



VENTURA BREEZE

Your Hometown Paper

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Chief Darin Schindler has led the Ventura Police Department since April 2020. The Patrol Task Force is responsible for restorative policing while also offering support to people experiencing homelessness. Photos courtesy of the Ventura Police Department.

Looking Back—and Ahead—with Ventura Police Chief Darin Schindler (Part one of two)

by Amy Brown

Chief Darin Schindler is a career law enforcement professional, having started with the Port Hueneme Police Department in 1989, and then serving in a wide range of roles in the Ventura department since 1995, culminating in taking the reins as Chief of Police in 2020. When asked what drew him to a career in policing, he shared that he'd grown up watching shows like Adam-12 and Starsky and Hutch, and that in the 1980s, when crime rates were soaring, he wanted to choose a career where he could make a difference. "I liked the idea of doing good things that would benefit the community, putting bad guys in jail and helping people," said Schindler.

Today in Ventura, certain types of crime are on the decline, **Continued on page 2**



Fifteen year-old Liam Jones was introduced to go karting by his grandfather

by Patricia Schallert

Go-Karting is a motorsport that is enjoyed by people of all ages, but it is especially great for kids who are interested in racing. Young people can start competing in Go-Karting competitions at a young age because the sport has a low barrier to entry and has less regulations than traditional car racing.

When you look at some of the biggest names in Formula 1 racing, many of them started their motorsport career racing Go-Karts. Many of them still love to Kart and attribute their success on the racing circuit to Go-Karting.



Liam Jones, a 15-year-old sophomore at Ventura High School who runs in track and field events, was introduced to go karting because of his grandfather's interest in NASCAR and Formula 1 car race events.

Seeing this interest, his grandparents bought him a "Shifter Go-Kart" when he was 13, he began training and has been racing ever since.

Now he takes part in many Go-Karting events **Continued on page 3**

Fifteen year old Liam Jones



Liam takes part in many Go-Karting events around the country. Photos by Evan Brown photography and Patricia Schallert.

"Are you having this much fun in your neighborhood?"

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The second day of a diet is always easier than the first. By the second day you're off of it.

— Jackie Gleason

Local Government News

Westpark Skatepark Expansion Project moves into design phase

The City Council approved a contract with Grindline Skateparks on January 23 to design and construct the Westpark Skatepark Expansion Project. The agreement is the City's first-ever design-build contract and will increase the facility's size by more than six times from 3,200 square feet to 20,000 square feet.

In 2022, the City received a \$2 million grant from the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program (SPP) to expand the 29-year-old skatepark at 450 W. Harrison Avenue.

"Skateboarding is an iconic outdoor recreational sport in California, and our local community has long vocalized a desire to improve our skateparks," said Mayor Joe Schroeder. "Once this project is completed, it will be one of the best in the region, attracting locals and visitors alike."

The City conducted seven public meetings in 2019 and 2020 to gain the community's feedback and insights into what elements they would like upgraded at the skatepark. After the City was awarded the grant, two additional meetings were hosted to help staff develop criteria for a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP sought qualified skatepark design-build

companies who could incorporate the community's feedback into their proposals.

Grindline Skateparks has been operating for over 20 years, since 2002, and is based in Seattle, Washington. They have designed and constructed over 300 successful Skatepark projects nationally and internationally. Regional examples of their work can be skated in Anaheim, Bakersfield, Oceanside, and San Diego.

"We're excited to move into the next phase of this project and bring the community's vision to life," said Parks & Recreation Director Nancy O'Connor. "This project not only provides an upgraded design to the park, but also improves access to the park, additional landscaping, public art elements, and new lighting."

The City will host two more community meetings in the coming months to gather public feedback to create the skatepark's final design. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 15, at 6:30 p.m. at the Westpark Community Center.

This project is managed by the City of Ventura Parks & Recreation Department in partnership with Pacific Coast Land Design Inc. Project funding is provided by the Statewide Parks Development and Community Revitalization Program, California Department of Parks & Recreation, and California Natural Resources Agency.

Learn more about the Westpark Skatepark Expansion Project and upcoming community meetings at www.westparkskatepark.com.

Looking back—and ahead Continued from page 1

according to Schindler. Ventura's annual crime statistics are based on the FBI's National Uniform Crime



Reporting Program, defined as the number of crimes committed per 1,000 residents. The crimes are broken down into categories, and the report comes out each spring for the previous year. Schindler reports that preliminary numbers indicate that 2022 had some of the lowest reported crimes in 30 years. "That being said, it doesn't tell the whole story," said Schindler. "What we see so far is a reduction in Part I crimes which include burglary, theft, robbery, homicide, sexual assault, larceny and arson. What we've seen happening over



the last few years, however, is a more visible increase in quality of life issues." Many of these issues are directly related to homelessness, which rose by 25% during the pandemic, according to the county's Point in Time Count in 2022.

Schindler emphasized that homelessness is not a crime—however, some behaviors that can be affiliated with it are. "We focus on the behavior, not the homelessness. Sometimes these behaviors are criminal in nature, and when they are, it's usually lower level

As I See It by Sheldon Brown

Ventura art is alive and well. This is our first issue with a full page covering the Ventura Art Scene. We always have a full page of the Ventura Music Scene. For a city of our size we have some wonderful talent here.

Akbar Alikhan has been appointed as interim Ventura city manager. The City Council unanimously approved his contract, and he will earn about \$249,000 a year. A permanent appointment it is expected to take about 6 months. He was hired as assistant city manager in June, 2019.

The city manager is like the CEO of a large corporation. He basically runs the city. The city council hires the city manager and city attorney (and can fire them).

A Michigan man has been sentenced for assaulting law enforcement officers and inflicting bodily injury during the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Justin Jersey, 32, of Flint, was sentenced to 51 months in prison. In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Court Judge Rudolph Contreras ordered 36 months of supervised release and restitution of \$32,165.65. Good, I hope we continue to convict all of the people who tried to destroy our democracy, no matter who they may be.

Pope Francis was backed by the ceremonial head of the Anglican Communion and the top Presbyterian minister in calling for gays to be welcomed by their churches as he again decried laws that criminalize homosexuality as unjust. The three Christian leaders spoke on LGBTQ rights during an unprecedented joint airborne news conference. I certainly hope this helps change the attitude of those who oppose people who are not the same as them based upon their interpretation of the bible.

I was impressed with Biden's speech. Not even if I believe, or don't believe in what he said, but in the manner in which he delivered his speech. Very forceful and well presented.

With an especially cold and wet winter, a temporary shelter program run by the city of Ventura and River Community Church needed a cash infusion to keep going. The city approved an additional \$60,000 from the general fund to continue the effort through the end of March.

Now in its third year, the foul weather shelter plan, provides motel vouchers for homeless residents. It becomes available when temperatures drop below 45 degrees or when it rains.

The city used \$25,000 of community

development block grant money from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to pay for this season's operations. The program was launched because there was nowhere for homeless people to go when the weather turned bad.

The city reserves approximately 20 motel rooms in Ventura and gives priority to homeless people age 65 and older or who live with chronic health conditions. Rooms are located at Motel 6 on Harbor Boulevard and three sites on Main Street: Bayshore Inn, Loop Motor Lodge and Mission Bell.

To get a voucher when the program is activated, people must stand in line from 5-6 p.m. at River Community Church. The church is located at 859 E. Santa Clara St. The voucher includes a room and three meals a day.

On the government's 1099 form (that comes in 4 parts), it says "Do Not Cut or Separate Forms on This Page" even though the pages need to be separated to send to recipients. I hope I don't go to jail for separating the pages.

We encourage you to send your opinions to opinions@venturabreeze.com. Please limit them to about 300 words



crimes like trespassing, sleeping in public, and a lot of the crimes that you would attribute to vagrancy," he said. "We do everything we can to do to help the homeless." The police department has a range of resources to help address the public health and safety impact of homelessness issues in the area, with a more holistic approach that partners with Behavioral Health and local organi-



zations to provide outreach, support and advocacy. The department has a Patrol Task Force which is responsible for both restorative policing, and is focused on engaging to provide connections to services and outreach. Schindler said has the Patrol Task Force officers have relationships with nearly all unhoused individuals in the area. "We always try to offer assistance first. Sometimes we can't because they've committed a crime, and sometimes you have to offer assistance 20, 30, 40 or even 50 times before they're ready for it," said Schindler. One resource is the Community Intervention Court, which is focused on providing possible solutions for those caught in a cycle of arrests, and provides defendants charged with repeated vagrancy-related crimes the opportunity to participate in treatment and social service programs. According to Schindler, his officers frequently encounter the same people, often with mental health and/or alcohol or drug issues, who repeatedly come to the department's attention because of lower level crimes. "We will take enforcement action, but we understand that arresting somebody because of an alcohol problem and perhaps urinating in public, when they have nowhere to stay, doesn't solve the problem. It may solve it for that day but not long term. We're hoping to come up with a better long term strategy to deal with the issue."

Through the program with the court system, individuals can agree to a structured plan for assistance—for example if they need recovery treatment, they can opt for that instead. "They'll come up with the plan, and the idea is the person has to be willing to do it, and if they successfully complete the program, their charges can be dismissed. That can give them the opportunity to start fresh, while helping themselves get back to where they want to be," said Schindler.

Fifteen year old Liam Jones Continued from page 1

around the country with great success. Currently he is racing two times a month.

His championships include: 2021 Los Angeles karting championship Pro Shifter 2 - 3rd place in championship 1 win, 2 Podiums in Fontana. 2022 Los Angeles karting championship

Pro Shifter- 3rd in championship, 1 Win, 3 podiums also Fontana, Ranked #25 nationally out of 212 drivers 4th in the 2022 Skusa PKC, with 1 podium 2022 was his first season in the Top tier Pro class

Reflecting on his racing goals, Liam eventually wants to race cars and compete in NASCAR and Formula 1 racing.

When not physically working on his go kart, he uses realistic, simulated experiences on his computer that translates directly into concrete instruction, with time measured results. Many professional drivers use this program to improve their skills and stay competitive. Liam reports it is very fun and instructive. Liam's Go- Kart career began with shifting, understanding the use of the throttle, the sound of the engine when shifting happens, and to use both feet when he drives. Liam's most important skill that he had to learn was to stay focused in the simulations and in real racing events.

Even though Liam is still in school, he continues to work on his basic Go-Kart skills. With his coach and support team in Fontana, he is learning everything about his go kart, including how to recognize and fix it when there is a problem and build it, so it is most efficient when he's racing. He learns from other racers and uses his own successes and failures from his personal racing experiences.

Liam also learned rudiments of racing at a young age by going to Jim Hall's racetrack when it was in Ventura at the Fairgrounds. He learned to race on rented go- karts until his grandparents bought him the "Shifter" The Shifter is manufactured in Riverside and has a TM KZ R1-125 cc engine that hits speed of 50 on the raceway and can go over 100 mph.

The Shifter Go- Kart made by "Factory" is from Riverside and they specialize in Go-Kart designs for each individual driver. "Factory Karts", are a team of passionate and professional people whose goal is to bring karting to the mainstream sports market. They are also Liam's support team when he is in Fontana.

Shifters are some of the best Go-Karts to drive according to Liam and a great way to prepare young drivers for professional race car driving. Liam's support "Shifter team" help him keep his Go Kart in top shape. He's raced in New Orleans, Utah, and California.

With professional Go-Kart racing, there is a weight restriction as there is in professional car racing. The weight needs to be no more than 390 pounds and after each race, Liam and his Go Kart are weighted together. Liam keeps his weight in check by running track and cross-country events at Ventura High School.

A new Go Kart track is being built in Winchester, CA. Liam says the best kind of Go-Kart track incorporates every element a driver could want with blind crests, dramatic downhill elevations, sweeping-flowing corners built into the side of a double-mountain peak and a blend of slow, medium, and incredibly high-speed corners that will produce many overtaking opportunities. The result is a track with the look and feel of a small Formula 1 circuit.

Race season is from March to November.

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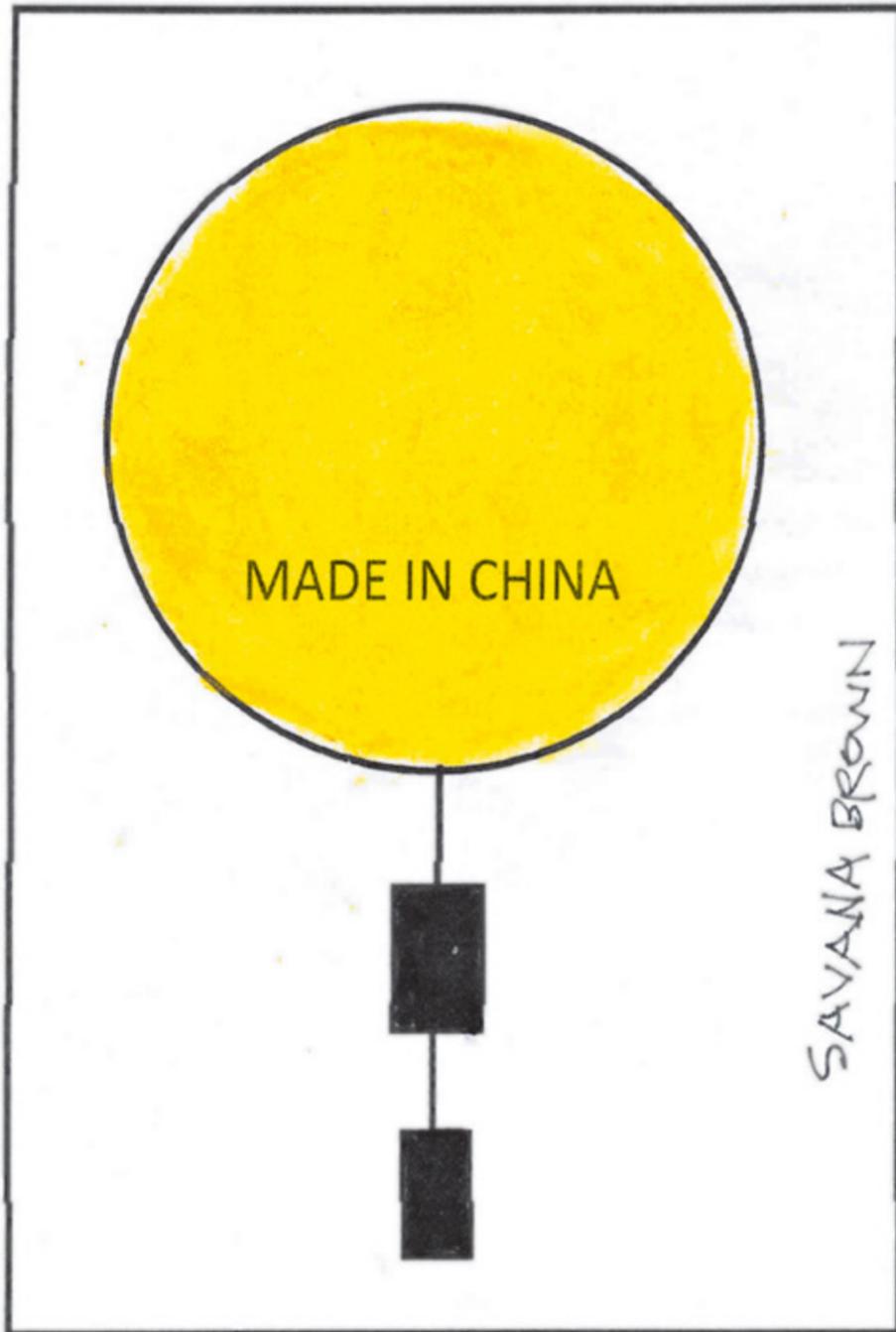
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David & Faith Friedlander started K&FT with a shared passion to help others build strong and healthy relationships. Photos by Patricia Schallert.

Friends celebrate Charles's seventh birthday

For over 23 years, "Kids and Families Together" has been serving foster, kinship and birth families throughout Ventura County. K&FT has become the leader in providing critical services and support to children, who have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, loss, and multiple placements.

Charles, a favorite staff, four-legged member, Bernese Mountain dog, celebrated his seventh birthday with staff members and their families on February 15 at Bright Spark Brewing on Market St. in Ventura. Charles also known as "Charlie" is a therapy dog and much loved by all the children.

Charles said "February 3 was my 7th Birthday. As I celebrate another year, I am filled with gratitude for my life, my

health, my family, my friends, my career and co-workers for belly rubs and treats and trips to the dog park. I am a very lucky and well loved pup."

Kids & Families Together is a not-for-profit support, education, and counseling resource center that provides services for individuals and families in foster/care, kinship care, legal guardianship, adoption, as well as birth families.

Kids & Family Together mission is to strengthen relationships by providing safe, supportive help that keeps family members emotionally connected to one another.

Kids & Family Together
 864 E. Santa Clara St.
 805-643-1446 www.kidsandfamily.org

County Ventura St. Patrick's Day Parade is on!

Entries for the Ventura Elks Lodge's 32nd annual County Ventura St. Patrick's Day Parade are now being accepted. The parade will commence at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 11, along Main Street in midtown Ventura.

This year's parade theme, "Let's Celebrate," gives the entrants free rein to pick their own entry themes, whether it's an upcoming event, a business anniversary or anything else that's worthy of a celebration.

Among the county's most popular annual community events, the St. Patrick's Day parade was a tremendous success last year, returning after two years off, to a route lined with happy families having a great time on a beautiful sunny day in Ventura. This year, the parade will run the same midtown route it debuted last year, downhill along Main, from Lincoln

Drive to Fir Street.

Entry to join in the parade is easy: Prospective entrants can simply go to the parade website and follow the basic steps to submit their forms and pay via PayPal. Entry deadline is Thursday, March 2; the first 100 entries will be accepted.

Our grand marshal this year is Ventura Elks Lodge No. 1430, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary! This beloved local lodge is a strong community organization that works diligently with our veterans and our young people, especially those in scouting programs, and has sponsored the St. Patrick's Day parade since the very first one in 1988!

St. Patrick invites you to be in the parade. Register online at www.venturastpatricksdaysparade.com.

If you have any entry questions, call parade coordinator Brian Brennan at 805-746-5955 or committee member Aaron Gaston at 805-340-8217. For other parade information, contact Jim Monahan at 805-340-1356 or Faye McDonald at funelda@yahoo.com or 805-340-7525.



The Bookmark

About Libraries and Friends

by **Mary Olson**

In celebration of **Black History Month**, author David Calloway will deliver a presentation of his book, *If Someday Comes: A Slave's Story of Freedom*. This historical novel fictionalizes the story of the author's enslaved Black great-grandfather. Calloway shares a unique perspective of the lives of his ancestors while providing an honest depiction of slavery. Born in Chicago, Calloway grew up in Palo Alto and Berkeley and now works and resides in Los Angeles. He holds an MFA in Film Production from UCLA and has worked as an Editor, Cinematographer, and Producer of features and television. Meet the author on Thursday, February 23, 1:30 to 3:30 pm at E.P. Foster Library. A Q&A and booksigning will follow the talk, with copies of the book available for sale.

Local Ventura County author **Olaf Engvig** will visit the Ojai Library at 6 pm on Thursday, February 23, and the **E.P. Foster Library** at 2 pm on Saturday, February 25, to deliver a talk on his book **The Ships That Built the West: The Scandinavian Navy, WAPAMA and VÆRDALEN**.

The Scandinavian Navy refers to ships and/or seamen from Scandinavia in the 1880-1945 time period. The US West Coast was built with the help of these ships and men. The book also shares the stories of related ships, such as the steam schooner WAPAMA and the restoration of the hybrid ship VÆRDALEN. Mr. Engvig will sign and sell his book at a discount after his pre-

sentation. Born in Norway, Mr. Engvig now resides in California. He holds a graduate degree in maritime history and received the Karl Kortum Maritime History Award in 2018.

These events are free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Ron Solórzano, Regional Librarian, at (805) 218-9146 or ron.solorzano@ventura.org.

Micaela Ellis, teen author, will visit the Hill Road Library on Saturday, March 4th, at 11:00 am to deliver a presentation on her book, **Autism Over The Years**.

In her presentation, Micaela will share her experiences as a young adult navigating autism in today's world. She hopes to expand community perceptions and educate others on some of the challenges that autistic people may face, as well as share the many opportunities for growth that are available to children and young adults like her when their needs are respected, understood, and celebrated. This event is free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Linda Cherry, Hill Road Librarian, 805-677-7180.

Ventura Friends of the Library Book Sale at the Vons at Telegraph & Victoria Saturday, March 18, 10 am to 3 pm Pick up some quality used books at bargain prices. We also have a large selection of Cds and DVDs.

Your purchases benefit the libraries of the city of Ventura.

Please stop by to shop and learn about the Friends of the Library. We are always looking for new volunteers – right now we especially need volunteers to help sort and categorize our incoming book donations. Please email friends@venturafriendsofthelibrary.org if you'd like to help.



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And next year you can enjoy their Valentine's party.

Photos by Patricia Schallert.

Ventura County Public Works Agency battles a growing problem of illegal dumping

Illegal dumping is a serious problem for the communities in Ventura County. Waste poses an environmental threat to both humans and wildlife. Illegal dumping, along with a \$3,000 fine plus clean-up costs and community service, can be avoided by locating the proper information on disposal and recycling options. Ventura County Public Works Agency's "Don't Dump On Me, VC!" campaign encourages the community to keep Ventura County beautiful by providing information on simple and easy ways to dispose of waste.

It's important to first determine the type of waste that is being disposed of. Examples of commonly found materials that cannot be put in the trash or recycle bin include mattresses and bulky items, electronic waste, and household hazardous waste.

For mattresses and bulky items, you can schedule a no-cost curbside pickup by calling your waste hauling service. This can often be included in your service at least once a year. Bulky items can include appliances, furniture, and electronic waste. If you are getting rid of a mattress, you may be able to donate it, recycle it or even have it picked up. The Mattress Recycling Council runs a recycling program called

ByeByeMattress, and households are allowed to drop off old mattresses and box springs at collection sites.

Electronic waste includes electronic products that are unwanted or do not work. This includes televisions and computer monitors, printers and scanners, fax and copy machines, video game consoles, and cell phones. These products can contain heavy metals that contaminate the environment and should not be disposed of in trash or recycling bins. E-waste can be recycled at numerous waste collection facilities throughout Ventura County.

Household hazardous waste is generated by a resident in a household while performing household activities and maintenance at your home. Some products that can pose a threat to the health of humans, animals, and the environment include antifreeze, batteries, drain cleaners, glue and adhesives, oven cleaners, and paints. To dispose of or recycle household hazardous waste properly, you can make an appointment at the Pollution Prevention Center. The County of Ventura holds about 9 monthly events during the year for the collection of hazardous waste.

"Waste is not only an eyesore on the Ventura County landscape," said Chris Kurgan, Director Roads and Transportation. "It harms our communities and costs taxpayers millions of dollars in clean-up costs, pollutes surface and groundwater, and poses safety hazards to people, especially children. If you witness illegal dumping in progress, please report it today."

More information and direct links to resources provided in Ventura County can be found at <https://www.vcpubliworks.org/dont-dump-on-me/vc/>

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The River Community Church honored those who collaborate with them throughout the year.

“We are better together”

The River Community Church, located at the corner of Kalorama and Santa Clara streets in downtown Ventura, is all about their community. On Sunday, February 5, at their Annual Church Meeting they honored those who collaborate with them throughout the year. From Mario Avilo (Downtown Ventura Clean Ambassador) and Scott Gulick (Downtown Ventura Safety Ambassador) to Community Partners Bruce Whitton (Bent Nail Services) and Jim Rice and Linda Jordan (Peirano’s Market).

The River showed their appreciation to those who give back to the city and to those who The River serves. Long-time donor awards were given to Charnell Smith of Aloha Steakhouse, Sharon Palmer of Main St. Meats, Orestis Simos and Alex Montoya of Water’s Edge and Mayur Patel of The Bayshore, Loop and Mission Bell Motels.

Leona Rollins, from the City of Ventura, shared her gratitude to The River for helping with the Foul Weather Shelter during the months of December 2022 through March 2023. The River opens their doors as an intake facility when the weather becomes inclement, and makes sure those being housed for the night get to the designated hotel and receive meals from partnering churches during their stay.

Mayor Joe Schroeder was another guest who learned of the many opportunities where The River meets the needs of those in the city. Sometimes it is the weekly drive-through Food Pantry, while other times it may be a hot lunch or a bag of food for the day to the under-resourced in the area.

Mayor Schroeder stated “ Just before I left for college my father walked me over to a neighbor’s house that we were not close

to. She was an old widow and looking back I’m sure she struggled financially. While this was my only free week that summer my father thought it would be a good idea if I painted Mrs. Williams house for a very small amount. He told me that neighborhoods fail and therefore a town can fail if we don’t individually reach out and help each other. He believed that the highest form of giving was donating without being asked.”

“When I look at the “community giving” at the River church the social impact is obvious. I asked the congregation how we can activate more citizens so the Ventura community would continue to improve. The answer was, one person at a time. Jim Duran is the Lead Pastor and his example of community giving should inspire all of us to help our neighbors.”

Sunshine and Dustin Cheek were recognized for their faithful efforts in volunteering in this area.

Other non-profit organizations that The River partners with are Tender Life Maternity Home and The City Center Transitional Living, and those attending heard a personal testimony from a resident from each program.

That’s when you see where housing the homeless and their children are so important to helping change lives. Also honored for going above and beyond in their volunteer efforts were Ted Alan (Tender Life) and Dale Harmon (The City Center) who are currently overseeing major renovations at each of the facilities.

Lead Pastor Jim Duran stated, “We are better together”, because he knows that The River cannot operate on its own and is thankful for all those who are in collaboration with these three non-profits. If you would like more information about The River Community Church, visit their website at TheRiverCommunity.org.



The Chamber held a ribbon cutting at Cynthia Bullard Photography. Located just off Market Street and Goodyear Ave. at 1891 Goodyear Ave, #607. “I know that you have options in choosing the photographer that perfectly suits your needs. I strive to make your experience with me a remarkable one. I have been photographing in and around Ventura County for well over 30 years.” Photo by Michael Gordon.

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Senior Living



Some seniors were moved to tears of joy.

Kindness and compassion towards seniors on Valentine's Day

by Carol Leish, MA

"We at Assisted Home Care & Hospice," according to Natalie Uribe, who is the Home Care Specialist at Assisted Home Care & Hospice, "were happy to be participating our first year in handing out Valentines to seniors living at various senior living communities. Pre-Kindergarten through 5th Graders participated in coloring Valentine Day cards during Kindness Week, which was the last week of January, 2023. The elementary schools in Ventura that participated were: Will Rogers, Montalvo, Portola, and Loma Vista.

"Some seniors were moved to tears of joy, after seeing the cards. They reminisced about when their children were going to elementary school. The cards said things, such as: 'You are wonderful'; 'You are so special'; and, 'Remember that you are loved today.'"

As Principal Perez, of Will Rogers Elementary School said, "It was a coincidence that making Valentines for seniors did occur during Kindness Week of January 23, 2023-January 27, 2023. And, we become kind and caring by doing kind and caring things each day, not just during one week."

"These Valentines from students," according to Uribe, "shine some light on the kids, and how they are impacting the lives of seniors. We want to thank all of the schools for helping out to share love on Valentines Day throughout the community, since this is about both seniors receiving love and about the children expressing love towards them. We will be giving to the various schools

videos of the senior receiving the Valentines in order for the children to see the impact that they had had upon them." Let's continue to spread love and joy to others throughout the year.

Gut microbes may affect motivation to exercise

by Brian Doctrow, Ph.D.
from NIH Research Matters

Exercise provides many health benefits, including protection from many diseases. Some people seem to enjoy physical activity more than others. But the mechanisms affecting people's motivation to exercise are not well understood.

Researcher swabbing a petri dish with bacteria to study the microbiome of mice.

An NIH-funded team of researchers, led by Dr. Christoph Thaiss at the University of Pennsylvania, set out to identify factors affecting exercise performance in mice. Their study appeared in Nature on Dec. 14, 2022.

The researchers first measured how long mice running on a treadmill took to

Continued on page 8



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Senior Living



“Do I get a lollipop after?”

Which vaccines do older adults need?

As you get older, a health care provider may recommend vaccinations, also known as shots or immunizations, to help prevent certain illnesses.

Talk with a doctor or pharmacist about which of the following vaccines you need. Make sure to protect yourself as much as possible by keeping your vaccinations up to date.

Flu — short for influenza — is a virus that can cause fever, chills, sore throat, stuffy nose, headache, and muscle aches. Flu is very serious when it gets in your lungs. Older adults are at a higher risk for developing serious complications from the flu, such as pneumonia.

The flu is easy to pass from person to person. The virus also changes over time, which means you can get it again. To ensure flu vaccines remain effective, the vaccine is updated every year.

Everyone age 6 months and older should get an annual flu vaccine, but the protection from a flu vaccine can lessen with time, especially in older adults. Still, you are less likely to become seriously ill or hospitalized with the flu if you get the vaccine. A flu vaccine is especially important if you have a chronic health condition such as heart disease or diabetes.

There are flu vaccines designed specifically for older adults. The CDC recommends that people age 65 and older receive a higher-dose flu vaccine or an adjuvanted flu vaccine (one with an additional ingredient called an adjuvant that helps create a stronger immune response). These vaccines are potentially more effective than the standard flu vaccine for people in this age group. Talk with a health care provider or pharmacist about which

vaccine is best for you.

Pneumococcal disease is a serious infection that spreads from person to person by air. It often causes pneumonia in the lungs and it can affect other parts of the body. Older adults are at higher risk than younger people of getting very sick or dying from pneumococcal disease.

The CDC recommends that all adults age 65 and older get pneumococcal vaccination. This vaccine will help protect you from getting a serious infection, including pneumonia. There are multiple forms of the pneumococcal vaccine: Talk to a health care provider to find out which is best for you. You can also visit the CDC's Pneumococcal Vaccination webpage to learn more about the types of vaccines that are available.

Tetanus (sometimes called lockjaw) is caused by bacteria found in soil, dust, and manure. It can enter the body through a deep cut or burn.

Diphtheria is a serious illness that can affect the tonsils, throat, nose, or skin. It can spread from person to person.

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, causes uncontrollable, violent coughing fits that make it hard to breathe. It can spread from person to person.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Most people get vaccinated as children, but you also need booster shots as you get older to stay protected against these diseases. The CDC recommends that adults get a Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) or Td (tetanus, diphtheria) booster shot every 10 years. Ask a health care provider when you need your booster shot.

Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox. If you had chickenpox, the

virus is still in your body. As you get older, the virus could become active again and cause shingles.

The shingles vaccine is safe, and it may keep you from getting shingles and PHN. Healthy adults age 50 and older should get vaccinated with the shingles vaccine, Shingrix, which is given in two doses. (Zostavax, an earlier shingles vaccine, is no longer available in the United States.)

Before getting any vaccine, talk with a doctor or pharmacist about your health history, including past illnesses and treatments, as well as any allergies. A health care provider can address any concerns you have.

It's a good idea to keep your own vaccination record, listing the types and dates of your shots, along with any side effects or problems.

Studying the retina's close connections to the brain for clues about cognitive health and the risk of brain disease

In recent years, Koronyo-Hamaoui, Ph.D., M.S. (a professor in the Cedars-Sinai Department of Neurosurgery) and her colleagues have discovered the first evidence of the specific diagnostic signs of Alzheimer's disease-related amyloid beta protein plaques in retinas from Alzheimer's and mild cognitive impairment patients. In a series of several NIA-funded innovative studies, her team found increased retinal amyloid plaques and associated retina blood vessel and nerve cell degeneration in patients compared to age and sex-matched cognitively healthy individuals.

Her team also created a low-cost, non-invasive technique to detect Alzheimer's protein plaques at a very high resolution in the retinas of living patients. Additionally, they developed a modified version of a powerful eye imaging tool — the scanning laser ophthalmoscope — that includes a wider look at previously overlooked peripheral regions in the retina. They combine this scan with giving research participants an oral dose of curcumin, a natural compound that lends zest and orange color to Indian spices such as curry and turmeric. Curcumin is naturally drawn to amyloid beta, the protein that comprises Alzheimer's disease plaques in the brain, making it easier for the researchers to spot.

“You can look at the retina and see things at the molecular, cellular, and vascular levels, like protein aggregates and vascular abnormalities,” said Koronyo-Hamaoui. Her team is exploring if optical retinal imaging with curcumin could be a cost-effective test to identify Alzheimer's pathology, including in people with mild cognitive impairment. “We uncovered parallels between the effects of Alzheimer's disease in the retina and brain, and that specific changes in the retinal regions mimic changes in the brain and cognitive status,” she added.

Koronyo-Hamaoui's team is collaborating with neuropathology experts across the United States, Europe, and Australia to expand their studies into Alzheimer's retinopathy and visual deficits to see if a similar test can detect buildup of the protein tau, another hallmark of the disease, in the

retina. Their hope is to develop affordable, accessible retina-based scanning technology that might someday be used in combination with routine cognitive and brain imaging for the earlier detection of Alzheimer's and related dementias, Parkinson's disease, and stroke.

Untreated vision loss can be especially devastating. Using data from the Health and Retirement Study, NIA-funded scientists recently made the case for including vision impairment as a risk factor for dementia, estimating that nearly 100,000 dementia cases in the U.S. could possibly have been prevented with existing vision treatments.

Older adults stop driving, they stop going out, they have difficulty reading, and they don't exercise as much because they're afraid of falling. Untreated vision problems really reduce social interaction, emotional well-being, and physical activity, which are all risk factors for cognitive decline.

Gut microbes

Continued from page 7

exhaust themselves and how much the mice voluntarily ran on a wheel. They found that the makeup of the gut microbiome — the trillions of microbes living in the gut — predicted these values better than genetic, metabolic, or behavioral traits. When the researchers used antibiotics to eliminate gut microbes, the mice got exhausted earlier and ran less on the wheel.

Motivation is controlled in part by a region of the brain known as the striatum. Neurons in the striatum are activated by the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine activation provides a feeling of reward. The team found that dopamine levels in the striatum increased after exercise in normal mice, but not in microbiome-depleted mice. Treating mice with a drug that blocks dopamine signaling had the same effect on exercise as depleting the microbiome. Conversely, a drug that activates dopamine signaling restored exercise capacity in microbiome-depleted mice.

Activating certain sensory neurons in the gut restored exercise capacity in the microbiome-depleted mice. But when dopamine signaling was blocked, so was the effect of these neurons. The researchers then tested mice engineered to lack these same sensory neurons. They found that the mice had impaired exercise capacity like that of microbiome-depleted mice.

Next, the team screened various compounds produced by gut microbes to see which ones could stimulate gut sensory neurons. They identified a class of compounds called fatty acid amides (FAAs). Supplementing the diets of microbiome-depleted mice with FAAs restored their exercise capacity.

Several FAAs are known to activate a receptor on sensory neurons called cannabinoid receptor 1 (CB1). The team found that blocking CB1 had the same effect on exercise as microbiome depletion. When CB1 was blocked, dietary FAA supplementation did not restore exercise capacity. But activation of dopamine receptors still restored exercise capacity even when CB1 was blocked.

These results suggest that microbiome-produced FAAs in the gut stimulate sensory neurons. Signals from these sensory neurons lead to increased dopamine levels in the striatum during exercise. Dopamine, in turn, enhances the desire for exercise. The findings suggest that the motivation to exercise — or lack thereof — might depend on the state of the gut microbiome. The motivation for exercise, then, might be enhanced by stimulating this sensory pathway.

“If we can confirm the presence of a similar pathway in humans, it could offer an effective way to boost people's levels of exercise to improve public health generally,” Thaiss says.

This research was supported in part by NIA grant DP2AG067492.

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ombudsmanventura.org





A tail of a good time awaits you.

Shell-Ebrate all things mermaid

A tail of a good time awaits mermaids and mermen as they return to the sea for the 8th Annual “March Is Mermaid Month” at Ventura Harbor Village, a mer-mazing, month-long celebration. All events are free to the public with the exception of vendor activities, dining, and retail merchandise.

Visitors across all oceans can meet to enjoy a myriad of mermaid activities. Kicking off Mermaid Month is a Kid’s Free Scavenger Hunt, which runs from March 1-March 31, 2023. Pick up the scavenger hunt sheets at the Mermaid Gallery, which houses original mermaid art and tons of mermaid merchandise in Ventura Harbor Village, and return for special prizes. Participants are encouraged to dress in festive mermaid attire.

Taking center stage is a series of ocean-inspired special events and live mermaid meet and greets scheduled on Saturday, March 4 and Sunday March 19 from noon to 3pm (weather permitting). Lovers of the sea can revel in seaside fun, including interactive booths, a mermaid craft station for kids, chalk art, mermaid dance party, live entertainment, and more! Vendors will showcase their skills for visitors including face painting and exotic bird photo ops on March 4 and 19, and glitter tattoo and hair braiding on March 19.

On both March 4 and 19, members of Surfrider Foundation Ventura Chapter will be present at an interactive booth to share tips and information about keeping the oceans clean. On March 19, prior to the special event, beach lovers of all ages can also participate in the Surfrider Foundation’s family-friendly beach clean-up at Harbor

Cove Beach, Surfers Knoll Beach, and Harbor beaches.

In addition, kids will delight in a mermaid craft station on both March 4 and 19 presented by Las Posas Children’s Center (LPCC) Inc., which operates school aged childcare centers on six campuses in Ventura Unified School District, creating a joyous atmosphere for children.

Visitors can view the wonderful artistry of Lysa Ashley as she creates mesmerizing mermaid art in front of Le Petit Café & Bakery on March 19 and catch Village makers with themed-crafted items.

DJ Darla Bea will put her own spin on Mermaid Month with a lively dance party on March 4 and 19. Come dressed up in sea-inspired attire for a family-fun dance party. Show off fin-tastic moves for a chance to win bubble wands and more! A walking mermaid will lead kids in fun activities from noon- 3pm.

Sway to the live tropical tunes of Anacapa Ukulele, local ukulele musicians who will perform along the Village’s Seaside Promenade on March 4 from noon- 3pm. Also, plan to bask in the sunshine with the melodic tunes of steel drums on Saturdays (March 4, 11, 18th and 25 from noon – 3pm) along the Village’s Seaside Promenade.

Kids can go in search of sirens(aka mermaids) in the sea! Climb aboard the pirate ship to look for mermaids below and then slide down to climb up again! Free kid’s activity on the Village Main Lawn on Saturday, March 4 from noon- 3 pm, next to Deep Sea Wine Tasting Room. And again, on Sunday, March 19 from 1- 4 pm. (weather pending).



Olivia has returned again to have her babies at the Olivas Adobe as she does every year.

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The Pet Page



Dedicated to Scamp

■ Bobi, a dog in Portugal born in 1992, has set a Guinness record as the world's oldest dog at more than 30 years old. Bobi has some mobility issues, and his eyesight is declining, but his owner says he still enjoys playing with the four cats with which he shares his home

■ The SDF stated "We are heartbroken to witness the widespread destruction throughout Turkey, Syria and the surrounding region caused by a massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake. Our thoughts are with all those affected as rescuers respond to join the search efforts."

"Seven canine disaster search teams trained by SDF have deployed alongside rescue teams from around the world in response to the earthquake and we send our deepest gratitude to all the two- and four-legged rescuers that answered the call for help."

National Disaster Search Dog Foundation

6800 Wheeler Canyon Road
Santa Paula (it seems like Ventura)

■ **Lee Pickett, VMD, practices companion animal medicine in North Carolina.**

Q: I adopted a pit bull who had lost one ear in the fighting ring, so I named him Van Gogh. He is a healthy, sweet, gentle guy who loves to snuggle. When we lie on the couch watching television and my arm drapes across his chest, I sometimes notice that his heart beats in an unsteady rhythm.

It beats fast for a few seconds, then slowly for a few seconds, and then the cycle repeats. I am concerned that Van Gogh may have heart disease because he is relaxed and unstressed when I feel this irregular heart rhythm. Should I take him to his veterinarian or a veterinary cardiologist?

A: Without examining Van Gogh, I can't say for sure. But my guess is that when he is calm, he develops respiratory sinus arrhythmia, a normal condition that commonly occurs when a dog's heart rate decreases with relaxation.

Not all arrhythmias, or irregular heart rhythms, indicate heart disease. In respiratory sinus arrhythmia, the heart rate quickens during inspiration and slows when the dog

exhales and pauses between breaths. The term "sinus" refers not to the nose but to the sinoatrial node, also called the sinus node, the heart's natural pacemaker located in the right atrium.

To convince yourself that Van Gogh's changes in heart rhythm constitute the normal sinus arrhythmia that occurs when a dog is relaxed, take him for a run. While his heart rate is still elevated from the exertion, feel his chest. You should feel steady, evenly spaced heartbeats.

There's an adage in veterinary medicine that "cats are not small dogs," because the two species differ in significant ways. This is but one example. When a cat relaxes, the heart continues to beat in a steady pattern. Any arrhythmia, even a respiratory sinus arrhythmia, is abnormal in a cat.

If you are in doubt about Van Gogh's arrhythmia, ask his regular veterinarian to listen to his heart and perhaps perform an electrocardiogram, or ECG.

■ **Cats have a better quality of life if you play with them**

by **Andrei Lonescu**

Earth.com staff writer

Scientists have long argued that play is an indicator and promotor of animal health and welfare. Now, by applying in-depth empirical methods to analyze data gathered from around the world, a team of researchers led by the University of Adelaide in Australia has found that playing with your cat can also nurture closer human-cat bonds.

To investigate play-related factors associated with welfare in cats, the scientists devised an online survey in consultation with veterinarians, animal behaviorists, and cat owners, aiming to measure factors such as cat quality of life, cat-owner relationship quality, behavioral changes, and problem behavior prevalence.

"Our survey results, based on responses from 591 cat guardians from 55 countries, indicated greater cat playfulness and more types of games played were significantly associated with better cat quality of life," said study lead author Julia Henning, a PhD student in Feline Behavior at Adelaide.

"Also, longer amounts of daily play, greater number of games, both cat and guardian initiating play,



Seven canine disaster search teams trained by SDF have deployed.

Scamp Club

(Scampclub pets are not for adoption.)

This is Maggie. She will be three-years-old on April 29. She loves to play on the beach and play at Marina Park with her friends. She likes going to restaurants and going on boat rides. When she's all brushed out and groomed, she can be mistaken for a lion.



Join Scamp Club

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

Lost pet? Go to LostCatVenturaCounty.com or LostDogVenturaCounty.com - free websites for finding and posting when you've lost or found a cat or dog.

and heightened guardian playfulness were also associated with better quality cat-guardian relationships."

Moreover, exclusive indoor housing for the cats was significantly linked with both increased cat quality of life and better cat-owner relationship in comparison to cats with outdoor access. "Behavioral changes that indicated stress, frustration, or unease were reported when play was absent. Therefore, we can conclude play may be a very important factor in assessing and maintaining cat welfare," Henning explained.

However, as senior author Susan Hazel (an expert in Animal Behavior and Welfare at the same university)

admitted, self-reporting surveys such as this often have significant limitations. "Cat lovers' answers may be prone to respondent and recall bias and limited in their ability to assess behavior. Participants who dedicated their time and effort on a voluntary basis are more invested in their cat's care than the average cat guardian. Therefore, responses may not be an accurate representation of the general population."

Further research is needed to clarify how much and what kind of play is most efficient for improving cat welfare.

The study is published in the journal *Animal Welfare*.

Forever homes wanted

Hi: I'm Trinity, a snuggly, happy, playful pup rescued from a shelter when my time was almost up. The shelter had me listed as tri-color for breed, but CARL thinks I might be Terrier X. When I grow up I may be small to medium sized (15 - 40 lbs). In spite of a less-than-ideal start in life, I'm grateful to be in a fantastic foster home with a foster mom who has lots of experience with puppies! Since I'm just a puppy, children in the home must be at least 6 years of age. If you're ready and able to give me a lifetime of love and wonderful memories, please fill out an application to meet me. Canine Adoption and Rescue League C.A.R.L. info@carlvc.org



Boomer is an affectionate 6-year-old pittie! Boomer loves leaning into humans for pets, curling up in small cozy spaces, and toys! As a pup, he never learned how to live with other cats or dogs, so would be best as the only animal in the home. Boomer loves people though and even knows "sit!" VCAS Boomer (A804722)
Pet Link: <https://www.vcas.us/vi-ewan-2/?ida=A804722>



The Pet Page



30-year-old dog in Portugal sets new world record.

Police Reports

by Cindy Summers

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

Assault with a Deadly Weapon

On February 1, at approximately 11:00 pm, the Ventura Police Command Center received a 9-1-1 call reference a fight that had just occurred in a parking lot to an apartment complex. Responding officers arrived within minutes and located the victim who was suffering from severe injuries to his face. Ventura City Fire and AMR paramedics attended to the victim on scene and transported him to a local hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries.

The investigation revealed the victim was confronted by the suspect in the parking lot to the apartment complex. The victim feared for his safety and ran for help knocking on doors at nearby apartments. The suspect chased the victim down and began punching the victim and kicked him several times in the head while he was on the ground. The suspect stomped on the victim's face leaving an impression of his shoe. A nearby resident broke up the attack and the suspect fled in a vehicle.

Officers following up on the case located surveillance video from the apartment complex and identified the suspect as a resident, 25-year-old Ventura resident Coy Duvernay. Officers located the suspect and evidence of the crime in an apartment, and he was arrested. The suspect was booked for Assault with a Deadly Weapon at the Ventura County Jail.

Assault with a Deadly Weapon Arrest

On February 14, at approximately 3:00 pm, the Ventura Police Command Center received several 911 calls about a male subject swinging a knife in the Vons shopping center parking lot. Officers responded to the area and detained 38-year-old vagrant Ramon Carbajal, identified as the subject with the knife.

During the investigation, it was discovered that Carbajal was in the parking lot, swinging the knife when he approached several juveniles and began slashing at them. He struck one of the juveniles in the back, not injuring her. The youth fled into a local business and

asked to call the police.

Carbajal was arrested for Assault with a Deadly Weapon and booked at the Ventura County Jail. A search of the Ventura County Superior Court website shows that since 2019 Carbajal has been convicted of ten misdemeanors and felonies, including Vehicle Theft, Vandalism, Petty Theft, Vehicle Tampering, Brandishing with a Knife, Resisting Arrest, Disturbing the Peace, and Identity Theft.

Shooting Homicide

On February 19, at about midnight the Ventura Police Command Center received a call of a subject disturbing outside a residence in the 11000 block of Mimosa St. As officers were responding to the call the reporting party called back and stated there was now a shooting victim that was inside of their residence.

Officer arrived on scene and located the victim, a 25-year-old male, who suffered from a gunshot wound to the chest. The victim received advanced life support from Ventura City Fire and AMR and was transported to Ventura County Medical Center where he succumbed to his injuries.

The ensuing investigation revealed that there was a possible altercation in the front yard of the reporting persons residence prior to the shooting. Currently the suspect is outstanding, and the investigation is continuing.

Harbor Patrol Blotter

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

Wednes 2/1

10:35am, while on patrol in the Fireboat observed a large tree in the surfline at the Santa Clara River breach. Officers were able to take the Hazard-to-navigation en tow and released near powerplant, in less populated waters/beach.

Friday 2/3

10:04am, dispatched to smoke near 1300 Spinnaker Dr. Officers responded in Fireboat and searched the South and A-Basin of the harbor. Unable to locate any smoke or fire. VFD continued the search on land towards Riverhaven.

6:45pm, received a mayday call from the wife of fisherman and his son with a disabled

17ft aluminum vessel in the sandtrap, against the North Jetty. Officers responded in the Fireboat, passed tow line and pulled vessel off the rocks. The skipper was able to restart outboard & officers escorted back to the launch ramp.

Saturday 2/4

8:05am, received request for found property, a lost surfboard that was found at Surfers Knoll. Officers received the property earlier in the week and returned it.

12:47pm, received request for a tow from Leo Robbins support boat. Officers responded in Fireboat and towed the vessel back to city sailing center docks.

7:55pm, received request for a tow from a disabled electric boat near the fuel dock. Officers responded in Fireboat, assisted vessel back to the keys.

Sunday 2/5

9:50am, received report of burglary at boutique in Harbor Village. Patrol responded with VPD, found evidence of disturbance from last night.

10:20am, received report of a sick sealion at Hollywood Beach. Relayed contact info for Channel Islands Marina Wildlife Inst. (CIMWI) to report incident.

3:23pm, dispatched to a fall at VWM G-dock. Officers responded with VFD / AMR to 63 y/o female who injured shoulder & collar bone. Patient transported.

Monday 2/6

11:40am, received report of female transient living on park bench at VIM. Officers responded, contacted female, convinced her to move along.

Wednes 2/8

11:11am, received report of a petroleum spill in the A-basin. Officers responded in Fireboat and thoroughly searched the area but were unable to locate a sheen.

11:33pm, closing the West end of the launch ramp with delineators and caution tape. The ramp will be used to dispose of damaged cement docks from the Keys Thursday 2/9

11:53am, received report of a transient screaming near Island Packers. Officers responded, found subject who was still yelling, did not engage, no laws violated.

Friday 2/10

8:45am, received report from City of Ventura that they have a survey vessel inspecting the Ventura Pier for damage from recent storms and large surf.

9:16pm, while on patrol in Rescue B19, officers issued warnings for fishermen hoop netting in prohibited areas of the Harbor Entrance.

Saturday 2/11

3:07am, received report of an attempted break-in at the Village Market in VHV. Officers responded with VPD to the call and investigation. VPD handled the call

10:30am, received request for a boat ride from an oil platform worker off Carpinteria. Advised that was out of our area and not a service we provide.

4:16pm, dispatched to unconscious person in the Ventura Marina Community. Officers responded with VFD/AMR call upgraded to cardiac arrest. Responders performed CPR and all other resuscitation efforts, but unfortunately were unable to restore pulse and or breathing.

Monday 2/13

10:35am, received report of holding tank removal service possibly pumping into Harbor waters at VWM C-dock. Responded, found subject with suspicious activity but no sewage in the water. Issued warning no PFD, discharge into water

VENTURA GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

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Gem, Mineral,
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MARCH 4 & 5, 2023

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by Pam Baumgardner
VenturaRocks.com

Between local promoters and the Canyon Club, there are a lot of great shows coming to the Oxnard Performing Arts Center. I don't need to tell you that it's pretty great to be able to take in a show locally as opposed to traveling to Agoura Hills, plus they have quite a mix of genres to choose from including Grupo Bronco on Friday, February 24; a Pink Floyd tribute band, Which One's Pink on Saturday, February 25 (opening acts are Prima Donna Rising & Zack Kirkorkian); the Ventura Music Festival presents Mnozil Brass on Thursday, March 2; The 3 Divas: Pops, Kuh & Jaya on Saturday, March 4; and Los Lobos on Sunday March 12 with special guest Gaby Moreno.

Namba Arts welcomes Ventura City Blitz on Saturday, February 25 for an evening of live rock, and eclectic music from several local artists including Sean Alan, Aaron Burch, The Late Knights, Tyler Indigo and more, then the following weekend, it's a night of reggae with Bombafiya and Singular Nature on Saturday, March 4 followed up with a Sunday show featuring cool improvisational music from Boom Duo.

The Museum of Ventura County will play host for another brilliant Camerata Pacifica show, Emi Ferguson and Ruckus Play Bach. With a slew of period instruments including theorbo, baroque guitar and bassoon, viola da gamba, and harpsichord, they'll explore Johann Sebastian Bach's genius from multiple angles, bringing to life the limitless colors and nuances of his music.

Punk in the Park is coming up fast with Pennywise, Suicidal Tendencies, the Bouncing Souls, Strung Out, Fear, Dwarves and more. There will be two stages (they say set times will not overlap) and the day includes 3 hours of unlimited beer tastings. The event falls on Saturday, March 25 with tickets on sale through the promoter's website at PunkInThePark.com.

Quick Notes: Tickets are on sale for Night Demon's record release show at Bombay's on March 16 with Romper opening; tickets are also on sale for Boots & Brews starring Chris Young on May 7th at Surfer's Point Live; the reschedule Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore at the Ventura Music Hall is Thursday, February 23; it's old school punk night with Roman's Weirdos at Gigi's on Saturday, February 25; Shawn Jones along with Sam Bolle play the Ojai Underground on Saturday, February 25; Margarita Villa will have music on Sunday, March 26 with CRV (acoustic); Swing Shift play the Sportsman in Camarillo on Sunday February 26; Angelo Moore's Dr. Madd Vibe and the Missing Links returns to the Grape for a date with

Barrelhouse Wailers on Friday, March 3; and The White Buffalo returns to Ventura for a show at the Majestic Ventura Theater on Saturday, March 4.

Do you have any music-related news or upcoming shows you want help publicizing? Please send all information short or long to Pam@VenturaRocks.com, and for updated music listings daily, go to www.VenturaRocks.com.

Music Calendar

For more listings, additional times and genres go to VenturaRocks.com

Aqua Bar (Crowne Plaza Hotel)

450 E. Harbor Blvd., Ventura

Sat 2/25: Jacob Marquez & the Good Vibes

Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts

8585 N. Ojai Rd., Ojai

Sun 2/26: Neave Piano Trio

Sat 3/4: Ash Grove Alumni

Boatyard Pub

1583 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura

Wednesdays: Frank Barajas

Thursdays: Jim Friery; Bluegrass Jam

Fri 2/24: Mac and D

Sat 2/25: Billy Mac & Friends

Sun 2/26: Ken Devoe

Tues 2/28: Karen Eden & the Bad Apples

Café Fiore

66 S. California St., Ventura

Wed 2/22: Donna Greene

Fri 2/24: Instone

Sat 2/25: Heathers on Fire

Cantara Cellars

126 N. Wood Rd., Camarillo

Fri 2/24: Colette Lovejoy

Sat 2/25: Ray Jaurique

Fri 3/3: The Raw Honey Band

Sat 3/4: Whiskey Business

The Cave

4435 McGrath St., Ventura

Wed & Thurs: Bobby Apostol

Fri & Sat: Warren Takahashi

Copa Cubana

Ventura Harbor Village

Tuesdays: Blues Tuesdays

Thursdays: Glenn Bennet

Deer Lodge

2261 Maricopa Hwy., Ojai

Sat 2/25: Roses Pawn Shop

Wed 3/1: Cass McCombs & Band

Sun 3/5: Ismay featuring Tim Bluhm & Little Wings

Downtown Ventura Stage

California and Main Street

Fri 2/24: Whole Hog

Four Brix

2290 Eastman Ave., Ventura

Sun 2/26: Sloan & Dave

Fri 3/3: Ignition

Sun 3/5: Déjà vu Three

The Garage

1091 Scandia Ave., Ventura

Sat 2/25: Irie Nationz

Gigi's Cocktails

2493 Grand Ave., Ventura

Sat 2/25: Roman's Weirdos, Black Adidas, The Indignants

The Grape

2733 E. Main St., Ventura

Tues: The Gratitude Jazz Jam

Thurs Happy Hour: Tom Etchart & Friends

Fri Happy Hour: Fred Kaplan

Wed 2/22: Kent Rollins

Thurs 2/23: Yayennings Trio

Fri 2/24: D.on Darox & the Melody

Joy Bakers

Sat 2/25: Heart of Blues (2 pm);

Barrelhouse Wailers (8 pm)

Wed 3/1: Jim Fox Trio

Thurs 3/2: SicNarf

Fri 3/3: Angelo Moore's Dr. Madd

Vibe and the Missing Links w/

Barrelhouse Wailers

Sat 3/4: the Azar Lawrence Experience

Sun 3/5: Vantage Point feat. Simon

Phillips & Jeff Babko

Keynote Lounge

10245 Telephone Rd., Ventura

Thursdays: Open Mic

Fri 2/24: Reign

Sat 2/25: Old School

Leashless Brewing

585 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura

Thurs 2/23: Mark Masson

Fri 2/24: Morie & the Heavy Hitters

Sat 2/25: Brian Detremont

Sun 2/26: Keyth G

Fri 3/3: Hefty Cheiftain

Sat 3/4: Carla Belotti

Sun 3/5: Kris Simeon

Lucas Sellers Wine

330 Zachary St., Moorpark

Sat 2/25: Lauren & Silas

Sat 3/4: Jon Ranger

Lucky Fools Pub

75 E. High St., Moorpark

Fri 2/24: Doc, Pete & Tiff

Majestic Ventura Theater

26 S. Chestnut St., Ventura

Wed 2/22: Eric Johnson

Sat 2/25: Thy Art is Murder

Sat 3/4: The White Buffalo

Manhattan

5800 Santa Rosa Rd., Camarillo

Wed 2/22: Robert Van

Fri 2/24: Tour Support

Sat 2/25: Jeanne Tatum Trio

Margarita Villa

1567 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura

Sun 2/26: CRV (acoustic)

Mrs. Olson's

2800 Harbor Blvd., Oxnard

Sat 2/25: Magnificent Bastards

Museum of Ventura County

100 E. Main St., Ventura

Sun 3/5: Emi Ferguson and Ruckus

play Bach

Namba Arts

47 S. Oak St., Ventura

Fri 2/24: The Listening Room Redux

Sat 2/25: Ventura City Blitz

Sat 3/4: Bombafiya, Singular Nature

Sun 3/5: Boom Duo

Ojai Underground

616 Pearl St., Ojai

Sat 2/25: Shawn Jones w/ Sam Bolle

Ojai Valley Brewing

307 Bryant St., Ojai

Sat 2/25: River Ripley

Onyx Bistro

2390 Las Posas Rd., Camarillo

Fri 2/24: Raw Honey Band

Sat 2/25: Brenda Carsey

Orozco's de Ventura

839 E. Front St., Ventura

Saturdays: V.I.P.

Oxnard Performing Arts Center

800 Hobson Way, Oxnard

Sat 2/25: Which One's Pink

Thurs 3/2: Mnozil Brass

Sat 3/4: The 3 Divas: Pops, Kuh, Jaya

Poseidon Brewing Co.

5777 Olivas Park Dr., Ventura

Sat 2/25: Barrelhouse Wailers

The Raven Tavern

1651 S. Victoria Ave., Oxnard

Fri 2/24: Jayden Secor

Sat 2/25: Holgers Heros

Ric's Restaurant Sports Lounge

2500 Las Posas Rd., Camarillo

Tuesdays: Tour Support w/ Kurt &

Bob

Sun 2/26: Karyn 805

The Shores

1031 Harbor Blvd., Oxnard

Fri 2/24: The Nuestro Band

The Sportsman

4426 Central Ave., Camarillo

Sun 2/26: Swing Shift

Strey Cellars

951 N. Rice Ave., Oxnard

Sun 2/26: Barfly

Sat 3/4: 805 Social Club

Taqueria Jalisco

4275 Tierra Rejada Rd., Moorpark

Fridays: Jim Friery

Topa Topa Brewing

104 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura

Wed 3/1: Davey Miller Jazz

Topa Topa Brewing

341 E. Ojai Ave., Ojai

Wed 2/22: Tom Collins

Topa Topa Brewing

4880 Colt St., Ventura

Sun 3/5: The Trivle Omdobble

The Twist on Main

454 E. Main St., Ventura

Thursdays: Davey Miller Trio

Fri 2/24: Brobots

Sat 2/25: Steve and Sally Williams (2

pm); Acoustic DNA (8 pm)

Sun 2/26: Jetlemons (11 am); TD

Lind (3 pm)

Vaquero y Mar

435 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura

Sundays: Mariachi

Tuesdays: The Sea Hunter

Wednesdays: Tribal Me

Fridays: Conjunto Zacamandu de

Tomas Herrera

Ventura Music Hall

1888 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura

Wed 2/22: Hirie, Kbone & Johnny

Cosmic, Vana Liya

Thurs 2/23: Dave Alvin & Jimmie

Dale Gilmore with the Guilty Ones

Fri 2/24: Fidlur

Sat 2/25: Melvin Seals & JGB

Wed 3/1: Walter Trout

Sat 3/4: Nick Colletti

Mon 3/6: Skeggs

The Vine (Sam's Place)

308 E. Ojai Ave., Ojai

Saturdays: Smitty and Julija and

Friends

Fri 2/24: Toni Jannotta Jazz

Fri 3/3: TD Lind & the Aviators

Winchesters

632 E. Main St., Ventura

Music Thurs 5:30; Fri 7 pm; Sat 2

pm; Sun 3 pm

Thurs 2/23: Big Adventure

Fri 2/24: Bobby Hart & Ralph Carter

Sat 2/25: Illunis

Sun 2/26: Ray Jaurique

Thurs 3/2: Karen Eden & Billy Mac

Fri 3/3: LA Jazz Connection w/ Davey

Miller

Sat 3/4: Steve and Sally Williams

Sun 3/5: Medicine Hat

1901 Speakeasy

740 S. B St., Oxnard

Fri 2/24: Teresa Russell, Stephen

Geyer

Ventura Music Scene



Progeny, an exhibit of visual art by children of WAV artists will open at the WAV Gallery on March 3, 2023. The show is curated by WAV resident artist **Sarah Calvin** and will mark the thirteenth anniversary of the opening of the WAV in 2010. WAV is an innovative community that includes 55 live/work spaces for artists, writers, musicians and other mediums.

The First Friday opening will include numerous local vendors with their arts and crafts for sale in the gallery's courtyard. There will be live music and food trucks to enhance the exhibit's opening at 175 S. Ventura Avenue in the heart of Ventura's art district.

"While once viewed as the controversial new addition to

Ventura's growing downtown cultural district, Venturans have come to eagerly anticipate the next display of WAV artists individualism," noted Calvin.

Progeny will focus specifically on visual art and includes works by both children of charter members as well as children of artists who have joined the community since its opening.

1st Place - Natives on the Hill - **Bonny Butler**

At Studio 99 @ The Bell Arts Factory

Plein Air Open Competition
Featuring works by **Laura Jespersen**, coordinator of Plein Air Ventura County

Many thanks to juror, **Sharon Weaver**, who chose our award winners and congratulations to these wonderful artists:

1st Place - "Natives on the Hill" -

Bonny Butler

2nd Place - "Jays Grove" -

Michelle Nosco

3rd Place - "House at Ojai Valley" -

Bebe Betker

HM - "Ojai Pink Moment" -

Sylvia Oltion Shapiro

HM - "Sunrise Walk" -

Patti Handfinger

HM - "California" -

Cathy Winton

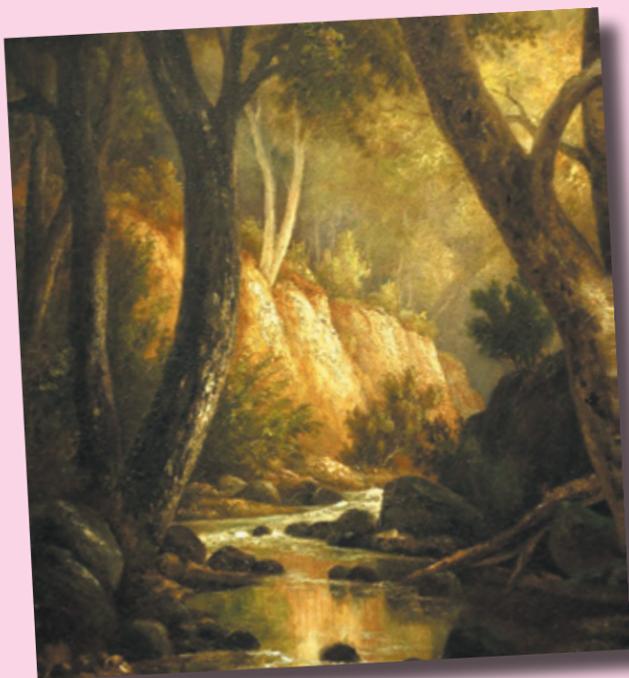
Exhibit Runs Now thru February 25, 2023

The entrance to Studio 99 at the Bell Arts Factory is around the back of the building off of Wall St. Open hours: Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 4pm



Vita Art Center presents two new exhibits that will run through March, Women's History Month. The main gallery features AKIN with Mother and Daughter abstract painters, **Ann Thornycroft** and **Ariel Dill** while the Nucleus Gallery features the work of mixed media artist **Deborah Faye Lawrence**.

Vita Art Center 28 E. Main



Finding the Light Works from MVC's (Museum of Ventura County Permanent Collection). Beyond influencing shape and color, artists use light to impart meaning to viewers. These works from MVC's collection showcase how light can elicit emotion, tell stories, and convey meaning.

Ventura Art Scene



Fox Fine Jewelry presents Side by Side, an art show with **Thomas Hardcastle** and **Bobbi Balderman** from April 20th to July 30th, with an Art Reception on April 22nd from 5 - 7 pm.

Thomas Hardcastle grew up in Ventura County, attending Villanova and later Ventura College, where he studied art. His artistic appetite whetted, at 23 he moved to the artist inspired community of Ojai. His love was art, but supported himself working as a hairdresser.

Show information: <https://www.foxfinejewelry.com/pages/side-by-side>

Fox Fine Jewelry 560 East Main Street



For this issues Lighter Breeze, go to www.venturabreeze.com

Ventura events

by Ana Baker

The Ventura Senior Men's Group continues to meet for a social lunch and program at the Poinsettia Pavilion in Ventura on the first and third Tuesday each month. Men of all descriptions are always welcomed to stop in to sample our shenanigans. Lyle Hotzler at 805-341-9820

Wanna Play Bridge? Join us for ACBL sanctioned duplicate bridge games every Tues., Wed., and Thurs. at 12:30. All levels of play and we will guarantee to have a partner for you if you need one. Lessons are available. Contact: Richard 805-850-8011 or Rose 805-659-9223 or buckleyrose357@gmail.com. All Welcome.

Feb. 22: The Channel Islands Chapter of the Embroiderers' Guild of America (CICEGA) will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday at the United Methodist Church, 291 Anacapa Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010. This month we will have a class on Blackwork embroidery. For more information, e-mail president@channelislandsega.org or visit our website at <https://www.channelislandsega.org>.

Feb. 22: The College Area Community Council will hold a Zoom meeting on Wednesday at 7 p.m. The upcoming meeting will present an overview of the city's new active transportation plan. An invitation and link to the meeting will be sent to everyone on the CACC mailing list. Visit the College Area Community Council website @ <https://cacventura.com> to learn more, to be added to the mailing list, or to access a link to the Zoom meeting."

Feb. 23: The Ventura County Library (VCL) is pleased to host, in celebration of Black History Month, an author talk and book signing with David Calloway to discuss If Someday Comes: A Slave's Story of Freedom at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday. Following the presentation, Calloway will participate in a Q&A about his book. Copies of the book will be available for purchase, and a book signing following the author's talk. This event is free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Nancy Schram, Director, at (805) 677-7158 or nancy.schram@ventura.org.

Feb. 23: Chabad of Ventura invites the community to join us for a unique and meaningful event, the Mega Challah Bake: Purim Edition, on Thursday, at 6 pm. The event will bring together women of all ages and backgrounds to learn and experience the traditional Jewish bread, challah and pastry, hamentashen baking. The event will be held at Poinsettia Pavilion, and registration is required. To register or for more information, please visit www.chabadventura.com/challah or contact Chabad of Ventura at chabadventura@aol.com, 8056587441.

Feb. 25: Rincon Point is renowned as the Queen of the Coast and one of the premier surfing spots in the world. That is only a fragment of its rich history. It was the site of a scandalous love-triangle murder in the 1870s, a rickety highway on stilts in the 1910s, and a raunchy honky-tonk in the 1920s. But that's not all. Join us at the Museum of Ventura County on Saturday from 3-4:30 p.m. for a discussion with authors Stephen Bates and Vincent Burns. Their book,

Rincon Point, uncovers the history of this famous and storied surf spot.

Mar. 1: Beach City Neighbors and Newcomers (BCNN) - Women's social organization serving women in Oxnard, Ventura, and Port Hueneme. Wednesday from 9:30 - 11:15 a.m. at the Ventura Yacht Club, 1755 Spinnaker Dr. The speaker, Kellie Tyndall, is a Senior Victim Advocate at the Ventura County District Attorney's office and a member of Ventura FAST (Financial Abuse Specialist Team). For more information, visit www.bcnnwomensclub.org.

Mar. 5: Old-Time Country Bluegrass Gospel Music Assoc. Sunday, 2-4 p.m. at the Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd. Live Music on stage. Jamming in the Canada Room. Free Admission. Free Parking Open to the Public. For more information, call 805-517-1131 or visit Facebook: OTCBGMA.

Mar. 5: Open house tours of the 1892 Dudley Historic House Museum will take place on Sunday from 1 - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Please call (805) 642-3345 or visit the website at dudley-house.org. The museum is located at the corner of Ventura's Loma Vista and Ashwood Streets (197 N. Ashwood).

Mar. 18: Ventura Friends of the Library will hold a Book Sale at the Vons at Telegraph, and Victoria 6040 Telegraph Rd. from 10- 3 p.m. Quality used books at bargain prices. Large selection of CDs and DVD's. Contact: Mary Olson (805) 223-1187.

Mar. 25: Channel Islands PC User Group (CIPCUG) Online and Live at our temporary site Ventura County Computers 2175 Goodyear Avenue, Unit 117 Ventura (805) 289-3960. Discussion, Tutorial, and Q&A sessions centered around Computers, email, the Internet, social media brokers such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google, and Yahoo. Events begin at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday. All CIPCUG events may be attended online. Due to limited space, live attendance is reserved for members. Details for connecting to online events are emailed before the event. To receive connection instructions, please sign up on our website at: <http://www.cipcug.org> cipcug club website

April 12: The Ondulando Fire Wise Community will hold their first community-wide meeting from 6 - 7 pm at the Church of the Foothills, 6279 Foothill Road. Doors open at 5:30. All residents of Ondulando are invited to come and learn about the benefits of a Fire-Wise Community: How to harden your home against wildfires, how our neighborhood can be more fire resilient, and how the cost of home insurance can be reduced for Fire Wise Communities. The program provides resources to help homeowners learn how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together to take action now to prevent losses." (VRFSC, Feb 2023). For more information search Firewise USA.

Ojai news and events

Chamber On The Mountain, a chamber music concert series in Ojai, presents the GRAMMY®-nominated Neave Trio on Sunday, February 26, 2023, at 3:00 pm in Logan House (located at the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts in Upper Ojai). Tickets \$30.00 at ChamberOnTheMountain.com.

Audience members are invited to meet the artists at a lovely outdoor patio reception following the performance, with a special wine tasting by Stevenson Oaks Vineyard & Winery.

Since forming in 2010, Neave Trio - violinist Anna Williams, cellist Mikhail Veselov, and pianist Eri Nakamura - has earned enormous praise for its engaging, cutting-edge performances, and has emerged as one of the finest young ensembles of its generation.

Neave Trio has performed at many esteemed concert series and at festivals worldwide, including Lincoln Center's "Mostly Mozart Festival," Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Smithsonian American Art Museum, 92nd St. Y, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Norfolk and Norwich Chamber Music Series (United Kingdom), and the Samoylov and Rimsky Korsakov Museums' Chamber Music Series in St. Petersburg (Russia).

Celebrating its Tenth Season, the chamber music series brings internationally recognized musicians to Happy Valley in Upper Ojai - home of the Besant Hill School, the Happy Valley Cultural Center, and the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts. For more information visit www.ChamberOnTheMountain.com.

"Elemental" featuring the work of six Ojai artists (Ingrid Boulting, Carlos Grasso, Gretchen Greenberg, Susan Griffin, Thomas Hardcastle, and Mariana Peirano) will be on display the month of April at the Ojai Art Center.

The four classical elements: earth, water, air, and fire have been interpreted in art, philosophy and science since ancient times presenting a wealth of inspiration as well as broad parameters for interpretation. See how six local artists interpret these elements...

Opening reception is Sunday April 16th from 3-5 PM.

A Patio Pop-Up Show of recent work will be featured Sat. & Sun., April 15 & 16, from 11AM - 4PM.

The Ojai Art Center is located at 113 So. Montgomery St. in downtown Ojai.



Cheryl Connally—the dream still lives within her and her family.

Island Adventures just beyond our shores

by Ross Williams

We often can take for granted that which is always there. All my life I've looked out across our ocean and the

Anacapa Islands have stared back at me. Warm sunny days, cold wind-swept mornings and hazy sunsets as I watched the orange glow of daylight recede into cool pinks and purples silhouetting those islands.

The distance, so close and yet so far has made the islands just a background of summer days on the beach. And on very special days when driving down the grade you can see out to forever and the islands dot the horizon. But for most of us, we don't see the adventure. The wild. The truly magical experience that lies just out of reach.

In 1967, when Bill M. Connally looked out across the ocean expanse, he saw so much more. He saw a treasure for all that yearned to be explored and shared. He saw adventure and beauty and he wanted to be its docent. The fact that within a mere 20 miles you could leave the hustle and bustle of Southern California and find an island that belonged solely to nature and time was pure magic to Bill.

With that the Island Packers was born. In fact, it became a family affair, for the first two years the boat actually did not have an outboard motor and so Bill's sons, Mark, Kirk and Brad took turns rowing the boat to and from the islands while Daughter Cheryl served snacks to the patrons. With kids in tow, Bill and wife Lillian Mae created a path to the islands for those who had never been before, connecting them to an untouched nature and the islands to the mainland for all to enjoy.

55 years later the Island Packers is still doing what it does best, scheduling trips to and from the islands, setting up whale watching tours and connecting the public to the magic of the Anacapa Islands. In the 70's they became the official Concessionaire to the Islands with deep ties to the Channel Islands National Park Staff. The Island Packers themselves have grown to a staff of over 50 employees and pilots out of both Ventura Harbor and Oxnard Harbor. The options have changed as well. You can kayak through the kelp forests and camp on Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands. You can hike from Prisoners Harbor to Scorpion Cove or just enjoy lunch away from the rest of the world. Adventure is only an hour away.

Cheryl Connally is still at it. The dream still lives within her and her family. Her son Jason now captains a boat out of Oxnard harbor. When asked what her favorite part of being part of the Island Packers story is, she replied, "Being on the ocean, seeing marine life in the wild. Thousands of dolphins dancing near our vessels and welcoming us to the islands. Whales almost year-round too. Every day is special and a different experience even after all these years. I love the islands so very much. I feel the ocean frees your soul, you are released of all the day to day worries and challenges. I love seeing our passengers get that experience and bringing joy to their day exploring the Channel Islands."

You can reach out to the Island Packers to schedule your next adventure.

Island Packers Cruises
1691 Spinnaker Dr #105B
Ventura, CA 93001
805-642-1393

And book online at Islandpackers.com



Show Time

A View from House Seats

Decisions Come With A Price

by Shirley Lorraine

Santa Paula Theatre Center's 2023 season promises myriad opportunities to reflect on life-changing occurrences, starting with *The Children* by Lucy Kirkwood, now on the main stage. A multiple award nominee, the play offers a deep and thought-provoking look at possibilities after a disaster with far-reaching effects. For a serious subject, there are quite a few truly humorous moments interlaced, which offer a welcome relief from what could easily be a heart-stopping situation not outside the realm of possibility.

Imagine a disastrous event occurring at a nearby nuclear plant that causes widespread consequences. Now imagine you are a retired nuclear scientist grappling with a full understanding of the situation and yet the all-too-human desire to protect oneself and one's family in an insular way. Your altered life is now shattered by a prior co-worker's request to step away from comfort for the greater good. What do you do? How do you weigh your needs with the needs of many others?

The Children, directed by Santa Paula Theatre Center Artistic Director Jessi May Stevenson, is a masterful piece of theater brought to life by three extraordinary actors. Leslie Upson appears as Hazel, a retiree acclimating slowly to a new way of life. John Webber is her husband Robin (the two are married in "real life"), also a retired scientist, who goes to great lengths to adjust and protect Hazel from some hurtful realities. Their world is upended by Tracy Hudak as Rose, a fellow scientist, former

co-worker (and more), who appears on their doorstep after a 30-year absence with what is ultimately discovered to be a life-changing request.

The three are a force to behold, drawing the audience in from the first moments. We laugh with them, feel their inner struggles, hurt with them over the turns their lives have taken, and ache with them for the weight of their future.

The staging is tightly choreographed to allow unencumbered movement in a small space. This cast is near perfection in their portrayals. Timing is paced well. Subtleties in the background are spot-on, and each of the three actors gives a strong, compelling performance.

I left the theater with a profound sense of obligation to think deeply about my priorities and pondering what would I do if I were able to make a difference on this huge a scale.

SPTC's season will continue with a series of plays that will delve into a plethora of human situations which pose emotional challenges for consideration. If you are not already a season subscriber, I highly recommend this season as a time to become one.

In addition to the main stage productions, there are concerts, backstage readings and opportunities to witness works in progress. The Santa Paula Theatre Center offers a wide range of stagings to suit many varied interests. Check the website often for current offerings and updates.

www.santapaulatheatercenter.org or (805) 525-4645.

shark tooth from her scar and felt terrible for what she represented to Nanisca, but Nanisca said she had nothing to do with the terrible experiences of her past. This however, was another reason why Nanisca wanted to end General Oba and soon after the Agojie along with male warriors ambushed the Oyo camp.

Nanisca was unable to find Oba during the battle, and the Oyo ended up retreating having been overcome by the Agojie. Nawi was no where to be found once it ended, so Nanisca returned to Dahomey believing she had been killed in the battle. Nawi had been knocked unconscious and was captured with several other

Agojie and had been loaded on a wagon to be taken to the slave port for sale by Oba. One of the Agojie was able to escape and went back to Dahomey to tell Nanisca what had happened.

King Ghezo had just appointed Nanisca as the Woman King, and was going to host a celebration to announce it to the kingdom, so forbid her to go and try to rescue Nawi. Though recently discovered, Nanisca's family bonds were strong, so she defied his command and set out with others who volunteered to go to the slave port and rescue Nawi and the others.

Runtime 2h 15m

Streaming Spotlight by Cindy Summers

The Woman King

- Netflix



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

"The Woman King" is based on incredible true events from the 1800s involving an all-female elite force of warriors known as the Agojie that guarded the African Kingdom of Dahomey. A new young king Ghezo (John Boyega), had just taken power. Their enemy, the Oyo Empire joined forces with the Mahi people to raid Dahomey villages and sell their captives to European slavers. The powerful Oyo was led by General Oba Ade (Jimmy Odukoya) and had new guns and horses, but King Ghezo had his own fearsome weapon: the Agojie led by General Nanisca (Viola Davis).

In the Kingdom of Dahomey, the Agojie were respected and revered and the Dahomey people were not aloud to look upon them, rather bow their heads in honor of their service to the king and kingdom. They lived in their own palace, where men were never allowed, where they trained and lived comfortably among each other thriving on traditions of dance and culture in a world set apart. They trained in hand-to-hand combat, using knives, machetes and spears as

well as some limited use of ball and musket firearms.

In order to fight with the Agojie, young women from the Dahomey and those captured in raids from other villages were offered the opportunity to train and had to past a final test in front of the king at the palace. A young girl named Nawi (Thuso Mbedu) was dropped off at the palace after her father tried several times unsuccessfully to wed her off to older men. Nawi was stubborn and always questioned authority, but was taken under the wing of Izogie (Lashana Lynch) who tried to keep her out of trouble and in good graces with General Nanisca.

Nawi was first to complete the brutal challenges of the final test and caught the eye of the king as well as recognition from Nanisca. Nawi had a chance opportunity to speak with Nanisca alone, who explained the she was only trying to keep Nawi safe and from harm with her harsh rule. Nanisca noticed that Nawi had a scar on her left shoulder and was very taken back. Many years before Nanisca was captured and raped repeatedly by Oba and his men and ended up pregnant. She hid her pregnancy, had a baby girl and Agojie warrior took her away after she was born.

Unknown to anyone else Nanisca had made a small cut on the baby's shoulder and placed a small shark tooth inside to always be able to recognize it was her if their paths ever crossed again. Nawi was shocked when she was able to pull a small

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34 and 30 points in back to back wins by junior guard. Photo by Lyn Golden.

Skyler Knight accomplished the improbable

by Tom Marshall

Steph Curry has two game stretches like this. High School players dream of one game like this in their career. 34 points in a tightly contested varsity girls basketball game is a respectable point total for a team. There's only 32 minutes in these games and defense at the high school level is suffocating. Skyler Knight accomplished the improbable.

The Ventura High School junior guard poured in 34 and 30 points in back to back wins over Oxnard and Dos Pueblos. She pulled off this offensive feat while playing her brand of smart, relentless defense. Skyler set the Ventura High single game record for 3 pointers in the game at Oxnard High with eight behind the arc buckets. Her team needed both wins to lock up the league championship and she delivered the goods. Two road games in three days. 64 points in 64 minutes of competitive late season high school basketball.

The vibe inside the Oxnard High gym during Ventura's 63-57 win reached Christmas morning as a 6-year-old levels. Both squads refused to give in and the crowd could feel the collective desire to win.

"Setting the VHS single game record for 3s in that win is my favorite moment playing basketball," Skyler said. That exciting win could only be celebrated for an evening as the team had to prepare for a trip up the coast and a game against Dos Pueblos 2 days later. A win there would lock up the league title for the Cougars. Skyler dropped 30 points for an encore in a 57-42 win.

Clutch is an overused word when describing athletic achievements. It implies an athlete has ice in their veins or doesn't and disregards the work an individual must put in to have the confidence and will to take the big shots. "Repetition and hard work give me confidence during games. There is always room to improve," Ventura's points leader said. Shooters shoot is another phrase that is often overused and misunderstood. Players need to feel their coach's support and confidence in them. "I missed my first 5 shots in a game and Coach Larson told me to keep shooting," recalled Skyler. Hard work and repetition builds confidence. A coach's unwavering support, confidence, and an excitable crowd during a tight game will bring out clutch moments in the great ones.

Every high school athlete dreams up an ideal athletic senior year by the end of their freshman year. Skyler's response didn't surprise me but it did offer insight into her team first mentality, "My ideal senior year includes going undefeated in league, maintaining and improving our great team relationship, and a few offers to play college basketball." There's wisdom in that statement. Winning teams always have good players but the most talented team doesn't always win. The best team wins.

Ventura fielded a relatively young team this season and should be a major force next year. Skyler Knight has another year to go in her Ventura High basketball career but she has already left her mark on the school's record books.

protect the iconic hillsides to the north of Ventura from development.

The Conservancy hosted top musical talent at annual concerts in Arroyo Verde Park, raising funds to permanently protect local open spaces. The first conserved parcels of land were in the Ventura River corridor. Community volunteers worked alongside VHC's staff to restore and care for conserved lands, setting a tradition of community involvement and volunteer support that continues today.

Ventura Hillside Conservancy became Ventura Land Trust in 2017 to reflect a broadened vision to protect open spaces countywide. The organization was accredited by the Land Trust Alliance in 2019, joining a network of more than 400 accredited land trusts across the nation that have demonstrated a commitment to professional excellence and to maintaining the public's trust in their work.

VLT now holds 3,877 acres of land in seven preserves across Ventura County—including the hillsides that inspired the organization's founding, now known as Mariano Rancho Preserve. Ventura's first large-scale nature preserve, Harmon Canyon Preserve, opened to the public in 2020.

VLT's 20th anniversary will be acknowledged throughout 2023 with special events and opportunities for the public to be part of envisioning VLT's next 20 years. The 20th birthday party is free to the public, but RSVPs are encouraged at www.venturlandtrust.org/birthdayparty.



Harmon Canyon Preserve by Jason Fakour.

Ventura Land Trust launches 20th Anniversary Year with community birthday party

Ventura Land Trust (VLT) will celebrate 20 years of land conservation in 2023, starting with a free community birthday party on Friday, February 24 at Topa Topa Brewing Company (4880 Colt Street, Ventura, 93003) from 6-9 pm.

The birthday party will include the reveal of the winners of VLT's inaugural Art Contest, a look back at milestones through the organization's history, a sneak peek of gear that will be on sale at the April 8th Gear Garage Sale, family games, and of course, birthday cake.

Ventura Land Trust was founded in 2003 as Ventura Hillside Conservancy by community members who sought to

Elmhurst Elementary 5th graders take advantage of new opportunities

After a challenging few years of COVID, Anacapa Middle School's popular instrumental music program found itself lacking students. Rather than cutting the program, Ventura Unified decided to utilize the opportunity and think outside the box. District administrators worked with Anacapa's music teacher, Mr. Gabriel Garnett. They had him continue teaching some classes at Anacapa while also starting a pilot program at its local elementary school, Elmhurst Elementary.

"The idea was to have Mr. Garnett continue with his classes and then spend time at Elmhurst in the mornings teaching our fifth-grade students in an attempt to stir up interest, expose more students to music, and share the joy of music but so much more than that occurred," stated Principal Deanna Baczek. "Students have gained confidence, shown grit, and have demonstrated a growth mindset through this process," said Baczek.

Students were allowed to choose strings or band and then the opportunity to choose which instrument they would like to play. Parcel Tax Funds earmarked for music education in the Ventura Unified School District were utilized, and instruments and instruction were made available to each fifth-grade student, with many of the instruments on loan from Anacapa Middle School, allowing them to take the instrument home with them to practice in the evenings and on weekends. "Considering they had never picked up these instruments or read music before this class, their improvement is impressive. As a former band participant, I understand the value of music in our students' lives, and I am extremely appreciative our students were given this opportunity," stated Baczek.

Every student has continued through the program, even when it seemed too complicated. "While the benefits of learning music are universal, teaching music to students at an early age is noticeably impactful. Elementary students begin to quickly demonstrate more self-control, organization and focus. They are eager to work within a team and

are excited to be a part of something where everyone counts. What has surprised me most is that Elmhurst's music students genuinely want to assist their colleagues in learning and help their teacher help everyone succeed; these young people's empathy, compassion and team-work are wonderful to work with," stated Mr. Garnett.

Initially, there was concern that the music classes would take away from their fifth-grade classroom time. However, it has proved to do just the opposite. It has given the fifth-grade classroom teachers time to work with students in smaller groups to address areas that need more focus.

Concerning declining enrollment in Anacapa's Middle School Music program, it appears that it might have resolved itself with this program. According to Elmhurst's counselor, all but one of the fifth graders who took part in this pilot program have signed up for music next year at Anacapa. "At this point, we can say with confidence that this pilot program was wildly successful, and it is something that Ventura Unified hopes to continue to have the means to offer its students," stated Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Dr. Greg Bayless. "Ventura Unified has always prided itself on finding creative ways to fund music programs for our students. We intend to look for additional avenues to continue these types of opportunities for our students."

Open House Ventura County Grand Jury

The Ventura County Grand Jury invites the public to its annual Open House on Thursday, February 23, 2023, from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Grand Jury Chambers located at 646 County Square Drive, Ventura.

The Grand Jury is a panel of 19 Ventura County citizens who conduct investigations into the operations of local governmental entities within the county. Investigations originate either from a public complaint or from within the Grand Jury.

The Open House is your opportunity to tour Grand Jury Chambers, meet current Grand Jurors, learn about Grand Jury functions and the application process. If you are interested in applying for the Grand Jury or want more information, please visit the Grand Jury website at: <https://www.ventura.org/grand-jury/>

For questions, please email lori.macdonald@ventura.org



While shooting the breeze these locals also enjoyed reading the Breeze.