

VENTURA BREEZE

Your Hometown Paper

Vol. 6, No. 9

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February 6 – February 19, 2013



I hope that this bridge gets built soon, I'm getting too old to go to the beach this way.

Don't fence me in!

by Brian Brennan
City Council member

In the last month a number of Midtown residents in the area of upper Seaward Avenue, Channel Drive and at the end of Anacapa and Hurst Avenue are all singing the same sad lament.

While "don't fence me in" was a popular phrase uttered by many a musician such as Woody Guthrie, Robert Earl Keen or Kris Kristofferson, it now resonates on the lips of many Midtown residents due to the recent industrial strength fencing installed along the railroad tracks in the vicinity of the aforementioned streets.

Union Pacific decided to put up fencing blocking access to Vista Del Mar Drive after years of trying to discourage residents from crossing the tracks at those locations. Portions of the tracks have had less secure chain-link fences in the past and residents wanting access to the beach have cut holes in the fencing. It was like a Tom and Jerry cartoon for 20-25 years, Union Pacific would fix the fence and in some cases by the very next day the holes would reappear. The new fence is made of stronger metal and can't be easily cut so a neighborhood of upwards of 20,000 people are now having to use Seaward Avenue to access the beach. Seaward which runs underneath Vista Del Mar Drive has high volumes of traffic, a narrow sidewalk on only one side of the street, all of which pose a hazard to pedestrians and bikers trying to use that route.

Continued on page 7

While in Paris, the City of Love, with your one-and-only for Valentine's Day you can always catch up with the Breeze at venturabreeze.com



Sam Povar welcomed well-wishers and dignitaries to the ribbon cutting of 2 projects spearheaded by him.

Ribbon cuttings across Main Street

by Mary Kay Williams

On January 17, City Council member Christy Weir cut the ceremonial ribbons on two privately funded installations on Main Street: the new "Welcome to Ventura" sign and the Repult/Art City Bus Stop directly across the street. Some 75 officials and other well-wishers applauded both, which were the artwork of Paul Lindhart. The welcome sign boasts a giant golden disk of polished translucent calcite that represents the sun and was sponsored by Ron and Jennifer Bamieh as a memorial to their daughter Remy. The bus stop was donated by Keith Repult and was completed, except for landscaping and lighting, in 2011.

Mr. Povar gave a preview of new projects on the horizon. "I am more excited than ever about what can be accomplished via grassroots efforts. In making these four projects a reality, I developed relationships with many citizens who share a desire to see Ventura

really shine and want to help in meaningful ways. That's why I founded the non-profit organization called "Ventura Now", which will allow people to volunteer their talents to new projects we have in the hopper." According to Sam, by month-end you can find Ventura Now's office at 50 W. Main Street, Suite 805 and on the web at www.venturanow.org.



Memorial on Thompson into an outdoor museum, installing a handcrafted tile mural depicting Ventura's timeline at Povar Plaza, and creating a promenade on Main Street where the Ortega Adobe converges with the Ojai River Trail."

When asked about his confidence that it will happen, Sam replied, "I

Continued on page 7



Your Hometown Paper



Dan Frederickson, the owner of 60 California Street, is beginning to implement a lease he negotiated in 2005 with the City of Ventura for reserved parking at the Santa Clara public parking structure in downtown Ventura.

Reserved parking implemented

by Tim Pompey

For those who have recently driven into the Santa Clara Street parking structure, you may have noticed something different on the second level: Reserved parking spaces.

While this may come as a surprise to some, the reserved spaces are actually part of a deal Dan Frederickson, owner of 60 California Street, negotiated with the city in 2005. Now that the new building residents are moving in (Lure, for instance), the time has come for him to set them aside.

Sam explained the strategy for a new program called the Ventura Sesquicentennial Celebration. "Ventura will be 150 years old on April 1, 2016. That's a pretty big birthday and we want people in California and beyond to join the party. We think our city must pull out all the stops and put its best foot forward.

"Some of the Sesquicentennial projects on Ventura Now's list are cosmetic facelifts like painting and landscaping, while others, like setting up an efficient e-transit system (aka Moving Sidewalk) and working on San Buenaventura Beach from the State are quite ambitious. Medium scale projects include renovating the Chu-

mash Memorial on Thompson into an outdoor museum, installing a handcrafted tile mural depicting Ventura's timeline at Povar Plaza, and creating a promenade on Main Street where the Ortega Adobe converges with the Ojai River Trail."

The something he finally received came

about after the city passed what is termed

an "in lieu of ordinance," which requires

that any business off of Main Street must

pay a fee if they do improvements on their

Continued on page 4

As a further reading pleasure for our readers the Ventura Port District's *Harbor Views* is included in this issue of the *Breeze*. We hope that you will enjoy reading it.

This issue's
Face of Ventura
by Johanna Spinks
is on page 10.



Aida
BY GIUSEPPE VERDI

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- City of Ventura Mayor Mike Tracy's 2013 update of the City address - "Progress on Priorities"
- Chamber/City Partnership
- What's in store for 2013 and more!
- Trudy Arriaga, Superintendent of the Ventura Unified School District will speak on behalf of education
- VUSD 2013
- Thank "Q" Ventura

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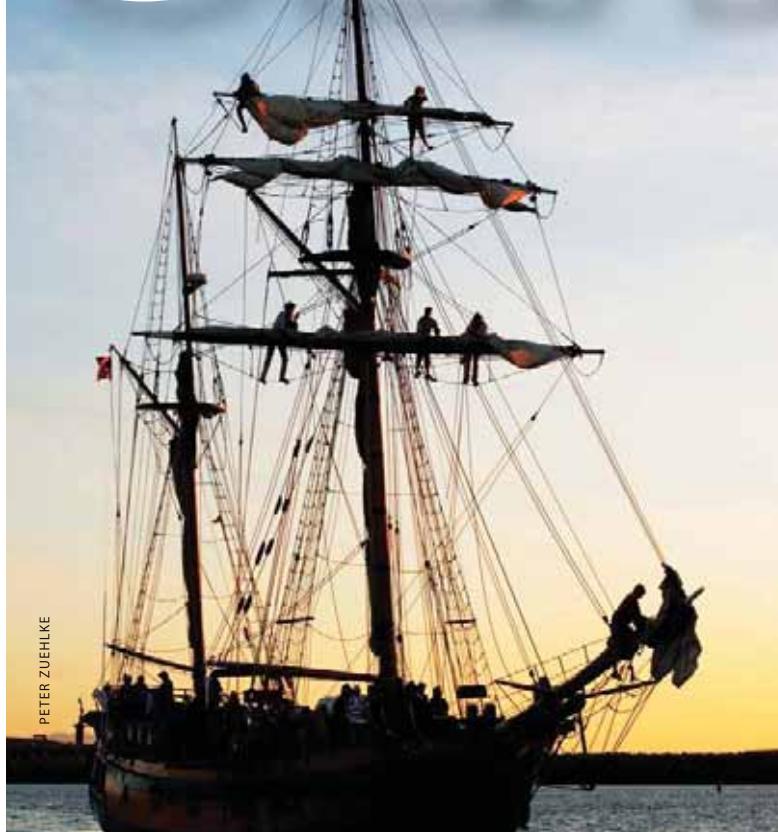
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City News

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All classes held at the Barranca Vista Center, 7050 Ralston Street.

Art Adventures for Tots 3-6 years
2/7-3/14 Thurs. 9:15-10:00 am \$50

Unleash your imagination through clay, pastels, paint and collage. Instructor Dawn Meyer. Course# 33745

Beginning Dog Agility 14 years-Adult
2/10-3/24 Sun. 11:00 am-12:00 pm \$100

Train, exercise and bond with your dog as he learns to go over jumps, through tunnels and master agility obstacles. No class 2/17. Instructor Shannon Coyner. Course # 33286

Valentine's Day Workshop 2-5 years
2/13 Wednesday 9:30-10:30 am \$10

Parents join your child for these fun themed parties. Celebrate learning with snacks, crafts and stories. Take one or take them all. Instructor Sara Cameron. Course# 33824

First Time Sewing for Youth & Adults
12 years-Adult

2/13-3/20 Wed. 6:00-7:30 pm \$50

Learn hand-stitch and machine sewing basics including knots, zigzag and buttons. Make patches, bags and hats. Bring 2 yards of cotton fabric and matching thread; all other supplies provided. Return students welcome. Instructor Angel Jones. Course# 33273

AM Level I Yoga 18 years-Adult
2/19-3/12 Tuesday 9:00-10:00 am \$48

Intro class for adults wanting to learn basic poses and breathing. Postures presented are easy to follow and deeply relaxing. Bring a yoga mat. Instructor Valerie Pike. Course# 33622

Reserved parking implemented

Continued from page 1
existing facility.

Frederickson claims that he initially refused this type of deal. What he did eventually negotiate with the city was permission to sign off on a lease for 25 years with an option for a 25-year extension. As part of the lease agreement, he was able (at his own cost) to build access from the parking structure into the building.

It's a deal he's come to grips with, but which still rankles him. "Our parking policy is vehemently anti-business," he insists, "and Ventura's culture is anti-wealth and anti-change."

Nevertheless, city transportation

manager Tom Mericle insists that paying for parking upgrades is consistent with city policy. "All new development in the city is required to provide for their parking impact," he explained, "so he was treated no differently from anyone else. In fact, he was provided more options than most developers, since he was in the downtown."

As it stands, Frederickson has leased 57 spots. He pays the city \$150 a month per space for 37 spaces used "exclusively" 24 hours a day 7 days a week. He pays \$75 a month for the remaining 20 "nonexclusive" spots used 5 days a week by his business tenants. These nonexclusive spots are available to the public any time after normal business hours.

Mericle states that the money collected from the downtown parking structure is helping maintain public parking downtown. "The money from the lease goes into the Downtown Parking District and is being used for operations and future capital projects in the downtown district area," he said.

As an example, Mericle is using part of Fredrickson's fees to improve lighting on the exterior of the Santa Clara parking structure, especially along the alley. He also hopes at some point in the future that the city will install additional video and lighting in the interior.

For Frederickson, charging for reserved parking is not a money-making proposition. Rather, it's simply a means for him to recover some of his outgoing expense. "What I'm trying to do is recoup some of the cost for the equipment and the parking lease," he said, "which together costs me about \$10,000 a month."

Breeze: This article was a response to the following email that we received.
Editor

I try to read every page of every issue of the Breeze, so realize you folks must be awfully busy, but do want to express gratitude for providing this town a terrific, much-needed service and apparently having a good time doing it.

What the heck is happening at the downtown parking garage?

Approximately 60 spaces on red level two have been "privatized," fifteen with tow-away signs and the remainder behind a fence and admission gate (!) labeled "Private Property-Lure Restaurant."

Isn't the parking garage a public structure built with public funds?

Guess I must have missed the public announcements and debate on this issue.

Any information would be welcome.
Many thanks,
T. W. Williams
Ventura

The Breeze delivered to your home?



We are considering home delivery of the Ventura Breeze for \$70 per year. We will decide after we see if there is enough interest in home delivery.

If you would consider delivery to your home please let us know at editor@venturabreeze.com so that we can decide if we will start this service.



VENTURA BREEZE

Your Hometown Paper

Member, Ventura Chamber of Commerce
and Oxnard Chamber of Commerce

The Ventura Breeze is your free local community newspaper published every other Wednesday and circulated throughout Ventura and to many locations in Ojai and the Channel Islands Harbor located in Oxnard.

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Breeze:

Just wanted to clarify for you my understanding of the law in California on "conflicts of interest" since you raised the question of why Mike Tracy couldn't simply attend the first round of City Manager interviews.

First, the law is quite strict. Regardless of the nature of the "conflict," those who have one under the law's definition (and renting to a job applicant definitely qualifies), both elected and certain appointed officials (like City Managers, Department heads and the City Attorney) are not allowed to even "influence" a decision. That is pretty

Opinion/Editorial



Sheldon (Governor) Brown
Publisher

With this issue the portrait series the Face Of Ventura by Johanna Spinks will come to an end after 2 years and a bit.

I can't begin to thank Johanna

enough for bringing this wonderful series to the Ventura Breeze and to Ventura. And I also wish to thank the "sitters" for giving her about 2 hours of their undivided attention while she painted them.

And one more time I would like to explain that these portraits do not represent Ventura's most "deserving" or "famous" (whatever that means) but represent a cross-section of the diversity, and uniqueness of Ventura. Why I'm not even a sitter and I'm the most famous person in Ventura so I should be mad at me.

Our first sitter was Captain Bill Finley from the Salvation Army and others included a 10-year old runner, a taxi cab owner who plays Santa Claus, a mortician, a movie star, a future movie star and an opera singer and a few philanthropists. A great example of what makes our city so wonderful.

Now that this is completed what is next? Johanna and I are delighted that this unique, once in a lifetime series has found a permanent home in the best possible of all art places in Ventura; stay tuned for more details on that.

Rumor also has it that Johanna also has something up her brush to paint more Ventura faces. Keep reading the Breeze to find out what that is all about.

The Ventura City Council has reluctantly approved a 50-year franchise agreement with Union Pacific Railroad Co. to zip through our city. The existing contract expired in 2003 and a new one was put off many times while the city and railroad resolved their differences on painting the railroad trestle (Been looking pretty good after the painting).

The new contract calls for Union Pacific to pay the city about \$13,000 per year for the right to run in Ventura. The previous contract was for \$8,700.

Most of the city council actually opposed the contract's financial terms (and length) but thought they had to accept them.

I think the amount that they are paying is ridiculously low, and the long length of the contract is much too long. Now folks are mad at Union Pacific for putting up the fences that block access across the tracks at Vista Del Mar (See article on page 1 regarding this).

In our last issue we had information regarding hula classes at the senior center. "Thursdays, February 14 - March 21, 6:45-7:45 pm Adult Women 50+".



What do they mean "adult woman"? What if I (and other males) want to take hula lessons? I may hire Gloria Allred to sue the city for men to gain equal rights.

On Feb.13, there will be a planning commission meeting to act on the proposed 128 room hotel off of Seaward behind the Golden China Restaurant for the following purpose "Permit Amendment request for a time extension of a previously approved Planned Development permit, Use Permit, Administrative Coastal Development Permit for a long time proposed hotel".

The Mexican restaurant on this site was torn down several years ago for a hotel project so it would be good to get it going already.

County judge Patricia Murphy has

granted more time to defense attorneys who are defending accused killer Joshua Parker to go to trial because one of his attorneys had an injury. The new trial date is set for April 22. It seems to me that the injury is to our judicial system that can take forever.

San Diego Mayor Bob Filner, per a campaign promise, has announced the end of the red-light cameras used to catch those running red lights. When doing this he stated that they are "The San Diego version of a traffic trap using robotic technology".

So, perhaps the time has come for our city council to follow suit.

The Supreme Court has ruled that a house that floats on the water and has no power to move on its own is a home and not a vessel. This is in keeping with current laws in California which state that floating homes that are attached to the shore and do not travel are governed by laws applying to homes and not those by federal admiralty law regulating ships and boats. So this means that you can't call yourself a captain if you ain't got a motor.

The city council has narrowed their search for a new city manager to just 3 (2 that have city manager experience) so the Pierpont Community Council asked their members what they would like to see in the new city manager, these are some of their suggestions.

Open communication with community councils.

Don't spend monies you don't have... balance the City Budget

Improve the business environment within the entire City to improve the tax base.

Demands a balanced budget and working toward a sustainable community.

Is accessible.

Limit retirement guarantees

Ventura's greatest tourist assets are its beaches and downtown - this is where the focus should be

We need intelligent leadership and not ideological platitudes.

Mailbox

broadly applied. Second, because of the concern over such "influence" the law was specifically amended to require elected officials to leave the room when they have a conflict (the only exception is if they are speaking on their own behalf from the audience at a public meeting when their own personal private property is involved.)

I have no dog in this fight and agree with your common sense view in the paper. But the law is clear and so the City attorney gave the right advice and Mayor Tracy was right in heading it.

Name withheld to protect the innocent

Breeze:

I wish to thank the ventura city council for supporting the federal resolution controlling the use of assault weapons by gun users. Assault weapons should be used in the military for their use only.

Sen. Diane Feinstein introduced a law in the senate and it is up to us who wish to keep these weapons out of the hands of the crazies, show our support for the bill. Don't you think? There will enough guns for hunters who enjoy the sport.

Bette k Goldenring



Editor:

Isn't this against the separation of church and state? Or, in this case church and the police.

Samuel Bullard
Ventura

Breeze

Based on all their previous missteps related to dune restoration, I really didn't think the City could pull this off...but they did...the seeds that were planted at Surfer's Point are beginning to sprout... interestingly, only on the flat portions

of the beach and not on the mounds of sands they placed there. Since it didn't take hold on the mounds, most likely that sand will be blown away.

George Robertson

Oops...

Breeze: This is regarding an article in our last issue Two beautiful ladies bring Polynesia to Ventura

Hi Sheldon,

Thank you so much! What a great article and thank you for including us in it! One thing I wanted to mention is that we didn't do any Polynesian dancing. We did Indonesian dancing, which is a totally different region. I just don't want to mislead people on this idea...

Thanks and aloha,
Rika

To work for the common good is the greatest creed.

- Albert Schweitzer



Community Events

WEV to host group dance lessons

To show support for small business, Women's Economic Ventures (WEV) will host a free networking event at WEV client business, Dance 4 Wellness on Thursday, February 7th. The event takes place from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at 880 Hampshire Road, Suite D in Westlake Village and will feature a group dance lesson!

WEV aims to boost economic recovery and support individual independence through the process of creating and supporting small businesses. The *WEV Connects* event at Dance 4 Wellness will allow anyone thinking about owning their own business to speak with other small business owners and connect with the WEV community of business people, donors, volunteers, and staff.

Dance 4 Wellness owner Maria Durant decided to start a ballroom dance instruction company halfway through WEV's Self-Employment Training (SET) course. She had taught dance before, but this time sought to do it on her own terms. In just six months after launching the business Durant doubled the yearly income from her last job!

The event is free to attend and light refreshments will be served. RSVP is encouraged, but not necessary to attend. For more information, please visit www.wevonline.org.

Ventura Half-Marathon to benefit Habitat for Humanity

The 12th Annual Ventura Habitat Half-Marathon, presented by Aloha Steakhouse is partnering with Habitat for Humanity Ventura County for the second year.

"Habitat is doing great things locally and we look forward to working with them this year and the years to come," said Josh Spiker, race director of Vendurance Sports.

The half-marathon and 5K will take place on Sunday, February 10 and features an out-and-back course along the Ventura-Ojai bike path.

The official starting and ending location is at the Ventura Unified School District complex on 255 W. Stanley Avenue.

Last year, the local race attracted over 600 runners and walkers alike, who were drawn to the friendly atmosphere, panoramic views and gentle hills, which Ventura is known for.

For more information or to sign up, interested participants can visit www.VenturaHalf.com

Ventura events

by Ana Baker

Feb. 7: The Ladies Luncheon – Do you have the mindset and the skill set to create a wildly successful and profitable business? Business coach **Dr.**

Gloria Miele will share tips and strategies for your best year yet. She will present ways to get a strong start to 2013. Experience networking, fun and great prizes. Best Raffle in Ventura, bring a Raffle prize to share and you will receive another opportunity to shout out about your business!

Come Eat, Meet and Greet! Event will be held at The Pierpont Inn, 550 Sanjon Road. Visit website to pre-register at: www.TheLadiesLuncheon.com.

Feb. 8: Tret Fure will be performing at WAV (Working Artists Ventura) on Friday, at 8:00 pm at 175 S Ventura Ave. Tickets are \$15 advance, \$18 day of show. For tickets call Shepherd at (818) 885-8857. One of the most prolific artists in the contemporary singer-songwriter arena, *Tret Fure* has released 13 albums and CDs over the course of her 40 year career. In addition to being a gifted songwriter, Fure possesses an uncanny mastery of musical technology.

Feb. 8: The General George S. Patton, Jr. Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution January luncheon meeting will feature the special program *Separation of Church and State* presented by Richard Hawley, Esq. This talk will emphasize the historical interpretation of the first full phrase in the First Amendment. The luncheon event will take place at 11:30 a.m. in the Garden Room at Marie Callender's Restaurant, 1295 S. Victoria Ave. The self-pay luncheon cost is \$20 per person, and includes a slice of Marie Callender's pie. For additional information, please call Bill Hurley, 492-2583 or Robert Taylor, 216-7992, and please visit the chapter website <http://pattonpatriots.org>.

Feb. 9: The American Cancer Society invites the community to the 5th annual **Bowl to Strike Out Cancer**, presented by Ventura County USBC Men's Bowling Association to raise funds for the Society. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m., tournament begins at 12:30 p.m. \$25 registration fee includes bowling, event t-shirt, BBQ lunch and one raffle ticket. Festivities include a silent auction, many raffle prizes and music! Registration forms are available at Buena Lanes and bowlers are encouraged to pre-register due to space limitations. Buena Lanes Bowling Alley, 1788 Mesa Verde Ave., for more information or to be a tournament sponsor, contact: Dina Fink at 656-0666 or buenabowler@aol.com.

Feb. 9: Portable apps, given by Toby Scott of Ventura County Computers, will be the program for the Ventura Beginners PC Users Group at 11 a.m. on Saturday. There will also be a workshop at 9:15 a.m. and time for Q&A. Meetings are held at Cypress Place, 1220 Cypress Place. Call 648-1368 for further information.

Feb. 9 & 10: The Olivas Adobe Historical Interpreters will host a **book sale / fundraiser** on Saturday and Sunday, at the Olivas Adobe Exhibit Hall, 4200 Olivas Park Dr., from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days.

This book sale / fundraiser offers slightly used books on many different subjects at bargain prices and will help to defray the costs of maintaining the historic artifacts displayed at the Adobe. www.olivasadobe.org

Feb. 14: Author and TV star Joanne Caras, of Port St Lucie, Florida, will be the featured speaker at the Chabad Jewish Center of Ventura

(5040 Telegraph) on Thursday at 7 p.m. Joanne's two cookbooks *The Holocaust Survivor Cookbook* and its sequel *Miracles & Meals* are a collection of over 240 stories and over 500 recipes collected from Holocaust Survivors from around the world. Proceeds from every cookbook sold benefit a Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem and other charities. Her TV show *Miracles & Meals* appears on Mondays at 9 p.m. on JLTV, which is available in over 36 million homes in the United States. *Holocaust Survivor Cookbook* and *Miracles & Meals* can be purchased at the lecture or from www.survivor-cookbook.org

Feb. 10: Camerata Pacifica at Temple Beth Torah. The acclaimed chamber music ensemble, based in Santa Barbara performs a monthly series of concerts in Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Marino and in Downtown Los Angeles. The group is composed of the finest performers of chamber music from around the world. Temple Beth Torah at 3pm.

Mozart: Rolling Hills and Jagged Ridges, for Violin and Piano

Saint-Saëns: Violin Sonata No. 1 in D minor, Op. 75

Liszt: Mephisto Waltz No. 1

Mendelssohn: Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49

Feb. 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24: Performance Theatre for Young Artists will present the toe tapping musical, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* at the Poinsettia Pavilion. Taking place in New York City in 1922, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* tells the story of young Millie Dillmount, who has just moved to the city in search of a new life for herself. Performance dates and times are as follows: Opening Night, Friday, February 15 at 7p.m., Saturday, February 16 Dessert and Coffee Bar at 6 p.m. and Performance at 7p.m., Sunday, February 17 at 3p.m., Friday, February 22 at 7p.m., Saturday, February 23 at 7p.m., and Closing Night, Sunday, February 24 at 5p.m. General admission tickets are \$15.00 for adults and \$12.00 for children, students and seniors. Dessert and Coffee Bar service on February 16 is additional charge. Poinsettia Pavilion is located at 3451 Foothill Road. For tickets or additional information, call 653-1962 or visit www.ptya.org.

Feb. 15: Ghost hunter **Richard Senate** will offer a lecture and tour on *The Ghosts of Chinatown*. February marks the Chinese Lunar New Year and 2013 ushers in the Year of the Snake! (or year of the water snake). Event will be held at the Bank of Books, 748 East Main Street from 7p.m. to 9p.m. Lecture fee/donation is \$5 per person. For more information contact Richard Senate 200-8658 or 643-3154

hainthunter@aol.com

Feb. 16: Cheri Mello will discuss the genealogy programs that are available for keeping track of your family history on a computer. She will review the pros and cons of several software programs, including ease of use, research assistance, and reports. **The Ventura County Genealogical Society** holds free meetings with presentations by talented speakers on the third Saturday of each month at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 3501 Vista Loma Road. Come and mingle with fellow family researchers and learn something new to help you in your family history research on Saturday from 1p.m. to 4p.m.

Feb. 22: First United Methodist

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Community Events

Church, 1338 E. Santa Clara Street, will host the second annual **Beacon Supper Club** at 6pm. Trotter Hall will be transformed into a 1940s supper club atmosphere for an evening of fine dining offering lasagna, vegetable, salad and dessert. Step back in time and enjoy the sound of Big Band style music. Reservations are required and seating is limited so call 643-8621.

Feb. 22: Designated Drivers Win Prizes in Downtown Ventura!

The "Be the DD and Win" Prize Posse will be visiting Anacapa, Bombay, Café Fiore, Dargan's, El Rey, Paddy's, Rookees, Tavern and Winchesters to give awesome prizes to sober designated drivers. The prizes include t-shirts, gift-certificates, oil changes, hotel stays and concert tickets! So, designate a driver, get home safe and win prizes from 10p.m. until 1:30a.m.

Ojai events

The **Ojai Valley Museum** is offering a new, annual series of **Adult Art Classes** beginning this month. Collaborating with Ojai artist, Bernadette DiPietro, and using her Blanche Street art space as an adjunct classroom, the museum is able to offer this new enrichment/educational program to the public.

DiPietro will teach the spring series: *Paper Batik* on February 16, *Ukrainian Egg Decoration* on March 9 and *Assemblage* on April 20.

The Ojai Valley Museum is delighted to partner with DiPietro to expand its programs to her facility directly across the street. Workshop participants have free parking in the museum's back courtyard and are given a Guest Pass for free admission to the galleries. In addition to the satellite classroom, DiPietro's Working ARTIST Gallery will be used for museum lecture series, special event presentations, and other types of workshops the museum galleries cannot accommodate.

The Ojai Valley Museum will e-mail a detailed description of each class, with applicable fees, just call 640-1390, ext. 203. Or access the museum Facebook page www.ojaivalleymuseum.org.

Free for current 2013 members, adults - \$4.00, children 6-18 - \$1.00 and children 5 and under - free. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Tours are available by appointment. Free parking is available off Blanche Street at back of museum.

Spend **Valentine's Day** with one of the most beloved folk singers of our generation. **John Gorka** is a music legend and an honored icon of folk tradition. He won the Kerrville Folk Festival's prestigious New Folk Award in 1984, and his debut album, *I Know*, received critical acclaim for his songs' subtle wit and acute character observation; before long he was touring with the likes of Mary Chapin Carpenter and Nanci Griffith. In the following years he has released a dozen albums and has become a folk legend. You can check out his music at: johnsgorka.com.

Costs: \$25 in advance, \$28 at the door under 15 years are half price at the door. (This show may sell out so be sure to get your tickets early).

For more information call Shane Butler at 665-8852 or for online

tickets go to: www.ojaiconcertseries.com

The **Ojai Playwrights Conference (OPC)** will launch its 16th season with its annual Benefit themed *Farm to Stable: A Feast of Creativity* scheduled for March 9, beginning at 4 pm, at a private ranch in Upper Ojai, California.

This year's Benefit will honor Robert Egan for his 35-year contribution to compelling new play development for the American theatre. Festivities begin with a cocktail reception at sunset, followed by a farm-to-table dinner, performances by amazing actors, writers and singers, a live auction, musical entertainment, and line dancing in the barn.

Ticket options are General Tickets (\$250); Patron Tickets for Two (\$1,000), and VIP Package for Ten (\$3,000). Tickets may be ordered online at www.ojaiplays.org. Seating is limited, so early ticket orders are encouraged.

Proceeds from the Benefit support the Ojai Playwrights Conference. Each summer, selected playwrights from around the world converge in Ojai for a two-week, intensive in-residence workshop of their plays that culminates in public readings. The 16th Annual OPC Summer New Works Festival will take place August 7-11.

Symphony of Life Spiritual Center invites community members to "return to the Self" through a day of silent meditation, readings, chants, and healing walks in nature on Saturday, February 9, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Bring a sack lunch.) Randee Vasilakos, Agape licensed spiritual practitioner, will conduct the retreat at Meditation Mount, 10340 Reeves Road.

Registration for the event is \$25 before Feb. 2, and \$30 afterwards or at the door. Tickets may be purchased online at www.solsc.org, or by mail to Symphony of Life Spiritual Center, P.O. Box 322, Ojai, CA 93024. For more information, contact Randee Vasilakos at 310-722-1933, or write spiritualtourguide@gmail.com.

On Saturday and Sunday, February 9 and 10, the **Ojai Film Society** will screen *Robot & Frank*, a humorous and touching drama set in the near future, with a nuanced performance by Frank Langella as an aging ex-cat burglar who is forced into living with a caretaker robot.

On Sunday, February 17, the Ojai Film Society will screen the French comedy/drama *Chicken with Plums*, a delightful tale of a renowned violinist who, mourning the loss of his broken Stradivarius, decides to take to his bed and remain there until he dies.

Ojai Playhouse, 145 E Ojai Ave., Ojai. Screenings are at 4:30 pm.

Ribbon cuttings across Main Street

Continued from page 1

I believe in this city and I know hundreds of people who are as passionate about Ventura as I am. I know we will succeed and the effort will pay big rewards for the City for many years to come."

Guest speaker Rick Cole noted the significance of the event as the third and fourth successful private/public collaboration spearheaded by Ventura's own Sam Povar. The other two were Povar Plaza in 2007 and the

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Mermaid at Soter Point in 2010.

He went on to say "Modern life is filled with the dull, the ordinary and the routine. Yet the distinctive Ventura entry monument that we dedicate today is anything but dull, ordinary or routine.

"Getting it approved and constructed required three critical elements that are also anything but dull, ordinary or routine. The first is vision. In his zest for public-private partnerships to beautify our city, citizen Sam Povar exemplifies the kind of vision we need to bring achievements like today to reality.

"The second quality is what in Spanish is called 'ganas' - what we often call "guts" in English. It takes courage to overcome and defy the dull, the ordinary and the routine. Yet that courage is what gives Ventura our unique sense of place. We see it in so many of the faces here today. In attorney Ron Bamieh, whose often gutsy advocacy in the courtroom is legendary and who, with his wife Jennifer, courageously faced the terrible illness that took their daughter Remy, whose memory this monument honors.

"Finally, it takes individual character to create community character. It takes character to stand against the dull, the ordinary and the routine. Sam is often thought of as "a character" because of his distinctive personality and exuberance. But it is his personal character, his vision, his courage and his love for our town that ensures there will be many more projects like this in Ventura.

"Ventura is not a dull, ordinary or routine community. That's because of people like all of you gathered here today. Don't let anyone discourage you from pursuing a vision, from having the guts to strive for something as unique and beautiful as this welcoming monument."

Don't fence me in

Continued from page 1

As a community that values connectivity through safe bike and pedestrian corridors this presents quite a dilemma. I'm not saying crossing the railroad tracks is the ideal solution but for upwards of 30 years the Midtown community has used that route as their de facto corridor to the beach. This is also a route used by the residents of the Pierpont and Vista Del Mar to utilize and access the retail services along the Thompson corridor.

There have been tragic deaths along the railroad tracks over the

years and a number of vagrant encampments. So while it's hard to fault Union Pacific for wanting to make the area safer it still poses a dilemma for connectivity.

The longterm solution is to build an overpass or underpass somewhere in that Midtown corridor so people can gain safe access to Vista Del Mar, the beach and business districts at lower Seaward, the Pier and Surfer's Point. The City Council is coming up on its Capital Improvement Project workshop on Monday February 25th and I plan to ask my fellow Council members to support my efforts to have the safe connectivity of this corridor listed as a project.

Now all that being said, having a project listed in the CIP process doesn't ensure it will get built, especially in these tough financial times. Getting it on paper does allow staff to look for grant funding opportunities as they arise and development fees when there is a project in the nearby area that has a nexus to connectivity.

In the short term, the Midtown Community Council is making this a priority and while short term solutions are limited we still need to explore them. Union Pacific has been willing to talk so I plan on exploring what options, if any, are available with the railroad. In the meantime I hope we can make some improvements to the Seaward corridor such as trimming overgrown landscape that is compromising the sidewalk, restriping the bike lanes, especially as you approach the freeway onramps. This would be a great area for a Green Lane Project very similar to the one around Mills and Main Street to ensure bike safety.

So I hope all the residents of Midtown who value this unique opportunity for safe community connectivity will come to the Ventura City Council meeting Monday, February 25th for the CIP workshop. For more information on connectivity in this corridor and if you want your voice to be heard please email any of the individuals listed below.

Chris Roberts, a local landscape designer, planner and advocate for connectivity, has drawn up a beautiful plan that connects the coastal bluffs from Alessandro down past the Pierpont Inn, up the hill in front of the old Chart House and all the way to the Pier. (Chris@pc-ld.com)

If you have further questions, or thoughts please contact me bbrennan@cityofventura.net

And Gregory S. Resnick, a Midtown resident who has crossed the tracks daily for 15 years, would also like to hear from you gssr22@hotmail.com.



News and Notes



A few of the Thursday morning regulars Deva, Michael, Merilee, Marion, Debbie Wolf, Andy (our great waiter), Don, and Jeannie shooting the (Ventura Breeze).

The Breakfast Club (Coffee, Company and Conversation)

by Jeannie Lumley Collins with Michael Fiddes

On any given Thursday morning, you'll find the regulars at their favorite hangout, sipping tea and lattes, and occasionally sampling someone in the group's latest baking experiment, to which the restaurant kindly turns a blind-eye.

Around the time of the global financial meltdown, three of what has been dubbed The Breakfast Club's "founders", Michael Fiddes, a retired psychotherapist, his wife Deva Kelly, a retired nuclear chemist, and Don Shorts, local antique dealer, started meeting at Palermo's to share their love of good coffee, company and conversation. As time went by, other kindred spirits sweetened the mix, which necessitated a move to the Savory Café. Eventually, and partly due to the installation of downtown's parking meters, the group relocated to its most recent mid-town haunt.

The current gathering of Thursday morning faithful includes Marion Rodd, a talented flutist and tutor with "Project Understanding", Debbie Diamond and her husband, high-energy politicos in action, creative artist Marilee Bysshe, and Gonnlie and Paul Stouthamer, originally from Holland and in their 90s, although they could fool you on a bet.

"Semi-regulars" Dee Shorts (Don's wife), designer Alicia Maris, and Brit Jeannie Collins, come along when they can. Our least available but most welcome honorary member is Michael and Deva's 8-year-old granddaughter, Ella. Other friends and family members from out of town show up on occasion, creating a veritable horde at cheerfully overflowing tables.

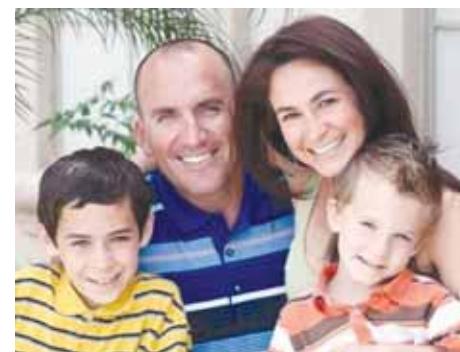
All but Don and Dee, who are estate appraisers and dealers in California Rancho antiques, and Alicia, a creative events planner/designer, are at least semi-retired, but only from the time-clock. Professions ranged from the corporate world to teaching, from health and the sciences to art and landscaping. Interests and hobbies run the gamut too. Music, art, politics, writing, theatre, movies, cooking, volunteer work and just about anything but golf (so far!) keep this crowd on the move. At one particularly animated breakfast recently, with several different conversations crisscrossing the table, Michael Fiddes commented "Trying to keep a conversation on topic here is like trying to herd cats".

Such diverse backgrounds and interests make it hard to put a finger on why we all show up week after week. Deva muses, "What began as an ad hoc

group of random acquaintances has morphed into treasured friendships and a great support system".

Marilee adds that she enjoys "the stimulating conversations and opportunity to share our lives". Gonnlie, her husband Paul (whose art is exhibited at local galleries), Michael, Marion, and Marilee, are also regulars at the "Y", where they swim and exercise. Don and Michael look forward to jazz night suppers at The Sidecar Restaurant and many in the group come out for Marion's performances with the Ventura County Concert Band. Don also has his "film night" clan, and so it goes. When asked what makes this group so special to him, he replies, "Well, when I leave here, I always have a smile on my face."

And that, in a nutshell, is why we all show up on Thursday mornings.



The Auster family decided to follow their dreams to Ventura.

Destination Ventura

by Barbara Hinton

Ventura has long been a favorite destination for Marlyss Munguia Auster, one of those special places that speaks to her heart. She even called Ventura home years ago. Now she is back, living in the city she loves and relishing her new role as Executive Director of the Ventura Visitors and Convention Bureau.

Her love affair with Ventura began about twenty-five years ago when, as a teenager, she moved to Ventura for the first time. A postcard sent to her mother with photos of the pier, the mission and the beach inspired her to pack up and move here on her own, even though she didn't know anyone in town. She said that she knew immediately that she wanted to live there. Within days of her arrival in Ventura, she got a job and registered at Ventura Community College.

She was working in the hospitality industry a few years later when she met her future husband, who was working at the same hotel. In fact, she told me his first day of work was the day after the big Northridge earthquake. She said there was even an earthquake on their wedding night.

Eventually, opportunities for advancement required that Marlyss leave the town she loved so much. Her first stop was Monterey. A job in San Francisco followed. There, she was working for a hotel downtown and learned to love life in a big city. But, she and her husband wanted to buy a home and start a family and they didn't feel they could afford a nice place in the Bay Area. Plus, she said that they needed sun.

Arizona offers plenty of sunshine, and became their next destination. Marlyss worked for the Hyatt Corp. while there. But she said her quest was always to be by the water. They lived by

man-made lakes and took vacations to the ocean to be close to water.

It was during one such vacation in Ventura that the powerful pull to be in Ventura returned. She and her family, which now includes two boys, had come to Ventura for nine days of vacation. On the final day, they made one last trip to the beach to say goodbye to the ocean. Their old dog, which had always loved to play on the beach, but was now slowing down due to advanced years, wouldn't get up from the sand when it was time to leave. It was a pivotal moment. She told her family that they needed to come back. But at the same time, she wondered if they could. How could they just move on impulse?

The more they thought about it, they decided to follow their dream. She said she feels like it is a wonderful lesson for her children, to see that you can have a goal, you can make plans and follow your dream and make it a reality, that sometimes it is OK to take risks and follow your heart.

Before she left Arizona, she did some networking to try to make some contacts in this area prior to the move. Her first phone call was to the former director of the Visitors Bureau, Jim Lutjohann. She said she hadn't thought about wanting the job, and at that point Lutjohann had said nothing about leaving the job, but that she felt like he would be a good person to know.

Now, having followed her heart, Marlyss is once again living in the place she loves so much and makes a living promoting it as a destination for others.



Kris's husband Doug Reed, Kris's dad John Humphries and her stepmom Bette Humphries enjoying her retirement party held at the Surf Brewery.

Kris Humphries cares about equality!

by Teryn Bonime

Retiring from the public sector after 35 years of service, Kris Humphries reflects on changes in the workforce and highlights from her career.

When Kris grew up, jobs were traditionally either female or male. There were no female sports teams, forcing parents to create their own leagues or find ways for girls to play on boys' teams. It was common for pregnant teachers to quit their professions for lack of daycare, and female-only "stewardesses" were required to be thin, wear skirts and high heels.

In 1972, Kris was in the first wave to benefit from the Title IX funding for women's college sports and her synchronized swimming team went on to win the school's first national championship. Her goal was to be a Parks and Recreation Director after graduating from Lewis & Clark College but jobs were scarce, so she found work in social services which eventually

NEWS TALK 1520 KVTA

Lyn Fairly and Friends, Saturday 12-1pm



Happy New You this year folks! In my photo you see me with a party favor in my teeth. That is because I believe the more you approach your life with a great attitude, the better your life can be. I want to wish you all the best for 2013. I appreciate you listening to my live radio show Saturdays at Noon. If you are a new listener, or a solid gold fan, stay tuned for more Arts and Entertainment news, "Radio School", coverage of current local events, stories of amazing people here in our county and always a moment of gratitude to our armed forces.

Horsepower For An Hour, Saturday 1-2pm



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The Kim Pagano Show, Saturday 2-4pm



Kim Pagano started her radio career on KKZZ and is now on 1520 KVTA every Saturday from 2-4pm. Kim brings you "Experts and Reality" in an effort to educate moms, dads, children, and the entire community in useful daily knowledge. If you would like to be a part of the Kim Pagano Show by sharing your journey, call or email Kim at 805-419-0008 or Kim@kimpaganoshow.com.



News and Notes

led her to Human Resources. Today she remembers her diverse careers with special districts, transportation agencies, several cities and counties, a non-profit, and government consulting firms.

The common thread running through her personal and professional life has been her passion for equality and social justice. Kris knew that creating the possibility of a more diverse workforce required attention on multiple fronts including societal acceptance, demand for more career options, and wage adjustments to create incentives for candidates. While the private sector could hire anyone they wanted without defending the process and outcome, public sector jobs created barriers. Since a government agency is funded by tax dollars paid by all segments of society, a higher more equitable standard for filling job vacancies needed to be in place.

"My greatest achievement was eliminating false barriers," she says, "by developing test instruments to ensure a fair, open and competitive process for employment candidates." Her favorites being tests for physical and manual jobs within the safety and public works departments.

"Traditionally" she continues, "highly sought-after mechanic and heavy equipment jobs were held by men aged 18-40 and required only an interview for hire. These were well-paid jobs in a tough market and should have been available to a wider range of candidates. I started asking why a job was done a particular way and how it could be modified for non-traditional candidates such as women, older workers, and people with disabilities."

Kris needed to measure levels of quality and defend hiring choices, so she began auditing the actual job and test-driving road equipment, ultimately proving that a middle-aged or female candidate could reach the pedals, grip the gear shift, and have the strength to lift the tools.

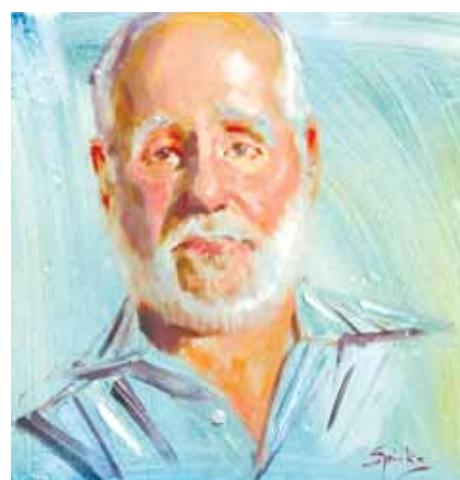
Kris has seen substantial advances in creating a public sector workforce that mirrors our diverse society as well as significant change in wage distribution. "The city's engineer and planner positions are now at least 50% occupied by women," she continues, "which was unheard of 30 years ago, but there's still room for improvement and not just at the upper ends of the pay scale. Still to be addressed are cultural stereotypes which include immigrants, disabled people, cross-cultural, same sex couples, and even the older generation's judgment of tattoos, body piercing, wardrobe choices and hairstyles."

When asked about her dreams for the future, Kris doesn't hesitate, "My dream is to drive past an all female road maintenance crew, not just a female flagger!"

Café on A book signing by Tim Pompey

Celebrating the release of *Blind Spot*, Oxnard writer Tim Pompey's new book of short stories, an author appearance and book signing is to take place on Sunday, March 3, 2-4 p.m., at Café on A, 438 South A

Street, between 4th and 5th Streets, in downtown Oxnard. The new book, as well as other works of fiction by Mr. Pompey, will be available to sell. Refreshments included, plus a short reading by Mr. Pompey from the new book. For more information contact 479-3485 or via email at tjpompey@gmail.com. Current book information on all his titles can be found at www.facebook.com/booksbytimpompey.



David Friedlander was a co-founder of Kids and Families Together. Portrait from the Face Of Ventura by Johanna Spinks.

Kids and Families Together, what it's all about

by Olga Alvarado, a.k.a. "Yogi"
You can follow her on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/yogisadventures

On New Year's Day of 2000, Kids and Families Together opened up in Ventura to help fill the gaps and provide services for kinship families, who at that time, were not commonly heard of. Co-founders David and Faith Friedlander gained the confidence and credibility of the county and started their model of in-home counseling, education services, kinship care in adoption, and more. In 2004, they proudly purchased the beautiful historic property located at 856 E. Thompson Avenue where they are still today.

Two years ago, they opened up Alice's House, a wonderful place for young adults who have emancipated out of foster care. Thanks to a recent California Act (AB 12), foster children who normally would have had to be removed out of the system after age 18, can now choose to stay until age 21. Alice's House is a cooperative living home that offers that population a supportive alternative. Just last month, they were approved to receive additional city funding to add on three more bedrooms and two bathrooms to Alice's House, making it possible to keep up with the needs of young adults. The home is named after friend and neighbor Alice McGrath, a prominent Ventura resident who was very involved in women's empowerment. After her passing, her daughter allowed the program to be held in her home until Kids and Families Together was able to buy the current property located off of Victoria.

Foster kids are children who have been formally removed from their families and placed with a foster caregiver. About 1/3 of the children in the system are placed with a relative, which is what David Friedlander hopes for because, as he said: "Reducing



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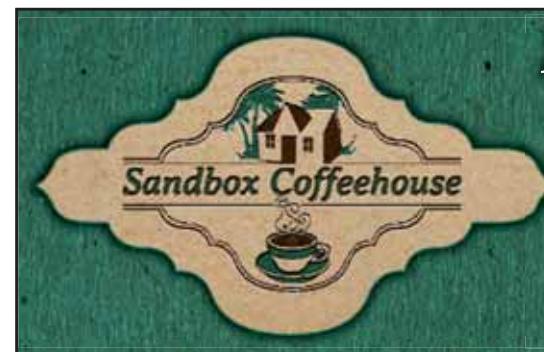
their trauma is really what it's all about." Child Welfare has become increasingly aware of that. During the 2000 census, there was a very specific question that helped inform the county of how many grandparents were raising their grandchildren, which turned out to be over 5,000 in Ventura County alone.

Kinships families have to deal with several issues that are different than unrelated caregivers. Many of them are struggling with shame, loss and grief. Thanks to a contract with Children and Family Services of Ventura, Kids and Families Together is able to provide support services to these kinship families, informal or formal (in Child Welfare Systems). Last year through a contract with Ventura County Behavioral Health, they were able to implement a program to form kinship community coalitions in four strategic areas throughout the county which are for locally identifying kinship families' needs and provide them with appropriate support services.

Kids and Families Together strives to promote and stabilize permanency. Because caregivers are often dealing with challenging kids, they do their best to educate them in the hopes of not having disruptions that

can further traumatize the children. Each stage of development raises new issues. They have counselors whose work is attachment-focused. Some of them are even working with families that are reunifying after foster care had been established. A therapy model that would work under other circumstances, in their case could have the opposite effect. It takes a special qualified team to deal with the situations this specific population is facing. Along with their highly trained counselors, they also offer an internship training program.

To receive services from Kids and Families Together, clients can self-refer, or be directed to them by social workers. Through their bilingual staff, as well as the Kinships Coalition, which is part of the Ventura County Behavioral Health Initiative, they are also targeting Latino kinship families to respond to the needs of a community that traditionally follows a kinship model but often lacks support. In addition, they offer workshops, mental health services for children through Behavioral Health, as well as a food-share pantry, lending library, and much more. To learn more about this outstanding Ventura organization, please visit their website: <http://www.kidsandfamilies.org>.



February Special
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The Ventura Breeze Presents The Face Of Ventura



Helen Yunker

Portrait by Johanna Spinks

At age 91, Helen Yunker can look back over an incredible life of achievement and service to her community. Her philosophy is simple – “In helping and sharing with others, you multiply your own blessings many times.”

Helen arrived in 1948 in California, from Chicago, where she was born in 1921. After 10-years in direct sales, Helen fulfilled her dream of living at the seashore when she moved to Ventura's Pierpont Bay area in 1958. A realtor since 1971 she ultimately founded Helen Yunker Realty.

Her 54 years in Ventura is a virtual kaleidoscope of ongoing community engagement. She has been recognized over the years for her many contributions, by numerous service organizations in the areas of educational, medical, civic, youth, theater, and arts.

Some of her recognition over the years includes:

1966: she co-produced “The First 100 Years in Ventura”, a centennial magazine celebrating and documenting the city's founding in 1866.

1968: The Ventura County Board of Supervisors awarded her for leadership, as President of the Pierpont Bay Association for leading the adoption of the Pierpont Improvement District.

1970: Helen led the first grandfathering program in Ventura, for the Pierpont area. Adopted by the City in 1977.

2003: The Ventura County Board of Realtors awarded Helen a special Inspiration Award for her dedicated efforts to protect individual property rights.

2007: The Girl Scouts named Helen “Woman of Distinction”.

2008: The Ventura County American Red Cross awarded Helen the Clara Barton Award for her work dating back to the 60's when, she played an active part in support services for our troops.

2008: The National Assn. of Community Colleges awarded Helen the “Benefactor of the Year Award” in Washington, D.C. for raising \$600,000 to equip the new math/science building at Ventura Community College.

In 2010 The City of Ventura awarded

Helen the Mayor's Arts Patron Award. Site dedications honoring Helen's support include:

Ventura County Community Foundation: “The Helen M. Yunker Collection for Non-Profit Research and Development”.

Ventura College: The Helen Yunker Auditorium

The Rubicon Theater: The Helen Yunker Performance Hall.

Mary-Health-of-the-Sick Convalescent Hospital: The Memory Garden

Classrooms at Ventura College math/science building

St. John's Hospital in Oxnard and St. Vincent's Hospital in L.A.

Loving music, Helen joined her church choir in Chicago at age 13 and still sings in her church choir in Ventura after 54 years.

And we are all blessed and grateful for her contributions to society.

We asked her what she likes most about Ventura.

Having grown up in Chicago, Ventura, with its 25,000 population in 1958, its climate, location and overall ambiance, was a true panacea and fertile ground for my life's goals. Today, after 54 years of service, my greatest blessing is the thanks and recognition I receive, also fully aware of my intense struggles, as well as accomplishments. Where else, but in Ventura, can one be embraced like a family member, and be gifted a feeling of “belonging”?

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

I was certainly honored to be selected for the final Face Of Ventura and to experience Johanna's great artistic talent. She made the sitting time pleasant, not a burden, and was very patient with my talking outbursts and observations. As an outstanding and respected artist, she has frozen in time a cross-section of 57 citizens'. She should be thanked and recognized for this generous and outstanding gift to our community. I know how grateful I am for making me a part of It. Thank you, thank you, Johanna.



Images copyright by Johanna Spinks

johanna@johannaspinks.com www.johannaspinks.com www.thefaceofventura.com



This is the last of the Face Of Ventura portraits

When I first started this art journey to record the town of Ventura as I saw it through my portrait eye, I had no idea what a journey of a lifetime it was going to turn out to be.

I feel a huge sense of gratitude to each and every sitter, many now my friends, who placed their trust and life stories in me. I feel a sense of apology to those who weren't painted. There are so many wonderful deserving people but alas too few spots in a two year community art project that could not go on forever.

I should point out no money ever changed hands in this project. This portrait project was always about a sincere desire to record what I was seeing in this time period of this wonderful historic town. My goal was always for this portrait collection to stay together, remaining one large portrait of the town. Despite offers to purchase, I knew they HAD to stay together.

I am beyond delighted that the portraits will now have a permanent home.

I also want to thank the townsfolk of Ventura who have showed such support toward the project: Lyn Fairly, who so capably recorded each sitter on her lively talk radio show Lyn Fairly and Friends; and lastly my pal Sheldon. We went through the journey together. It was a huge commitment on both our parts. The Face of Ventura became something we both cared about very much.

I think it will remain something special for us both because the project involved real lives, real people, indeed the heart of Ventura.

So with all of that in mind, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Johanna

The Face of Ventura collection can be seen at Crowell, Weedon & Co., 5740 Ralston Street, Suite 301, until March 30, 2013. Drop-ins welcome.

News and Notes

Grape expectations

And the winners are?

by Eric Garnier

Following the footsteps of last year's successful event, the 2nd annual Ventura County Wine Trail Food and Wine Challenge was held last Thursday at the Embassy Suites in Oxnard. The turnout of about 400 was terrific, with people coming from all over the county.

Twelve local wineries paired up with as many eateries to try to create the perfect food and wine pairing. In addition, a portion of the proceeds went to benefit the Ventura County FOOD Share.

This year's winners were split into two groups. First, a panel of judges from both the food and wine industry, tasted the pairings. The wine was served blind, so as not to bias any opinions. A secondary award was given called the "People Choice" award, handed out at the end of the evening.

As I kept going around the room asking people their opinion, I found that the fans were taking the event very seriously. They did not make quick decisions. They all had a handful of favorites and were trying to narrow down their decisions. I thought that all the contestants did an outstanding job and that everyone was a winner. The wines were exceptional, which in itself speaks for the quality of wines being produced locally. I myself, also struggled with trying to make a decision. After the first go around, I had it down to five different groups. Another observation that I saw was the passion, fun, and commitment from both the wineries, winemakers and the chefs that I was able to communicate with.

The winners were announced as the event was winding down. The awards were as follows:

People's Choice Award

Cantara Winery and Twenty 88 Wine Bistro

2009 Intrepid, a blend of Syrah, Cabernet and Cabernet Franc paired with crispy short ribs with peppers, onions and a dark cherry blend

Judges Award

Bella Victorian Vineyard and Bella Victorian Bistro

2008 Bella Elena Syrah paired with wild boar stew over pancetta, root vegetables and mushroom

My deepest congratulations to all of the participants and winners. By the way, the two winners were on my final list of five that I mentioned above.

Cheers!

Eric

Wineoeric@gmail.com

Run up stairs

by Preston Andreini

Ventura City Fire Fighters Association

Every year since 1992, firefighters put on over 50 lbs of gear and run up 69 flights of stairs, for a vertical elevation gain of 788 feet. And they do it for a worthy cause...The Scott Firefighter Stair Climb event. This event directly supports the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society by raising money through sponsorships, fundraising, and entry fees. In 2012, the event featured 1,550 firefighters from 291 different departments and brought in a record \$1.2 million for blood-cancer research and to assist with patient services. The event is held at the Columbia Center (formerly Bank of America Tower) in downtown Seattle, the tallest building west of the Mississ-

sippi. It takes 1,311 steps to reach the highly acclaimed observation deck overlooking the city.

This year it's personal. Three Ventura City firefighters are devoting their own time and money in order to attend the event. They will climb their way up and up, raising money with every step, to help find a cure for leukemia. Captain Jason Kay, Engineer Preston Andreini and Firefighter/Paramedic Jeremy Henderson will be competing in this strenuous event, in full firefighting gear, on March 10. All three started training months ago and aren't taking the amount of dedication required lightly.

"Jeremy asked if I would be interested in a competition and I immediately said NO," said Kay. "It sounded like a lot of pain and time. Then Jeremy explained what the cause was about and how closely it affects so many families, and I had to do it."

Henderson has done similar competitions in the past, but this time around it hits close to home. His mother was diagnosed with leukemia 2 years ago, and just last year his niece died of a blood disorder. "If there is anything I can do to help another family not go through what I have gone through this past year, I'll be first in line." Henderson brought the event up to Andreini at work one day. "Preston responded with 'I'm in' before I even gave him the dates", says Henderson.

The team is collecting support, in the form of donations and sponsors, at <https://www.facebook.com/TeamVenturaCityFire> and www.teamvfd.com. All donations go directly to the Aubrey Gaines foundation.

Cypress Place

Cypress Place Senior Living has announced that Ventura native and Olympic bronze medalist Troy Dumais will be the keynote speaker at their upcoming Health & Wealth Expo. This year's event will take place on Wednesday February 27th from 11a.m. to 1p.m.

Dumais won the bronze medal in men's synchronized 3-meter springboard diving during the 2012 London summer Olympics. His presentation begins at 11a.m. and he will be taking photos and signing autographs from 11:30a.m. to 1:00p.m.

All vendor booths will be open to the public from 11:30a.m. to 1:00p.m. as well, and will include free blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, free balance and hearing tests, and free wealth management consultations. A free healthy gourmet lunch will also be provided.

Admission is free and the event is open to the public. Free shuttle parking will also be available.

For more information or to RSVP, please call 650-8000. To learn more about Cypress Place Senior Living of Ventura, visit www.cypressplaceseniorliving.com.

The Comprehensive solution: the Safe City Initiative

by Camille Harris

Giving their update on January 14th, to the City Council, Code Enforcement presented a list of 198 homeowners they had turned over to the county for a collection process that can end in fore-

ARTIST RECEPTION

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*The Face of Ventura
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Raffle tickets will be sold to benefit FOOD Share and your chance to win a future live sitting with Johanna.

Johanna Spinks knows faces inside out. She steadfastly observes the grand tradition of oil portraiture, taking her cues from the Old Masters adding a contemporary romantic twist.

Johanna's work also includes still life and landscapes which have won her international acclaim being featured in the New York Times, American Artist Magazine and Art Talk.

Johanna's paintings are in collections worldwide. Come see The Face of Ventura before it goes into its final home. Her "other works" will be showcased as well so you can get your chance to become a collector!

Thursday, February 7th

4:00 to 7:00 pm

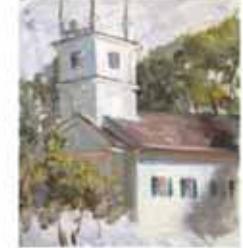
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R.S.V.P. by February 1st to Cindy at 805-620-4711



closure in five years. A review of the list reveals that 40% of those properties have already been sold or foreclosed upon. This is nearly four times the norm of just 11%, according to MLS. Did the people just give up after winding up on this list; sell in desperation or need to access to whatever equity they had left?

Unlike other cities in Ventura County who use collection agencies, this turnover of owners by Ventura to the tax collector does not allow for citizens to get their "day in court." In small claims court, a judge could allow a comprehensive time payment plan but the tax collector does not allow partial payments. A simple change in code enforcement's collection policy to match Oxnard's would allow an objective judge to hear the story.

With those same property owners financially handcuffed by code enforcement's practice of clouding titles, they cannot access their equity for financial emergencies, so this could have forced a desperation sale. These discounted sales can drag down the net worth of all properties.

Seeking a comprehensive solution, The Ventura City Council, with a motion by Councilmember Brian Brennan, directed its Code Enforcement Staff to return with a plan to expand the 2nd unit amnesty ordinance to all Ventura

properties on May 9, 2011. After 18 months of no response from the staff, Councilmember Andrews repeated the direction to staff this past January 14th remarking, "This is 'found' money." And the attending council members again supported the direction.

This direction from the City Council creates an incentive for Ventura properties to receive safety inspections and pay fees in place at the time of improvements or repairs. It is a win for both the city, who gets the "found" money and for the property owners, who receive a grandfathering of existing setbacks and amnesty from fines. Assurance of safe housing is a huge bonus for the entire community.

The Council understands the need for safety and a comprehensive and practical solution to the City's lost or missing permit issue. They also want to do everything they can to keep people in their homes. As the staff continues to delay the Council's direction, the safety of our city is at risk, so citizens are picking up the ball and heading for the ballot.

The Safe City Initiative enforces the direction of the City Council and will require 13,000 signatures to qualify for the ballot.

All those who can help to gather signatures please contact me at grandtherventura@gmail.com

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2012 Olympic Bronze Medalist

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Senior Living

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Burglary prevention advice

by Nanci Cone

Protecting your home and family from criminal intrusion should be high on your list of priorities. According to the FBI, a burglary occurs somewhere in the United States every 15.4 seconds which can leave a family feeling vulnerable and violated. July and August have the most burglaries with February having the fewest crimes. Burglaries are committed most often by young males looking for items that are small, expensive, and can easily be converted to cash. Statistics tell us that 70% of the burglars use some amount of force to enter a dwelling, but their preference is to gain easy access through an open door or window.

The first step is to make your home more difficult to enter since the burglar will bypass it if it requires too much effort or more skill and tools than they possess. Experienced burglars know that the garage door is usually the weakest point of entry followed by the back door:

Use a solid core or metal door for all entrance points

Use a quality, heavy-duty, dead bolt lock with a 1" throw bolt

Use a quality, heavy-duty, knob-in-lock set with a dead-latch mechanism

Use a heavy-duty, four-screw, strike plate with 3-inch screws to penetrate into a wooden door frame

Use a wide-angle 160° peephole mounted no higher than 58"

To keep sliding glass doors safe:

Use a secondary blocking device on all sliding glass doors

Keep the latch mechanism in good condition and properly adjusted

Keep sliding door rollers in good condition and properly adjusted

Use anti-lift devices such as through-the-door pins or upper track screws

Use highly visible alarm decals, beware of dog decals or block watch decal

Regarding windows:

Secure all accessible windows with secondary blocking devices

Keep them open no more than 6" for ventilation

Make sure someone cannot reach through an open window and unlock the door

Make sure someone cannot reach inside the window and remove the blocking device

Use anti-lift devices to prevent window from being lifted out

Use crime prevention or alarm decals on ground accessible windows

Neighbors:

Get to know all your adjacent neighbors

Exchange keys to prevent having to hide them outside

Agree to watch out for each other's home

While on vacation - pick up newspapers, and flyers

Offer to occasionally park your car in their driveway

Communicate often
Lighting is really important. To make

Continued on page 18

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Professor Scamp, Ph.D



Dear Scamp:
Do you realize that every time I see a photo of you in the Breeze, I can't stop smiling! You manage to brighten my day, making everything just a bit better – All with that mug

of yours!

Did you see your picture in the last issue? (The one of you, sporting that P.D. badge) Too Cute. I caught myself grinning, while asking: Can he get any cuter!!!? With hugs, and Valentine wishes & kisses
Patti Thomas
Patti:

Thanks Patti. Always nice to hear from one of my millions of fans. Of course I saw my picture, I read every word in the Breeze. I just don't know if I can get any cuter, it would probably be illegal.

Scamp

I received this wonderful email from Doug Reed that I want to share (There also just happens to be an article in this issue about his wife Kris).

Scamp:

In your last issue Forever Homes Wanted - we are adopting Jose, the lab from Cabo. We visited Sunday and plan to take him home Thursday. He seems to be a really good dog.

Thanks for your support for dogs that need a loving home.

Doug Reed

City of Ventura

And this email from Mindy who brings these dogs to Ventura from Cabo (that's in Mexico) when I told her.

Scamp

AWSOME!!!! Jose' is so lucky!

Thanks Sheldon, Scamp and the Breeze!!

Mindy Benezra

I just read that in Riverside County there was a migrant encampment (Not sure what that is) called Duroville that has recently been closed down leaving perhaps hundreds of dogs being left behind by their humans. The Department of Animal Affairs spent weeks rounding all of them up.

I would assume that most of them have been, or will be euthanized. I hate it when humans who can't even take care of themselves think they can take care of, and deserve a dog. Especially the homeless, who can't feed them or give them any exercise.

Only 2 states do not allow the domestication of ferrets, California and Hawaii. The California Fish and Wildlife Department fears that ferrets, a nonnative species could escape (like killer bees did) go feral and prey on native species (like kangaroos) and compete with them for food.

I've heard that some people think that ferrets are cute, smart and entertaining (sounds like me). For many years ferret lovers have been trying to have California lift the ban which dates back to the 1930's (like my publisher).

I'm against lifting the ban because then my humans may think that they are wonderful pets and get one and then I would need to share my bed, and possibly food with Freddy the ferret and Savana the cat. The bed is crowded enough with just the 2 of us in it now (Well actually 4). Even though Savana doesn't eat much but I'm sure that a ferret would.

I was also shocked to find out that we adorable dogs evolved from wolves (I thought Adam and Eve had a dog

and that is where we came from).

It seems that the key to this evolution is because a very long time ago some brave (or stupid) wolves starting hanging around with Neanderthals (or someone like that) and eating their food. Geneticists (I don't know what they are) have determined that the wolf's ability to digest carbohydrates was the key to ending up with wonderful dogs.

That is because dogs can break down starch into sugar which made early dogs better able to digest the scraps that they were now eating from dumps helping them to survive and evolve.

Then people mated dogs of different shapes, and color and temperament to create the wonderful varieties of adorable, tail wagging breeds that we have today.

Shih Tzu's were bred to be adorable and to enjoy eating I'm sure.

This is way over my head but I'm sure that it makes sense to my smart readers. But I do know that I like eating carbs and anything else (except lettuce).



Maybe you should carry little bags of dog food for these "homeless" dogs. I'm afraid if you give the dogs money they might just use it to buy beer.



(Pretty Happy Dog)

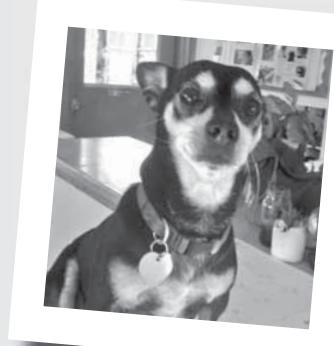
Forever homes wanted

Hi: I'm Little Maggie (I'm just 12.5 lbs) a sweet 10 year old female Sheltie whose owner sadly has passed away. I'm a less active dog who is good with other dogs, cats and children. I'm house, crate and paper trained,

come when called and walk well on a leash.

I enjoy sleeping, eating and going outdoors.

I had severe dental disease so they had to pull all but 5 of my teeth and I am unable to see out of one of my eyes. I still have lots of love to give and I hope I don't have long to wait for a loving family to come and take me home. Stop by and meet me, you're sure to fall in love with me. The Canine Adoption & Rescue League, Sam's Place, 3203 E. Main Street, 644-7387. www.carlvc.org



Hi: My name is Kingston and I am a very sweet Chihuahua mix. I am about 2-3 years old and very sweet and playful. I am looking for my forever home. I love other dogs, people, sofas and squeaky toys. I am staying at Ventura Highway Luxury Boarding for Dogs, call today to see me, and some of my friends as well. 805 643-3647 P.S. All of us who get adopted board 1/2 at Camp VH any time of year, for life!



Hi: My name is Pinto (Bean) and I was rescued by CABODOGZ from the Ventura County Animal Shelter just last month. I am a French Bulldog/Jack Russell and I am about 5 years old. I love to play with squeaky toys and I will entertain you with my antics. I am a little shy at first but I warm up quickly to a kind voice. I can be seen with some of my friends at Ventura Highway Luxury Boarding for Dogs, 4692 Ventura Avenue, 643-3647.

Hi: My name is Spot. I was born on June 1 of last year. I am a sweet, social white kitten. I am curious, talkative and very playful. I am quick to purr. I am especially talkative when I see you playing with other cats. I enjoy giving kisses to my humans.

My story...my brother Buddy and I were 7-weeks-old when rescued. Mom was a feral (wild) cat in El Rio. We were given lots of love and attention. It is amazing the difference a few, short weeks can make I am good with other active cats, "cat friendly" dogs with a slow introduction and older kids – kids must be 9 years and older. I am looking for a family who will cherish and love me, and will provide an indoor only home.

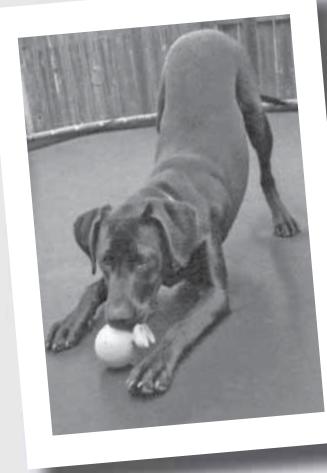
Please call 649.2844 or send email to greyfootcat@gmail.com to find out more about Spot and other cats that need a loving home.

Scamp Club

Hi: This is Bailey and Sheena and they live together, they are best buddies and get along really well together, aren't they lucky? Bailey is a black Lab who will be 2 in February. Some of her favorite things to do are jumping

and running around on the trampoline in the back yard. She loves playing in the water and getting wet with the hose. Goes to the park in the afternoon to play with the other dogs and loves to ride in the car. Loves rolling over and getting tummy rubs.

Sheena, is 10 years old and a Golden Lab. Her favorite thing is going to the park to play with her dog friends, she loves running and chasing them. She loves riding in the car too, and likes to go to the beach and run in the ocean.



Join Scamp Club

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.

Assault with Deadly Weapon

On Monday, January 21st, at 6:25 p.m., the VPD received a call that Kristine Lambert had threatened a neighbor. Lambert was armed with a knife and threatened to kill the victim. The victim was able to lock their house and avoid injury. Lambert eventually left and went to her nearby home. Lambert refused to communicate with the officers. Officers obtained a search warrant.

Officers executed the search warrant to locate Lambert. Lambert had barricaded herself in a rear bathroom. She was armed with a knife when officers were making entry. Officers deployed a taser to subdue Lambert. Officers arrested Lambert without further incident.

Stolen Vehicle

On Tuesday, January 22nd, at 7:15 p.m., officers responded to a report of a stolen vehicle that had just occurred at the McDonald's restaurant located at 5980 Telegraph Road.

The victim had unknowingly dropped their keys in the parking lot just prior to entering the restaurant. When the victim returned to the parking lot, they discovered their vehicle had been taken.

Officers located the vehicle being driven by suspect, Mark Stuart, just a few blocks from where it was originally taken. Officers stopped the vehicle as it entered the Ventura College parking lot and took Stuart into custody without incident.

Domestic Violence

On Wednesday, January 23rd, at 11:20 a.m., the VPD received a call of a male and female arguing in a parked vehicle in the 2700 Block of Sherwin Avenue.

Officers arrived on scene and made contact with the suspect, Johnny Donovan, and the female victim. Officers attempted to arrest Donovan. Donovan physically resisted before being taken into custody.

Donovan had been physically abusing the victim over the past several days, making threats against her life, and holding her captive against her will. The victim was treated on scene. Donovan received minor injuries and was treated at the VCMC.

Robberies

On Tuesday, January 22nd, at 6:04 a.m., the VPD received a call of a robbery that had just occurred in the 700 Block of North Ventura Avenue. The suspect entered the business and handed the clerk a note demanding money. The clerk then handed the note back to the suspect and did not comply with his demands. The suspect walked out of the store with no money.

The VPD received a call of an additional robbery in the 800 Block of East Thompson Boulevard. The suspect entered the business, then went behind the counter and brandished a knife at the clerk, demanding money. The clerk gave the suspect an undisclosed amount of cash.

Jose Mendoza was the suspect in the crimes. Mendoza was residing in Bakersfield and a search warrant was obtained for his residence. Mendoza was located at the residence and was arrested. He was booked at VC Jail.

Loaded Firearm

On Friday, January 25th, at 3:08 a.m., an officer stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation in the 1600 block of Johnson Drive. As this vehicle came to a stop, a passenger in the back seat, Julian Nunez, opened the rear door and attempted to exit the vehicle. The officer told him to stay in the vehicle however Nunez again opened the door.

Additional officers responded and Nunez was ordered out of the vehicle and detained while the officers investigated why he attempted to exit the vehicle. He was searched and a loaded firearm was located on his person. Nunez was immediately taken into custody and the firearm was secured.

The driver and an additional passenger, Omar Ruiz, were searched as was the vehicle and no other firearms or weapons were located.

Ruiz was determined to be on parole and arrested for a parole violation. Nunez and Ruiz were later booked into the VC Jail.

Shooting

On Saturday, January 26th, at 8:40 p.m., the VPD received several calls in reference to gunshots heard in the 400 block of West Ramona Street. As VPD Patrol Officers were en route to the area, a witness observed the victim, Juan Garay, getting into a vehicle and leaving the scene. Responding VPD officers located the vehicle and contacted Garay who was determined to have a gunshot wound to his leg. Garay was transported to the VCMC and is in stable condition.

Prowling Arrest

On Tuesday, January 29th, at 11:18 p.m., the VPD received a call of a subject in the back yard of a residence in the 100 block of West Flint Street. The suspect, Ryan Cortez, was found hiding in the back yard of the residence. Cortez was taken into custody for prowling.

3 hours later, the same victim called the VPD again and advised that there was another unknown person in her back yard. The suspect ran away. Officers conducted an extensive search of the area but were unable to locate the suspect.

Brandishing a Firearm

On Wednesday, December 26th, at 5:30 a.m., the victim was in his vehicle stopped for a traffic signal in the area of California Street and Thompson Boulevard. Another vehicle pulled up next to him and the driver brandished a semi automatic handgun at him. The victim called the VPD and officers responded to the area but were unable to locate the suspect.

Detectives were able to identify the suspect in the above incident as Andrew Hasting. On Wednesday, January 30th, detectives served a search warrant at Hasting's residence. Hasting was taken into custody at that time and evidence related to the crime was found at the location. Hasting was booked into VC Jail.

Assault with Deadly Weapon

On Wednesday, January 30th, at 11:58 a.m., the VPD received a call of a disturbance in the 100 Block of James Drive. Officers determined that a stabbing had just occurred and the suspect, Raymond Diaz, had fled.

The victim, Darrow Ohnstad, and Diaz were involved in an argument and the suspect stabbed the victim in the stomach. VC Fire Department treated the victim at the scene for a non-life threatening wound.

The VPD determined that Diaz was at a location on Yucca Street in Oxnard.

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No Delay in Trash & Recyclables or Green Waste
Pick Up Due to the Presidents' Day Holiday

Presidents' Day will be celebrated on Monday, February 18. We will have regularly scheduled trash and recyclables or green waste collection the week of February 18-24 in the Cities of Ventura and Ojai.

Thank you and Happy Holiday
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647-1414

On January 31st, Diaz was located near an apartment building on Yucca. Diaz was taken into custody without incident and booked at VC Jail.

Hiding in the trunk

On January 30th Patrol officers conducted a traffic stop on a car driven by Rachel Carranco for a vehicle code violation. During the stop, officers determined that Carranco was driving with a suspended driver's license. As part of the investigation, officers searched the car and found illegal drugs in the passenger compartment. Officers continued the search and found Daniel Blancarte, 22, a Santa Paula resident hiding in the trunk of

the vehicle. Blancarte was uncooperative with demands made by officers but was eventually removed from the trunk. The officers found that Blancarte had been lying on top of a stolen and loaded handgun. Blancarte has previous convictions for felony violations and therefore simple possession of a firearm is a felony violation of current law.

Blancarte was arrested for a convicted felon in possession of a handgun, possession of stolen property, possession of narcotics and outstanding warrants. Blancarte is a documented gang member from Santa Paula and was booked into Ventura County Jail.

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Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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



Show Time

Where The Music Flows

Delaney's delightful

by Michael Kohli

VenturaLiveWire@gmail.com

Currently listening to: We All Fall Down by Aerosmith

Delaney Gibson appeared in town last month. Filming a brand new music video for her upcoming single, "Lions." Her upcoming album, *Tall Like The Tree*, is expected soon. The album's lead single, "Give Up The Ghost" recently had its online / YouTube video premiere. Looks great! Before Delaney went back to her current residence in Texas, she gave us a Monday Night intimate performance at Zoey's Cafe. Her new songs sound breathtaking! Looking forward to the new album. Stay tuned to DelaneyGibson.com.

Mardi Gras is just around the corner. This coming weekend, Bombay Bar & Grill has a full weekend planned, including Friday, February 8, which will bring together on one stage: The Shoemaker Brothers, Zippy, Josh & The Rag Tag Band, Ska Daddyz, Kyle Hunt And King Gypsy. This will be an amazing line-up. Perfect for the party occasion!

As mentioned last issue, Saturday Night Sound mastermind Brian Parra will be booking shows at The Old Livery again. For years, it became an all-ages tradition. The first show has been announced. Friday, February 24 at 6pm will feature: Dirty Rice, The Grittys, Spartacus, and Declining Youth. The show is for all ages. \$10 at the door / \$8 presale. Check it out and have fun!



Two on the Aisle

Food Confessions melts in the mouth

by Jim Spencer & Shirley Lorraine

The plays comprising the Rubicon Theatre Company's menu of shows for its annual seasons always offer something to please every taste. As part of its 15th anniversary season the Rubicon serves up a delectable dish with a saucy new, world premiere comedy, *Food Confessions*. The debut script by Santa Barbara playwright Nancy Nufer is a mouth-watering buffet. True to form, there is something to please every palate.

Food Confessions is a tribute to food in all its forms. Everyone views food through different eyes, but we all must eat. That, in itself, is the basic ingredient that blends the action into delicious, hilarious morsels of delight.

The play is elegant in its apparent

simplicity and yet complex in its execution and depth. It is a series of insightful vignettes offering up a soupcon of witticisms and truths about our connections to food through relationships, life experiences and challenges. Family traditions, particular tastes, pretensions about food and childhood memories about food are all included in this examination of our relationships with and surrounding our eating habits and idiosyncrasies.

Each actor in the five person cast plays a variety of roles, some recurring, some not. Director Jenny Sullivan has imbued each character with such nuance that they morph seamlessly from one character to another.

All of the actors are stellar. They perform as a true ensemble, each taking their spotlight moment and then blending into the mix to add color and flavor for someone else's moment. The action is smooth as representative costume additions and deletions are made, a few props appear and disappear without effort.

Actor-cum-playwright Nufer is a standout in a field of accomplished performers. She is flanked by Dan Gunther, often seen on stages throughout Ventura and Santa Barbara; Robert Lesser and Devin Scott, both also hailing from nearby Santa Barbara, and Kara Revel, currently from Los Angeles.

Performed without an intermission, the play often incorporates familiar tunes to which the words have been adapted to the situation. Laughter begins and actually overshadows some of the words, which are probably equally amusing. We wish we could have heard them all.

Scene design by Thomas S. Giamario gives the action a playful yet authentic flavor.

The recipe for *Food Confessions* is still being revised in order to reach its zenith. Talk-back sessions are to be held after each three Wednesday evening performances and the actors, director and playwright welcome comments, suggestions and questions.

As one character observes, "Eating – it's just chew, swallow, repeat." We recommend doing just that – watch, savor, enjoy. Then go back for a second helping.

Food Confessions continues through February 24, 2013 at the Rubicon Theatre Company, 1006 E. Main St., Ventura. Show times: Wednesdays-2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays-8 p.m. Saturdays-2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Sundays-2 p.m. Tickets: \$35-\$49. 667-2900. www.rubicontheatre.org. Rubicon now has 24-hour ticketing online which allows attendees to select seats and print tickets at home.

The Entertainment Report

Silver screen

by Linde Carlson

Hello Ventura, these are my picks of the week:



Silver Linings Playbook

In this emotional, yet fun-loving, indie romantic comedy, Bradley Cooper plays Pat, a former teacher who after 4 years in a mental institution moves back in with his parents. Pat tries to reconcile with his ex-wife, but things get tangled in a web of confusion when he meets

VFS @ 420 East 2013

Booker's Place – A Mississippi Story

Reviewed by Lorenzo DeStefano

Ventura Film Society

In 1965, filmmaker Frank De Felitta, now 90 years old, made a documentary film for NBC News about the changing times in the American South and the tensions of life in the Mississippi Delta during the civil rights struggle. When the film was broadcast it outraged many Southern viewers, in part because it included an extraordinary 2 minute scene featuring a local African-American waiter named Booker Wright. Wright, who worked at a local "whites only" restaurant in Greenwood, Mississippi, went on record to deliver a stunning, heartfelt and inflammatory monologue exploding the myth about who he was and how he felt about his position serving the local white community. The fallout for Booker Wright was extreme and cost him dearly. He lost his job. He was brutally beaten. The restaurant he

owned on the black side of town was firebombed and, seven years later, he was murdered. Forty-five years after Booker's television appearance, Frank De Felitta's son, director Raymond De Felitta (*City Island*) VFS 2011) returns to the Delta with Booker's granddaughter, to examine the repercussions of that fateful encounter between an oppressed man and a filmmaker whose best intentions changed his subject's life forever.

The Ventura Film Society is proud to present *Booker's Place – A Mississippi Story* Tuesday February 19th @ 7:15pm, as the 2nd of 21 feature films of our 5th season. The VFS thanks all of its patrons, donors, volunteers and sponsors for supporting our mission of bringing quality alternative films and filmmakers to Ventura. Screening, Membership & Advance Ticket Information on our 2013 season, running February 5th through December 3rd at 420 E. Santa Clara Street (@ Oak Street) in Downtown Ventura, is available at [www.venturafilmsociety.com](http://venturafilmsociety.com). Please contact us at 628-2299 /info@venturafilmsociety.com for further information.

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Jazz Jam every Wed

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Open Mic/Jam Night with "Shure Thing" every Mon 6-9pm

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

Acoustic Jams with "Ken Kong" every Fri, Sat & Sun 12pm

Fri 2/8 - Crosscut 7-11pm

Sat 2/9 - Fish Fry 6-10pm

Sun 2/10 - Blue Stew 2-6pm

Fri 2/15 - Addicts Attic 7-11pm

Sat 2/16 - 4XL 6-10pm

Sun 2/17 - Blue Stew 2-6pm

Bombay Bar & Grill

143 S. California St., 805-643-4404

Local Live Music every Thur thru Sun

Thur 2/7 - Mardi Gras Event 11am,

C.L.W. Event 9pm

Fri 2/8 - Shoemaker Brothers 5pm, Ska Daddyz, Kyle Hunt & The King Gypsy, Zippy, Josh & The Rag Tag Band 9pm

Sat 2/9 - Count Lorenzo Blues Band 6pm, D.On Darox & The Melody Joy

Bakers 9pm, Electric Liberace, Rey Fresco 11pm

EI Rey Cantina

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805-484-4483

Sat 2/23 - Dirty Rice 9pm

GiGi's Coctail Lounge

2493 Grand Ave., 805-642-2411

Karaoke with Steve Luke every Sun & Wed 7pm- 12am

Live Bands every Fri & Sat 9pm

It's All Good Bar & Grill

533 E. Main St., 805-641-9951

Open Mike Night every Wed

Majestic Theater

26 S. Chestnut St., 805-653-0721

Sat 2/9 - The B-52's, The Moog 8pm

Thur 2/14 - Excision, Paper Diamond, Vaski 7pm

Fri 2/15 - In Flames, Demon Hunter, All Shall Perish, Battlecross 7:30pm

Sat 3/30 - Dirty Rice – Album Release Party

Sandbox Coffeehouse

204 E. Thompson Blvd., 805-641-1025

Thur 2/7 - Open Mic Night Hosted by Jammin' Joe 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Continued on page 18

Music Calendar 2/6 to 2/19

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

Amigos Cafe & Cantina

546 E. Main St., 805-874-2232

Live Bands and Musicians every Wed

Lighter Breeze

Zits



Tiger



Retail



Mother Goose and Grimm



Bleeker



Gil



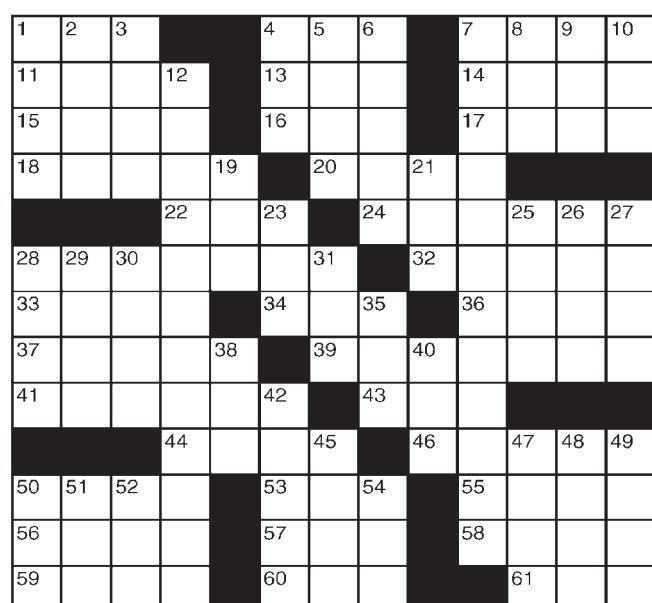
Solutions on page 15

Solutions on page 15

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Two-timer
4 Arrow launcher
7 Goya's "Naked" subject
11 Scads
13 Atmosphere
14 PC picture
15 Panorama
16 Beer cousin
17 Fender bender
18 Artist's support
20 Knitting need
22 Lower limb
24 Used a switchblade on
28 Unimportant
32 Spy
33 Relaxation
34 — de deux
36 Lug
37 Bother
39 Washington city
41 Half-hour TV show, often
43 Blond shade
44 Hawaiian feast
46 Eccentric
50 Note from the boss
53 54-Down stat
55 Eye layer
56 United nations



- 57 Slithery squeezer
58 Skaters' venue
59 Out of control
60 Switch positions
61 Two, in Tijuana
- DOWN**
- 1 Bear lair, often
2 Others (Lat.)
3 Accomplishes
4 Sheep's cry
5 Unctuous
6 Cause, as havoc
7 Dark time
- 8 Expert
9 "The Daily Show With — Stewart"
10 Pismire
12 Another way to say 7- Down
19 Floral neck-wear
21 Genetic letters
23 Space
25 Authoritative command
26 Hebrew month
27 Take out of context?
28 Earl Grey's kin
29 Hindu
- 30 "Say It — So"
31 — Vegas
35 The Red or the Black
38 Thee
40 Request
42 Ballroom dance
45 "Once — a time ..."
47 "Amores" poet
48 Gambling game
49 Tibetan herd
50 Biz deg.
51 Shade tree
52 Cattle call?
54 Auto fuel

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left to others.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Your usually balanced way of assessing situations could be compromised by some so-called new facts. Check them out before making any shift in judgment.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) You might feel angry over an unexpected shift in attitude by someone you trusted. But this could soon turn in your favor as more surprising facts come out.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Love rules everywhere for all amorous Archers, single or attached. It's also a good time to restore friendships that might have frayed over the years.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) It's not always easy for the proud Goat to forgive past slights. But clearing the air could help establish a better climate for that important upcoming venture.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Good news: Your skillful handling of a recent matter has won admiration from someone who could be influential in any upcoming decisions involving you.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) You continue to welcome new friends into the widening circle of people whom you hold dear. One of those newcomers soon might have something special to tell you.

BORN THIS WEEK: You love nature and inspire others to follow your example of concern for the planet's well-being.

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

This 'n' That

Festival of Talent returns February 23

by Jim Spencer & Shirley Lorraine

April marks the 220th anniversary of the birth of the American circus, renowned as an entertainment extravaganza featuring a variety of acts and skilled performers. So, it is fitting the 2013 edition of Ventura's popular *Festival of Talent* on February 23 is built around a circus theme.

The show is under the experienced guiding hand of Rubicon Theater Company Associate Producer Brian McDonald as its director. He advises the Festival will feature several experienced circus performers, plus showcase a broad range of performers from Ventura including a sword dancer, two bands, tappers, stilt walkers, jugglers and a bell choir. Don Wood returns as the MC/Ringmaster for the event.

Members of the AiRealistic Circus and Flying School in Ventura will amaze the crowd with demonstrations of skill, beauty and strength on apparatus suspended high above the Ventura High School stage. AiRealistic founders and principal instructors, Carmen and Greg Curtis, are each graduates of national gymnastics competition teams and Cirque Du Soleil productions. While the company has facilities on both coasts to provide aerial shows for events worldwide, the Curtis' home, professional training facility and school are located in Ventura.

The Festival is not just a show. Presented in association with the Ventura Unified School District and the Ventura Kiwanis Club, it is a fundraiser for the Ventura Education Partnership, which provides grants to underwrite special projects and classroom experiences for which there is no other funding. All the proceeds end up in local classrooms.

Ventura High School is the site

of the Festival of Talent on February 23. There is pre-show entertainment, a silent auction and a raffle starting at 5:30 p.m. and a pasta dinner catered by Milano's from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. The curtain rises on the show at 7:00 p.m. Advance sale tickets are available at all Ventura Unified schools and online at www.vep4vusd.org. - \$10 general and \$20 reserved seating, or pay \$15 at the door. Information 641-5000, x1550 or info@vep4vusd.org.

Senior Cone-nection

Continued from page 12

sure it's really effective:

Use interior light timers to establish a pattern of occupancy

Allow 100 feet of visibility for exterior lighting

Use good lighting along the pathway and at your door

Use light timers or photo-cells to turn on/off lights automatically

Use infra-red motion sensor lights on the rear of single family homes

If you decide to install a burglar alarm, note that:

Alarm systems are effective deterrents with visible signage

They should be properly installed, programmed, and maintained

They need to have an audible horn or bell to be effective

Keep your alarm response call list up to date

Instruct your neighbor how to respond to the alarm

Most burglars will bypass a home with barking dogs

If you keep a home safe:

Use the safe everyday so it becomes routine

Protect the safe code and change it occasionally

Install it away from the master bedroom or closet

Police agencies suggest you:

Engrave your drivers' license number on valuables

Photograph and record the serial

numbers of all valuables

Photocopy the contents of your wallet and other documents

Store the copies in a safe deposit box or with a relative.

Music events

Continued from page 16

Sat 2/9 - The Average Jim 12pm - 2pm

Sun 2/10 - Hard Times Band 12pm - 2pm

Thur 2/14 - Open Mic Night Hosted by Jammin' Joe 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Sat 2/16 - Sadie & The Blue Eyed Devils 12pm - 2pm

Sun 2/17 - Brandi Rose 12pm - 2pm

Squashed Grapes

2351 E. Main St., 805-643-7300

Vocal Jazz Night every Tue 6:30-10pm

House Jazz Band every Fri 6:30-10pm

The Livery Theater,

34 N. Palm, Ventura

Sun 2/24 - Dirty Rice, The Gritty's, Spartacus

The Tavern

211 Santa Clara St., 805-643-3264

Live Bands every Tue thru Sat

"Honky Tonk Tuesdays" Country Night,

Live Country Band every Tue 8pm

Ventura County Blues Society Jam session hosted by Tommy Marsh every Wed 8pm

Wed 2/6 - Ventura County Blues Society 9pm

Thur 2/7 - Gypsy Death Star 9pm

Fri 2/8 - New Libery, Shakey Feeling 9pm

Sat 2/9 - Mini Driver, Randy Rich & The Roosters 10pm

Tue 2/12 - Bobby Campbell 9pm

Wed 2/13 - Ventura County Blues Society 9pm

Thur 2/14 - Valentines "Get Lei'd Party" featuring The Brothers Gow 9pm

Fri 2/15 - Rich Sheldon, Rubberneck Lions 9pm

Sat 2/16 - Dork, Shawn Jones 10pm

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

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Live Bands every Wed thru Sun

Friday Dance Party every Fri 9pm

Thur 2/7 - Mark Clark's Mind

Fri 2/8 - Legalizers

Sat 2/9 - Bomb

Sun 2/10 - Kyle Hunt & The Gypsy's

Fri 2/15 - INSTONE

Sat 2/16 - Sound Effects

Sun 2/17 - Simple Creation

Yolies/Hi Hat Entertainment

138 W. Main St., 805-816-9663

Top Notch Musicians and Bands every Fri 8pm

Fri 2/8 - Pete Anderson (World Renowned Guitarist)

Fri 2/15 - James Harman (Award Winning Blues Harmonica)

Zoey's Café

185 E. Santa Clara St., 805-652-1137

Wed 2/6 - Joshua James 7pm, Calico The

Band 10pm

Fri 2/7 - Black Action Suites, Bird Brain 10pm

Sat 2/8 - Brother Sal & Band 10pm

Tue 2/12 - Bluegrass Jam 8pm

Wed 2/13 - Calico The Band 10pm

Fri 2/15 - Peter Feldmann & The Very

Lonely Boys (Bluegrass) 10pm

Sat 2/16 - Chris Pierce & Band 8pm,

Brother Sal & Band 10pm

Tue 2/19 - Acoustic Open Mic 7:30pm

Tito Puente, Jr. comes to town

Ventura Music Festival presents Tito Puente, Jr. Feb 16, at 8 pm at Ventura High School (2 N. Catalina St.) for their 2013 Latin Jazz concert featuring the electrifying percussionist and bandleader Tito Puente, Jr. Experience the sizzling Afro-Cuban and Caribbean rhythms pioneered by his father (the original Mambo King) in hits such as "Oye Como Va" as well as his own compositions. Tickets/info 648.3146 or www.venturamusicfestival.org

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Art Scene



Andrea Vargas will be one of the featured artists at Jewelry Couture. Photo by Claudia Vargas.

Fine arts and fine jewelry merge at Jewelry Couture

"The Artist Collection," featured at Jewelry Couture by Sehati, is a new haven for local artists' works county-wide. "You have to find a group of artists whose art co-mingles...but there has to be an artistic spirit about the art," explains Layla Hallberg. Hallberg, who represents talented artists county-wide and coordinates art galleries and auctions, has found both a talented group of artists and a new place of "artistic spirit" to house it.

The Artist Collection is an ongoing art show at Jewelry Couture; it will begin with a collection of all the artists' works, and then solo and duo shows, featuring one or two artists, will be on display. Each show will go for 6 weeks, and a gala at the start of each show will begin those artists' displays. The artists being featured in the show are, according to Hallberg, "well-known and respectable Ventura County artists."

The many mediums to the show include water color, oil paints, oil pastel, and sculptures, but the artists weren't limited to a theme- Hallberg considers Jewelry Couture the "perfect place" for their art and will display the artists' true artistic talents throughout the show.

With brightly-lighted showcases, marble floors surfacing canvases and sculptures, and at a convenient location, Jewelry Couture is proud to host "The Artist Collection." Co-Owners of Couture, Sha and Shahar Sehati explained that although an art gallery has been an idea for Jewelry Couture for many years, finding the right pieces of art was challenge. "The environment and jewelry in general, needs art to compliment it. Art and jewelry are not strangers with each other and don't have to be," explained Sha. The Sehatis are confident that Couture will be an important part of Ventura's intimate art community, especially because "jewelry-lovers truly know and value art."

Presently, the artists featured in "The Art Collection" are Frances Elson, JoAnne Duby, Tasia Erickson, Andrea Vargas Mendoza, Chris Provenzano, Kay Zetlmaier, Virginia

Beale, Lynn Creighton, Christine Leong, Gina Niebergall, Steve Cook, Jim Fitzgerald, David Blackburn, and Susan Seaberry. The display of their work will go on until March 15.

The next gala, introducing a solo gallery of Frances Elson's art, will be on Saturday, April 6th from 5pm to 7pm at Jewelry Couture by Sehati. Jewelry Couture is open pm Mondays to Fridays from 10am to 7pm, on Saturdays from 10am to 6pm, and on Sundays from 11am to 6pm.

Hallberg, along with the Jewelry Couture's staff, believes that "The Artist Collection" is a way to bring out art from the community at a convenient, classy level. Moreover, their vision is to create a social hall for "fine art and fine jewelry" for the entire community. Hallberg notes, "I couldn't think of a more perfect place for this."

An Afternoon of Arts & Letters at the museum

Fused-glass artist Fran Elson and author Amada Irma Perez are the featured speakers in the new series *An Afternoon of Arts & Letters*, beginning at the Museum of Ventura County on February 10. Admission to both afternoon programs is \$5 for the general public and free to museum members.

In an illustrated session from 1:00-2:00 p.m., Elson answers the question she is asked most often, "How do you do that?" She discusses and demonstrates the wide variety of techniques she uses creating glasswork in her studio in Somis, such as fine art pieces, jewelry, tableware, home décor and accessories.

At 3:00 p.m. author Amada Irma Perez of Ventura presents *The Exquisite Art of Writing: Rediscover Romance and Enhance Family/Friend Relationships.* She promises "afternoon tea and a delightful writing experience" and will share intimate details from her letters, journals and diaries while guiding participants in new ways to express their sentiments.



Owner's Phyllis and Jen were all smiles at the Red Brick Gallery's 6th Anniversary Party and Artist Reception that was held on January 26 as they celebrated 6 years of art making and teaching in Ventura. The anniversary party featured specialty bites, an arty raffle and art demonstrations by local artists throughout the evening. www.redbrickart.com, Red Brick Gallery, 315 E. Main Street, 643-6400.

Art, a la Carte



Recently George Stuart was asked which of his more than 400 renowned *Historical Figures®* are personal favorites. See the 20 figures which hold special significance to him when the new spring exhibition Stuart's Choice opens on Tuesday, February 26. Visitors are invited to cast their vote on which of the Stuart choices they like most. The results will be posted in the Museum of Ventura gallery each week.

Stuart will elaborate on his 20 favorites in two accompanying monologues, held at 2 p.m. on Tuesdays, April 2 and May 7, in the Museum's Martin V. and Martha K. Smith Event Pavilion. Admission to each monologue is \$15 for the general public and \$10 for museum members. For reservations call 653-0323 x 7.

Stuart's *Historical Figures®* have gained recognition for their exquisite detail and historical accuracy. The Museum of Ventura County presents rotating exhibitions of the more than 200 George Stuart *Historical Figures®* in their permanent collection.

For more museum information go to www.venturamuseum.org or call 653-0323.

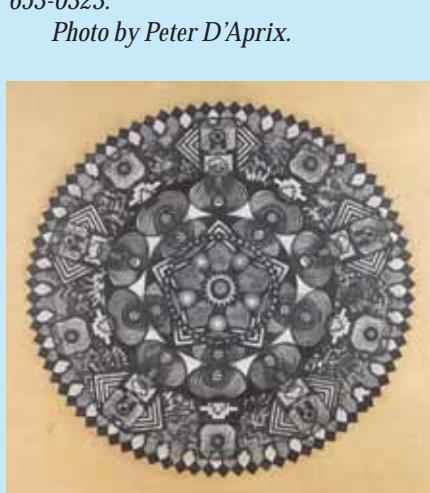
Photo by Peter D'Aprix.



Donuts, oil on canvas, by Jeanette Corona will be on display when the Buenaventura Art Association showcases works by the top 3 winners of the 6th annual Collegiate Emerging Artist Cup scholarship competition in a group show starting February 13 at its seaside Harbor Village Gallery.

Jeanette Corona, Paige Kilbourne and James Joseph Nagy placed first through third, respectively, in the March 2012 judging. They will attend an artists' reception at the gallery 5-8 p.m. on February 15.

Their recent works will be on display through March 11 in the gallery in Ventura Harbor Village. Open noon - 5 p.m. daily except Tuesdays. For more information about the exhibit or the nonprofit Buenaventura Art Association, call 648-1235 or visit www.buenaventuragallery.org.



The Buenaventura Art Association's downtown Ventura gallery is having a solo exhibition featuring the work of Richard A. Yusim, whose intricate, graphical mandala-like paintings also are musical metaphors.

Recent Work 2011-2012 will run through February 23.

He applies water-based paint and drawing and collage materials to compose complex and kaleidoscopic symmetrical designs in black and white on wooden panels.

"I discovered my dedication to art involves not only the exploration of my own passion for painting, drawing, music and film, but also using art education to help individuals with special needs," Yusim said.

He turned in 2010 to making art full-time and this show highlights the output of his first two years. Buenaventura Gallery, at 700 E. Santa Clara Street, is open noon-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

Focus on the Masters (FOTM) is pleased to announce that 10 artists have been selected for FOTM formal documentation by a distinguished jury of educators and artists for the 2013 season. As part of FOTM's popular Artist Spotlight interview series, now entering its 19th year in programming, an artist will be featured each month beginning with Bilian Fan, Tuesday, February 12, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The interviews, filmed before a studio audience, will take place at The Comedy Club at The Harbor.

The 10 artists have been selected from the 71 nominations FOTM received this year. Criteria for being selected for formal documentation include the artists' mastery of their craft, respect from their peers and their historic role in the life of our artistic community.

Admission to the Artist Spotlight interviews is free for FOTM members; general admission is \$10, seniors \$5. To support the production of Artist Spotlight, they enlist the help of generous donors who wish to sponsor or co-sponsor a Spotlight Interview. Full sponsorship is \$1,200; co-sponsorship is \$600. The sponsor's name is included on their website and in all publicity material regarding the artist.

AfterGLOW Special Events will be planned after each interview. These popular salon style gatherings offer supporters the opportunity to visit with the featured artist in an intimate setting while enjoying a light supper in the company of dedicated arts supporters. If you would like to host an AfterGLOW in your home or sponsor an artist, please call Mary Galbraith 653-2501 or Mary.Galbraith@FocusOnTheMasters.com



This 'n' That



Steve Tyrell, Judith Hill, Joseph Sohm and Roger Kellaway enjoying the moment at Visions of America. Photo by Holly Wiland.

Gershwin and Kellaway in Oxnard (and other places)

by Sheldon Brown

As part of the New West Symphony's 2012/2013 Master Series piece, a wonderful concert experience was had on January 25, by myself and Diane at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center. The New West Symphony orchestra was conducted by Brazilian born Marcelo Lehninger, the dynamic Music Director of the orchestra who was appointed in 2012.

The first half of the program was the Gershwin Concerto in F major for Piano played by acclaimed Los Angeles pianist Norman Krieger. This work was composed in 1925 and performed that same year when George Gershwin was only 27 years old. It was spectacular then, just as it is now.

The second half of the program was an unusual and groundbreaking photosymphony called "Visions of America". The work of one of the country's foremost photographers, Joseph Sohm, his photography was shown on a large screen behind the orchestra portraying an unfolding imagery of American Democracy through the lens of his camera. The inspired symphonic program accompanying the screen portrayal was composed and performed by renowned jazz pianist Roger Kellaway with lyrics by the very famous Alan and Marilyn Bergman, who's body of work everyone is familiar with. They were on hand, as they were last year for a concert held at our own Rubicon that included their work.

The songs, composed specifically for the symphony were performed by

two outstanding vocal artists, Judith Hill and Steve Tyrell, whose moving renditions were an integral part of this exceptional experience.

Joseph Sohm told the Breeze "The New West Symphony performance of 'Visions of America' was created and produced right here in Ojai - but exported to Boston and Philly. So it was an honor for Roger Kellaway, Alan and Marilyn Bergman and myself to bring it back to whence it came from, Ventura County."

This concert was, in part, sponsored by the Alliance for the Arts and our very own special Sandra and Jordan Laby, who's never ending generosity for the arts, is always greatly appreciated and adds so much to all of Ventura County's cultural experiences. The Concerts were introduced by US Senator Barbara Boxer and Alan Bergman actually conducted the Star Spangled Banner to begin the evening's Celebration of Democracy.

Besides being held in Oxnard the concert was also held at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza and Santa Monica's Barnum Hall. I mention this because it is such a shame that Ventura does not have our own performing arts center so that it becomes necessary for us to leave Ventura for these kinds of concerts. And you know that we hate to leave Ventura.

Even large orchestras playing at our wonderful Ventura Music Festival have to play at Ventura High School. Maybe someday.

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Violin and viola competition

Applications are now being accepted for the fifth-year Henry Schwab Ventura County Violin Competition. This exciting competition is open to young violin and viola players up to 25 years of age.

Sponsored by a grant from the Schwab Charitable Fund, this competition encourages young musicians and also furthers their musical education.

A total of \$3,000 in prize money will be awarded to contestants who compete in two events taking place as follows:

The preliminary audition will be held February 23, at the new Recital Hall at Ventura College. Three candidates will be selected. These three finalists will compete on June 22, at the new Ventura College Performance Arts Center, accompanied by the Ventura College Symphony Orchestra. The finalist will be honored by playing his or her concerto selection at a later date with the Ventura College Symphony Orchestra, directed by Prof. Robert Lawson.

Both competitions are open to the public; free admission to the preliminary competition; for the final competition there will be a charge of \$10.00 (general), \$5.00 for seniors/students. For further information or to request an application, call 525-0144.

Ventura Botanical Gardens wants you for a Valentine!

It's not too late to sponsor a Foot, or two or three or more, on the Demonstration Trail at the Ventura Botanical Gardens. What a surprise gift for the loved ones in your life who don't need another box of candy!

Join the fundraising Foot by Foot campaign and see your name on their website, in their newsletter and at the trail itself. Your name will be there permanently as a part of Ventura's history and so will the name of your Valentine.

Each foot is \$50. So far, donors have purchased feet as birthday gifts, wedding gifts, and holiday gifts, in honor of friends and family and in memory of loved ones. Many have even purchased feet for their dogs. Personalized certificates are sent for each donation and are suitable for framing, and they will be sending special ones for this Valentine's Day. If you respond by February 8th your gift will be there by February 14th. It's as easy as can be to place your order at VenturaBotanicalGardens.com.

A Red Tent in downtown?

On February 14, at noon in front of the Century Downtown movie theater The Red Tent of Ventura County will join with activists around the world for One Billion Rising, the movement to end violence against women and girls.

One Billion Rising began as a call to action based on the staggering statistic

that 1 in 3 women on the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. On February 14, 2013, V-Day's 15th anniversary, The Red Tent of Ventura County will join activists, writers, thinkers, celebrities, and women and men across the world as they express their outrage, demand change and rise in defiance of the injustices women suffer, demanding an end at last to violence against women.

Every woman wants to be assured that her children and grandchildren will have healthy, happy lives in the future. The Red Tent is the place where all this and more is cultivated.

To find out more about Red Tent go to www.meetup.com/TheRedTenofVenturaCounty.

Saturdays at the track

by Tom Marshall

Ventura BMX opened for the first time to a huge crowd on December 8th, 2012. Spectators lined the fence as hundreds of seasoned and new riders rode the latest addition to the Ventura Community Park. As a complete greenhorn to the sport of BMX I was pleased to witness the sport's family aspect during the grand opening. I wanted to get my two BMX rookie children involved in this sport as soon as possible. I had seen and heard enough to know that the BMX community was welcoming, encouraging, and positive.

My 6 year old son and 9 year old daughter initially wanted to ride the track on opening day. I feared they would be intimidated by the starting gate and the large number of riders. Serious deliberations ensued before we arrived at an agreement. Promising to take them and their bikes to the track the following Saturday was the agreed upon compromise. When we arrived at the track on opening day sans two-wheelers, the wisdom of our decision was confirmed. Their feelings of wonder and amusement were easily read on their beaming, wide eyed faces but apprehension loomed behind the muted excitement. The advanced riders thrilled my children with their aerial escapades and mastery of the track. The 3 and 4 year old riders were as fun to watch as the veteran racers as they inched up the inclines of the larger obstacles.

A week later we arrived a half hour before the track opened so I could fill out the necessary paperwork and figure out the details. A total of 5 minutes were spent at the registration table.

The two of them nervously made their way up the hill to the starting gate and viewed the track from a rider's perspective for the first time. Their ear to ear smiles masked the nervous energy both of my kids felt. They steadied themselves right before the drop of their first gate. Boom! The gate dropped and I couldn't get them off the track for 45 minutes. Thirst and fatigue eventually set in. I asked them a question as they rolled off the track even though I knew the answer. "It's awesome, Dad!" Yeah, I had a feeling they were going to say that.

We have spent a few Saturdays at the track over the last month. My children have been exhausted after each of the 2 hour practice sessions. Neither of them has any interest in racing right now but they are both gaining confidence and having loads of fun riding the track during practice. That's part of the appeal of BMX to me as a parent. It's a sport that can be enjoyed on an intermittent basis without a huge commitment.

I don't think our Saturday mornings will ever be the same again.