you learn both carefully and kindly, to avoid giving the wrong impression.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) That frayed relationship could be mended in time for the holidays if you were more flexible. Give a little, and you could get back a lot more than you imagined.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Things might not seem to be settling down as quickly as you would prefer. But it might be just a little holiday time flutter. You'll soon get news that will lead to more stability.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Stop getting so involved in everyone's personal problems that you lose precious time with loved ones. Remember, even the Supreme Court closes for the holidays.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) All signs point to a bright holiday, with all of those pesky problems finally resolved in your favor. Share the good times with people you love and, of course, who love you.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Your plans should not be set in stone and cemented over. Leave some openings in case you need to make changes. Spend the holidays with your nearest and dearest.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Surprise! This holiday finds you on the receiving end of the generosity of those who are usually the recipients of so much that you give so freely and lovingly.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) That piece of good news assures that you'll be swimming in clearer, calmer waters this holiday season. There might be a storm or two ahead, but you'll weather it all in fine style.

BORN THIS WEEK: You have a flair for seeing things as you'd like them to be, as well as a gift for turning your perceptions into reality.

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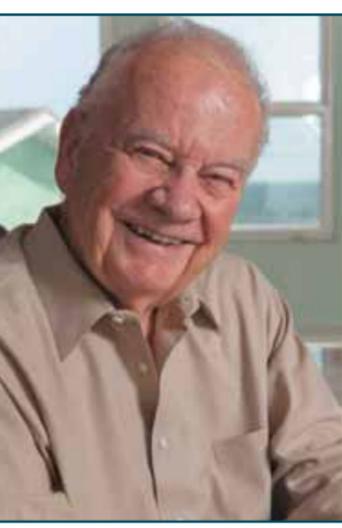
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Marilyn on the left and her volunteers decorated the LemonWood lampposts with Santa hats and happy faces. Photo by Barbie Lange.

Santa hats and happy faces at LemonWood

by Barbie Lange

Four years ago, Marilyn Morter, a resident of LemonWood Mobile home park, decided she wanted to contribute to the community by decorating the lamp posts with Santa hats and happy faces. She and volunteer Colleen Nobles cut out and sewed the hats and the tradition began. She started with decorating the clubhouse only the first year and it was a huge success! "Everyone loved the festive look," she said. For the second year, she purchased more material and sewed many more hats until all the 128 lamp post had their Santa hats.

During this year's decorating day of Dec. 3rd, she gathered everyone outside the clubhouse to take a picture with the lamp posts. "So many people here ap-

preciate the lamp posts, they smile when they see them or they give a thumbs up and say glad to see it." Next year she is planning to add Poinsettia plants, also known as the Christmas flower, to the lamp posts.

Marilyn and her family moved to Ventura in 1930 and she is very proud to be living in the "Poinsettia City." The plants came from Mexico and Dr. Poinsett (America's first ambassador from Mexico) brought it to South Carolina between 1825 and 1829 and was named in his honor in 1836. Marilyn says she will continue to decorate the lamp posts every year, as they bring a smile to everyone's face when they see them.

Art Scene



Visions of the Pre-Columbian World

The Ventura County Potters' Guild Gallery is featuring Francisco Magdaleno their first featured artist since opening the pottery showcase in July of 2010.

Francisco Magdaleno is a local artist that creates very strong, beautiful sculptures mostly from terra cotta clay. These are coil built by hand, a very timely method that joins

its maker to the creation. Magdaleno's use of oxides and his turquoise treatment of glazes give his sculptures a very primitive look and feel. Collectors are taken back to a romanticized time in Mexico's history before the Spanish came and the indigenous people lived according to their individual cultures.

December 1 through January 16, 2012 with an artist reception on January 14, 2012, 4 - 6 p.m.

Gallery open everyday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. includes 20 local ceramic artists. Ventura Harbor Village, 1583 Spinnaker Drive, Suite 105, 644-6800



Portrait of Virginia Kron by Donna Granata,

FOTM Portrait Series 2011

The Ventura County Arts Council presents Celebrating Artists: An Intimate Look, Portraits by Donna Granata at the Ventura County Government Center, Atrium Gallery in the Hall of Administration, 800 S. Victoria Blvd., Ventura. This photographic exhibition can be viewed from January 20 through February 28, 2012. The public is invited to attend an artist's reception Thursday, February 2, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Celebrating Artists: An Intimate

Look features the monumental Focus on the Masters (FOTM) Portrait Series by Donna Granata who has been photographing artists for the past two decades. The exhibition features artists who have lived or worked within Ventura County and illustrates the cultural abundance within our community.

Donna Granata will be available for a special Lunchtime Gallery Walkabout on Thursday, February 16 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information please visit: www.FocusOnTheMasters.com or call 653.2501, www.VenturaCountyArtsCouncil.org or call 658.2213.



Sheldon, Publisher of the Ventura Breeze, with LuLu, the mannequin and Annie-Gabriel at a recent "First Friday."

Artsy-Fun at First Friday

by Annie-Gabriel, CHt., AMt.

"First Fridays" in Downtown Ventura are generally the 'place to be', as locals and visitors descend upon Main Street, the Avenue and the surrounding art galleries and venues, to check out some new art and hear some good music.

The WAV - Working Artists of Ventura's Loft Village was lit up and happening at a recent FF!

One of the 3rd floor loft galleries had its launch; a mix of eclectic art and styles, as a 20-year retrospective; including light Installations and mannequins, from Annie-G, and Recovery-Assemblage Artist & Instructor, originally from the Santa Barbara Art Scene, Marcelino Jimenez. A hanging installation of sea creatures, was courtesy of the Art From Trash group. Cool live jazz was performed by Dan Flowers, guitarist, and organic food and drinks were sponsored by Joshua Lane, Ventura's Eco-Nutritionist and author, who was on hand to answer questions.

It turned out to be quite an evening at "the Green Greenwich Village" of the west coast! Standing room only...and a good time was had by all.

Crowell, Weedon & Co. showcases local artists

In an effort to support the arts community, Ventura financial services firm, Crowell, Weedon & Co., showcases various artists by exhibiting their artwork throughout their office, located at 5740

Ralston Street. This is an opportunity for artists to promote their talent, and be on display for the local businesses and community at large to enjoy. The artwork remains on display in the Crowell Weedon office for a set period of time, along with informational materials about the artist, and featured pieces.

The newest artist on exhibit is Rex Kochel, a skilled watercolorist based in Ojai. Kochel's artistic career began later in life due to his athletic pursuits in high school and in college at Oregon State University. He was in his 30's when he first enrolled in an art class at Ventura College, yet with time and practice, Kochel's skills developed and he became a full time art instructor at Ventura High School until retiring in 2004.

Also returning to exhibit at Crowell Weedon is local artist, Dan LaVigne, showcasing a new body of work. LaVigne has been a professional artist since receiving his bachelor's in fine arts in 1981. A chance to study under American impressionist Dan McCaw at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena awakened him to the richness and flexibility oil, which has been his primary medium for the past 23 years. He is the past president of the Buenaventura Art Association, a member of Oil Painters of

America, and currently teaches Plein Air painting at the California Arts Institute in Westlake. www.danlavigne.com

Crowell Weedon invites the community to stop by the office and admire the works of Rex Kochel and Dan LaVigne on display. Crowell Weedon is regularly seeking local artists to display work in their office. For artists interested in displaying at Crowell Weedon, please contact Cheryl Gooss, 620-4700 or cgooss@crowellweedon.com, or their curator, Carrie Stanton 816-9344.

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The paintings of Rex Kochel have established him as a juried artist



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Two "Face Of Ventura" portrait sitters were recent guests on Lyn Fairly & Friends they were Harbor Master Scott Miller (on the left) and restaurateur Lynn Mikelatos (on the right). That's Lyn in the middle. Lyn Fairly & Friends can be heard on News Talk KVTA1520 every Saturday from noon to 1.

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