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Photo courtesy Wirestock on Freepik.

Buffleheads winter in Ventura Harbor, where their diving, head-bobbing, and courtship “water-skiing” displays make them stand out among local waterfowl.

## Buffleheads Return to Ventura for the Winter

By Nella Nelson

They dance on the water. They duck and dive like penguins. They stand up as if on waterskies. Their large fluffy heads and distinct markings make them stand out among other harbor birds. Who are these unique visitors we see in Ventura during the winter months?

They are buffleheads, their scientific name being *bucephala albeola* (bull-headed in Latin). As birds with a big bull-like head, they’re actually ducks of the golden-eye variety. Ducks can be divided into two categories: the dabbling duck and the diving duck, the second of which the bufflehead belongs. The bufflehead is the smallest diving duck in North America.

The tiny (13” to 16” long) Bufflehead spends winters bobbing in bays, estuaries, reservoirs, and lakes. Males are striking black-and white from a distance. A closer look at the head shows an iridescent green and purple setting off the striking white patch. Females are a subdued gray-brown with a sharp white patch on the cheek. Bufflehead nest in old woodpecker holes, particularly those made by Northern Flickers, in the forests

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## Seven Ventura Retailers Pass Alcohol Compliance Test



A Ventura Police Minor Decoy Operation found full compliance among local alcohol retailers, reflecting responsible sales practices citywide.

Seven alcohol retailers in Ventura recently demonstrated full compliance with state law during a recent Minor Decoy Operation conducted by the Ventura Police Department on Saturday, January 17, with no sales made to an underage decoy. The operation reflects continued efforts to prevent underage access to alcohol and support responsible business practices citywide.

While no citations were issued, the results reflect a positive outcome for the City of Ventura and its residents. The operation demonstrates how local retailers are taking their responsibility seriously and are actively verifying identification before completing alcohol sales.

**Continued on page 15**

## Industry Horror Builds Jobs and Purpose in Ventura

**From a Garage to Main Street: How Industry Horror Is Creating Jobs - and Purpose - for Autistic Young Adults in Ventura**

By Amy Brown

On a typical day inside Industry Horror’s screen printing shop on Ventura Avenue, the hum of equipment mixes with laughter and the rhythm of people doing work that matters to them. The industrial space is festooned with an eye-popping combination of movie posters, cartoon art, disco balls, and mannequins. Here, garments are printed, stickers are cut, and unique horror noir-inspired designs come to life—but what’s being created here goes far beyond apparel.

Industry Horror is a Ventura-based nonprofit that provides job training and employment for autistic young adults, a population that faces staggering barriers in joining the workforce.

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Photos by Adam Clement

Ryan and Davina Decant hatched an idea from their Oxnard garage that has grown into a lifetime of opportunities for hundreds of neurodivergent employees.

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“When I was a boy, the Dead Sea was only sick.”  
— George Burns

## City News



Interim Chief Kris McDonald to serve as the next Fire Chief.

## City Selects New Fire Chief

The City of Ventura has selected Interim Chief Kris McDonald to serve as the next Fire Chief of the Ventura Fire Department after the retirement of Fire Chief David Endaya in December 2025. Following a nationwide recruitment process, Chief McDonald will assume the role on January 31, 2026.

As Assistant Chief, McDonald has overseen key operational functions

within the department and brings broad experience across multiple areas of fire service leadership. He has served in several command and training roles, supporting department operations, personnel development, and emergency response readiness. Regionally, he also holds multiple qualifications within California's Incident Command System, strengthening the City's capabilities

during large-scale and complex incidents.

“Kris brings deep operational expertise, a commitment to training and safety, and a steady leadership style,” said City Manager Bill Ayub. “He is well prepared to lead the Ventura Fire Department into its next chapter.”

Each year, the Ventura Fire Department responds to more than 18,000 incidents, including fires, medical emergencies, rescues, hazardous materials responses, and mutual aid calls.

Born and raised in Northern California, McDonald began his firefighting career as a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician (EMT) in 1994 and became a paramedic in 1997. He joined the Eureka Fire Department in 1998 and began serving the Ventura community in 2002 as a Lateral Firefighter-Paramedic. Since then, he has advanced through the ranks of Engineer, Captain, Battalion Chief, and Assistant Fire Chief.

In accepting the appointment, McDonald remarked, “I am profoundly honored and humbled to assume the role of Fire Chief for the City of Ventura, and I remain committed to guiding the department toward enhanced public safety, innovation, and service excellence.”

As Fire Chief, McDonald will oversee nearly 100 sworn and professional staff and six strategically located fire stations providing all-hazards emergency response services, and will earn an annual base salary of \$270,922.00

For more information about the Ventura Fire Department, visit [www.cityofventura.ca.gov/Fire](http://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/Fire).

## Ventura Fire Invites Public Input on Wildfire Plan

The Ventura Fire Department, in partnership with the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, has drafted its first Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and invites residents, business owners, and community stakeholders to help shape the final plan through public workshops and an online questionnaire.

The draft Community Wildfire Protection Plan focuses on two primary goals: identifying and prioritizing local fuel reduction efforts and recommending actions that reduce the risk of homes and structures igniting during a wildfire.

“As wildfire risks continue to grow, planning and prevention are more important than ever,” said Interim Fire Chief Kris McDonald. “This draft Community Wildfire Protection Plan reflects both data and local experience, but it is strongest when the community helps guide it. We encourage residents to review the plan, attend a workshop, and share their perspectives so we can truly meet Ventura's needs.”

Community members are invited to attend one of two public workshops to learn more about the draft plan and provide input:

- Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.  
Community Meeting Room, City Hall  
501 Poli Street
- Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 6:00p.m.  
Ventura Fire Department Headquarters  
1425 Dowell Drive

In addition to the workshops, the Ventura Fire Department encourages participation in the CWPP Questionnaire, a short feedback form

available in both English and Spanish. Designed to take less than five minutes, the questionnaire allows participants to share their views on wildfire risk, prevention priorities, and actions the community can take to reduce risk.

The questionnaire is open through Friday, February 27, 2026, and feedback gathered through both the workshops and online will help inform revisions before the plan moves forward in the adoption process.

“The success of a plan like this relies on meaningful community involvement,” said Stephen Watson, Executive Director of the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council. “Local knowledge helps ensure the plan reflects real-world conditions and concerns, and that the strategies we recommend are practical, effective, and supported.”

A CWPP is a community-driven document developed for areas at risk of wildfire. It is created collaboratively with residents, fire agencies, local government, and other partners to identify wildfire risks and prioritize strategies to protect lives, property, and critical infrastructure, particularly in areas where neighborhoods meet wildland areas, known as the wildland-urban interface (WUI). CWPPs can help provide additional access to funding by demonstrating the importance of wildfire resilience projects.

For more information about the draft Community Wildfire Protection Plan, workshop details, and the community questionnaire, visit [www.cityofventura.ca.gov/CWPP](http://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/CWPP).



## City Begins Eastside-Midtown Waterline Project

The City will begin construction on the Eastside to Midtown Waterline Interconnect Project in mid-February, a major water infrastructure upgrade designed to improve water reliability and strengthen the City's overall water delivery system.

"The project includes upgrades to underground water lines along Foothill and Kimball roads and represents the second phase of constructing new transmission pipelines that improve efficiency throughout the City," said Ventura Water Gina Dorrington. "This project reflects how local water rate dollars are used to maintain critical infrastructure and ensure reliable service for our customers."

Work will include installing approx-

imately 8,500 linear feet of new underground water pipeline along Foothill Road, as well as constructing a new Pressure Reducing Valve (PRV) station at the Bailey Treatment Plant. These improvements were recommended in both the City's Water Improvement Study and the Boyle Water System Evaluation as critical investments to support the continued reliability of Ventura's water system.

The pipeline alignment runs along Foothill Road between Kimball Road and Elizabeth Road and will connect the existing 24-inch waterline on Satcoy Avenue to the 14-inch waterline on Kimball Road.

For safety, Foothill Road will be closed in two segments during construction, first between Satcoy and Petit avenues and then between Petit Avenue and Kimball Road. Construction will take place along Foothill Road from Kimball Road to Elizabeth Road and along Kimball Road from Telegraph Road to Foothill Road. Work is scheduled to occur from February 2026 through January 2027, with construction hours typically Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., excluding holidays.

"Our construction crews work to minimize impacts whenever possible; however, residents and travelers should expect periodic traffic disruptions during this work," said Bill Ayub, City Manager. "Once completed, the project will enhance flexibility, reliability, and long-term resiliency, helping ensure Ventura's water infrastructure remains safe, dependable, and prepared for future needs. The City asks the public to follow all posted signs and detours for safety."

For more information and project updates, visit [www.cityofventura.ca.gov/WaterlineProject](http://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/WaterlineProject)

## Buffleheads Return to Ventura Continued from page 1 of northern North America.

Due to their small size, they are highly active, undertaking dives almost continuously while sustained by their high metabolism. They do not tend to collect in large flocks; groups are usually limited to small numbers. One duck serves as a sentry, watching for predators as the others in the group dive in search of food. Buffleheads one of the world's most punctual migrants, arriving on their wintering grounds within a narrow margin of time.

As aquatic invertebrates, the bufflehead diet shifts seasonally and by habitat from insects and larvae in freshwater during summer to crustaceans, mollusks (clams, snails), and shrimp in saltwater during winter, with some seeds and plant matter occasionally consumed year-round. These energetic diving ducks hunt underwater, swallowing their prey whole. They can spend 12-20 seconds under-

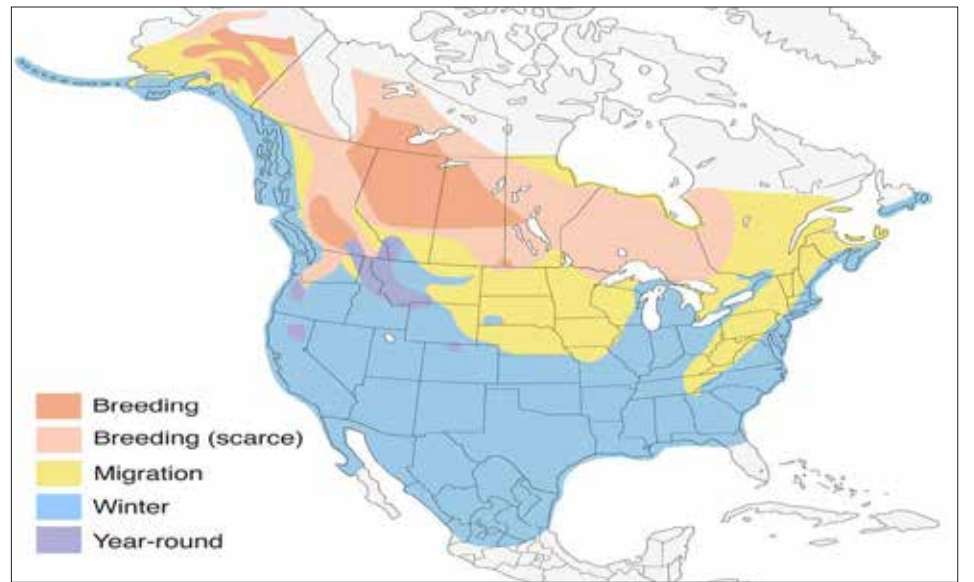
water. Predators of the bufflehead tend to be owls, peregrine falcons, bears, minks and bald eagles. Their lifespan in the wild averages three years, though the oldest bufflehead on record was an exceptional 18 years old.

Head-bobbing is the most common courtship display. The male swims toward a female and starts making a movement in which the head is repeatedly extended upwards and forwards. A characteristic sequence of actions during courtship involves fly-over and landing. The male makes a short flight over the female with the head held forward and low. At landing, the male is upright and the crest is erected as he "skis" on water with his feet pointing forward, thereby showing his fancy black and white upper plumage. Buffleheads are the only monogamous ducks, sticking with one life partner throughout their lives. Eggs are laid at an average of 8-10 per clutch, with a smooth creamy color and appearance.

We can see the buffleheads perform

their fascinating mating dances and hunting dives in our Ventura Harbor as they prefer calm, sheltered waters and estuary type en-

vironments. [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Bufflehead/overview](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Bufflehead/overview); [www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/bufflehead](http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/bufflehead)



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4201 Guardian St.

**OXNARD**  
Thursday, February 26  
6PM – 7:30PM  
Ventura County Behavioral Health  
Williams Training Room, 1911 Williams Dr.

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Mental Health Services Act

**Industry Horror Builds Jobs**  
**Continued from page 1**

It's estimated that nearly 90% of autistic adults in the U.S. are unemployed or underemployed. Many age out of school-based services with few pathways forward.

For founders Ryan and Davina Decant, that reality is personal, and their path to nonprofit leadership was anything but traditional. Ryan spent years working as a special education aide and teacher while living in Bakersfield. His teaching focused on supporting students with special needs, but he began to see a troubling pattern after kids graduated.

"I kind of realized that my young students didn't have jobs, so I wanted to bridge that gap," he said. He had been experimenting with screen printing and art, and soon, what began as a small clothing project eventually became something much bigger.

Ryan started printing shirts out of their Oxnard garage in 2010, was soon hired to do screen printing work for a larger account and eventually began hiring interns through The Arc of Ventura County. "If it weren't for Arc, we wouldn't be where we are today," said Davina. The Arc's paid internship program pays the wages of its eligible interns for the first year. "It helped us gainfully employ them, and support that first year, because that's honestly how long it takes to train them, for it fully to click," said Davina.

Many of Industry Horror's employees had no or limited job options before joining the company. Leon Simmonds is 23 and joined the team working in the screen printing shop three years ago, after walking into the Industry Horror store, hoping to escape a fast-food job he didn't enjoy. "I really like working at a place that helps others. And the free t-shirts are one of my favorite perks of working here," he said. "Plus, we're planning a school with the profits we make, and that's going to be great for the entire community." Simmonds, who likes to build computers and attend music festivals in his spare time, hopes to complete a two-year certification in electrical work at the trade school.

Nathan Sprague is 33 and has worked in the print shop since 2018, and designed a popular t-shirt based on the Decants' pets. "My design is a best seller, but really, I never dreamed I'd have a job where I can work, talk about movies, and have the chance to judge cornhole contests and help with car shows," said Sprague, who has also created a podcast called Industry Horror CoffinCast, where he reviews various horror movies.

Industry Horror's ambitions extend beyond its current spaces. The nonprofit has submitted a proposal to develop a community-centered trade school on Ventura Avenue, offering autistic students' hands-on skills and pathways to stable careers. The long-term goal

is to keep education free, funded through grants, partnerships, and community support. "They have enough stuff they're going to have to pay for throughout their life. I don't feel education should be one of them," Davina said. "We really just want to give back and take care of this community, especially The Avenue. The Avenue needs it."

Industry Horror officially became a nonprofit in 2016. Every purchase at the current retail store on Main Street supports job training and long-term employment for the neurodivergent community. Davina, who continues to work full-time as a hairdresser, has been a steady force behind the scenes. "He works for free," she said of her husband. "All Ryan's time is volunteered, and I support our family at the salon. We could take paychecks, but that would be taking away two salaries that could go to our employees."

Today, Industry Horror employs 11 people and has helped hundreds more through internships and transitional employment. Jenni Cravens is the store and operations manager and has been with the Decants since the very beginning, starting as a photographer for the clothing catalog. She appreciates the inclusive and nurturing work environment at the company, having worked for other less supportive organizations in the past.

"Being late-diagnosed autistic, I struggled with finding my voice in those companies. There can be disciplinary actions when your behavior doesn't align with their guidelines. Things like sensory overloads, tick and stims - in certain corporate environments, those aren't always accepted," she said. "I've been written up for things like that. At Industry Horror, they meet us where we need to be met as individuals. If we're having sensory issues, or hyper-fixating on certain things, they will first ask us what we need from them. I've never even had people like that in my life, much less an employer."

Juliana Graves is a bubbly young retail sales associate at the store. "If I hadn't gotten a job here, I probably never would have gotten a job anywhere," she said. "This is a place where I feel accepted, and that's very important to me." She shared that her favorite thing learned in her role is customer service.

"Our superpower is catering to their abilities," said Davina. "It's always been people over profit. They're so loyal, they're so honest, and they always show up," Davina said. "And they're incredibly creative." She adds with a laugh, "They'll never lie. Whether you want to hear it or not." Beyond humor, there's conviction. "They should almost be a requirement in every workplace," she said. "They bring so much goodness."

Industry Horror stands as proof that with hard work and creativity, meaningful change doesn't have to have grandiose origins. Sometimes, it starts in a garage.



Photos by Adam Clement

Leon Simmonds and Ryan Decant work together to create Industry Horror's one-of-a-kind apparel in the print shop. Leon hopes to complete an electrical certification course at the planned trade school—meanwhile, he hones his screen printing skills at the non-profit's shop.



# Business Profile



Local experts will showcase cabinets, countertops, islands, fixtures, lighting, and more for kitchen and bathroom remodels.

## Ventura Home Show Features Fresh Upgrades, Tiny Living, and Free Admission

Looking for a kitchen remodel, bathroom upgrade, or a fresh home makeover? Or maybe you're exploring ADUs for rental income, adding a granny unit, or taking a tiny home on the road?

See what's new in decorating, remodeling, landscaping, and tiny homes at the Ventura Home Improvement & Outdoor Living Show Feb. 20-22 at Ventura County Fairgrounds. Admission is free.

The Tiny House Village will feature full-size tiny homes, backyard cabanas, casitas, homes on wheels, and the latest tiny home technology. Meet with builders to explore sizes, layouts, designs, amenities, utilities, zoning, and to learn about ADUs and the tiny house movement.

For kitchen or bathroom remodels, local experts will present traditional and contemporary cabinets, countertops, center islands, kitchen accessories, bathtubs, showers, vanities, fixtures, lighting, and walk-in tubs.

Remodeling products & services will include room additions, second stories, foundation repairs, windows, doors, floors, solar, heating, air conditioning, window coverings, plumbing, electrical, and moving and storage services.

Backyard upgrade offerings will encompass roofing services and materials, gutter systems, exterior siding solutions, paving stones, walkways, painting contractors, and more.

For outdoor living upgrades see what's new in pools, spas, hot tubs, decks, patios, fountains, ponds, birdbaths, waterfalls, and artificial turf. Bring your plans to meet the experts.

Landscaping and gardening pros will be available for advice on irrigation, composting, soil treatments, plant maintenance, and attracting birds, bees, and butterflies to your backyard.

Remodeling and decorating experts will be on-site to guide attendees on transforming indoor and outdoor living spaces from room makeovers and garden decor to complete renovations.

Arts & Crafts Showcase will feature handmade jewelry, art, apparel, knit and crocheted items, handmade soaps, candles, home décor, personal care, unique gifts, and one-of-a-kind objects.

Show highlights will also include gourmet and specialty foods, home improvement bingo, daily giveaways, and the AAA Travel Showcase throughout the weekend.

The Home Improvement & Outdoor Living Expo will be February 20-22, 2025 at Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W Harbor Blvd, Ventura, CA 93001. Show hours are Friday and Saturday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm and Sunday 10:00 am-4:00 p.m. Admission is free. The on-site parking fee is \$10.00. Produced by On The Edge Promotions. For more information visit [www.venturahomeshows.com](http://www.venturahomeshows.com).



The Tiny House Village will feature full-size tiny homes, backyard cabanas, casitas, homes on wheels, and the latest tiny home technology. Meet with builders to explore sizes, layouts, designs, amenities, utilities, zoning, and to learn about ADUs and the tiny house movement.

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## Library News



E.P. Foster Library in downtown Ventura will close on March 23 for a \$13 million renovation, with reopening expected in fall 2027.

### E.P. Foster Library Renovation Begins in March

The E.P. Foster Library in downtown Ventura will temporarily close beginning March 23, 2026, for a \$13 million renovation to transform the facility into a modern, accessible space for the community and install a new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Construction is expected to be completed by fall 2027.

During the temporary closure, community members can continue to use all Ventura County Library online tools and resources and visit nearby Ventura libraries, including the Avenue Library, Hill Road Library, and Saticoy Library. The Mobile Library will be activated downtown on Mondays from 10:00 a.m.

to 1:00 p.m. with additional resources and story time programs. Updated hours, service information, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) are available on the library's website and will be updated throughout the project.

"We're excited to bring these long-planned improvements to life," said Ventura County Library Director Nancy Schram. "When the work is complete, E.P. Foster will offer more accessible spaces, enhanced technology, improved energy efficiency, and greater year-round comfort for everyone who uses the library. We look forward to welcoming the community back to a space that truly reflects their needs."

Announced in November 2024, the renovation project is funded through significant state, federal, and local investments. In 2023, E.P. Foster Library received an \$8.7 million Building Forward Grant from the California State Library to improve library facilities. The grant requires a 50 percent local match, which the City of Ventura and Ventura County will share to support this vital community resource.

Additionally, Congressman Salud Carbajal (CA-24) secured \$750,000 in Community Project Funding to help pay for the new HVAC system, and the Ventura Friends of the Library (VFOL) approved a Resolution committing \$250,000 in capital support for the project.

"I'm proud to have secured federal funding to ensure the E.P. Foster Library can install a brand-new HVAC system," said Rep. Carbajal. "These upgrades will allow the library to continue serving as a vital educational resource while also providing a safe cooling center for the community during extreme heat events."

The renovated facility will be designed to better serve residents year-round and to function as a cooling center during extreme heat events.

For project updates and background information, visit [www.library.venturacounty.gov/epfoster](http://www.library.venturacounty.gov/epfoster). For questions regarding the project, contact Ventura County Library System Director Nancy Schram at [nancy.schram@ventura.org](mailto:nancy.schram@ventura.org).

#### The Bookmark

### About Libraries and Friends

By Mary Olson

#### Nancy Schram, Ventura County Library Director announces Big Changes Ahead for the E.P. Foster Library

"The E.P. Foster Library in Downtown Ventura is preparing to turn the page to an exciting new chapter!"

Following the announcement of a \$13 million renovation project, the City of Ventura and Ventura County Library have confirmed that preparations are officially underway to launch this long-anticipated effort. This renovation will reimagine the historic library as a modern, accessible community hub, designed to better serve residents year-round. Once complete, the updated facility will not only enhance traditional library services but will also play a vital public-safety role by operating as a cooling center during extreme heat events.

Construction is slated to begin this Spring, with project completion expected by Fall 2027. To help keep the community informed, Ventura County Library has created a dedicated information page, including a Frequently Asked Questions section, that will be regularly updated as work progresses. Please visit this page at: <https://www.library.venturacounty.gov/locations/foster/construction-updates>

**For the month of February, the Friends' bookstore located on the 1st floor of E.P. Foster Library, will be open Monday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm and Sundays, 1:00 to 4:00 pm.**

And all inventory will be ½ off. During the closure of E.P. Foster Library the Friends of the Library will continue to hold periodic outdoor sales and sell on eBay. We are looking for an alternate location for our bookstore, so keep an eye out for an announcement.

**Master Gardeners at the Library Composting 101: Turn Green Waste into Gold**

**Avenue Library, Wednesday, February 11, 6:00 to 7:00 pm**

Join Master Gardener, Terry Garman, to learn the basics of making compost. Learn

how to recycle your waste and at the same time help your garden grow. Learn about all the tools and techniques required to easily convert your garbage and garden scraps into fertile nutrients for your vegetables and garden plants.

Link to Register: <https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=47323>

Please use the side door entrance on Simpson Street as the library is closed at time of event.

**Introduction to Hydroponics: Growing More in Less Space**

**E.P. Foster Library, Saturday, February 14, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm**

Discover the basics of hydroponic gardening in this 90 minute class designed for beginners with limited growing space. Learn about both commercial and DIY hydroponic systems, which plants thrive in soil-free environments, and simple maintenance.

Link to Register: <https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=47419>  
Walk ins Welcome!

**GAME DAY E.P. Foster Library Makerspace Tuesdays, February 10 & 24, 4:00 to 5:30 pm**

Drop in for a fun-filled game afternoon featuring the Nex Playground, Mario Kart, and Super Smash Bros! Compete with friends and enjoy some friendly gaming fun. All skill levels welcome!

**Discover Science -- Borax Window Hangers.**

**Hill Road Library Saturday, February 21, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm**

Join the Foothill High Discover Science team on the patio at Hill Road Library for hands-on science learning about the principle of solubility by making Borax crystal window decorations! Appropriate for grades k-5 and families.

**Maker Lab at Hill Road Library**

February 12: Valenslime Slime scientists are invited to create Valentine-themed slime.

February 26, March 26: Stop Motion Animation Club Come and make a short film with us!

Space is limited; sign-up begins at 3:15 and classes will begin promptly at 3:30 PM. Unfortunately we are unable to accommodate late arrivals for these activities. Designed for ages 8+

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## NO DELAY in Trash Collection Schedule Due to the Presidents Day Holiday

Presidents Day will be celebrated on Monday, Feb. 16, 2026. We will have regularly scheduled trash, recycling and yard/organics waste collection the week of Feb. 15-21, 2026 in Ventura County.

Thank you and Happy Holiday  
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# Senior Living



Image by Patricia Schallert

The Sea Stars gather with their boogie boards for friendship, camaraderie and exercise.

## Where the Ocean Meets the Heart

By Patricia Schallert

Becky Carron, known as the “queen bee” of The Sea Stars boogie boarders, has created a tight-knit community of women bound by their shared love of the ocean. A Ventura local, Carron has always felt at home in the water and started the boogie boarding group to bring together like-minded women who feel the same pull toward the sea.

The Sea Stars—mostly retired women whose families live far away or are unable to visit regularly—gather with their boogie boards for friendship, camaraderie and exercise. For these women, the ocean is a place of peace, beauty and joy. As one member put it, “Being out on the waves with your girlfriends is like being a kid again – carefree and having the time of your life.”

Samantha Crisp, a passionate boogie boarder and Sea Stars member, believes the experience holds a different meaning for each woman. Some find it a physical escape, relishing the warmth of the sun and the salt water on their skin. For others, it is a mental retreat, offering

freedom and relief from daily stresses. Emotionally, boogie boarding fosters a deep connection to nature and to one another, creating a shared sense of unity, joy and peace.

Out on the waves, the women of The Sea Stars feel empowered, free and deeply connected to nature. The thrill of being surrounded by dolphins, whales and seabirds—carefree and without worry—is a feeling they cherish. Carron emphasizes the strong bond the women share, both with the ocean and with one another.

Each member comes from a unique background and career path, yet their love for the ocean creates an instant connection. The group offers unconditional support and a judgment-free space where everyone is encouraged to be themselves. Carron, the group’s founder, helps newcomers overcome their fears and reminds them that fun comes first.

The Sea Stars ensure everyone feels comfortable and supported, providing wetsuits and boogie boards to those who

Continued on page 8



Image by Patricia Schallert

The group offers unconditional support and a judgment-free space where everyone is encouraged to be themselves.



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# Senior Living



Image by Freepik

## Caring for the Caregivers

By Carol Leish

*“There are only four kinds of people in this world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.”*

— Rosalynn Carter

The Ventura County Caregiver Coalition’s mission is to advocate for and empower caregivers by ensuring accessible, supportive services are available to those who care for loved ones. The coalition emphasizes a simple truth: If you provide care for someone you love, you are a caregiver.

Caregivers assist neighbors, family members and friends who may be facing medical challenges, mental health conditions, substance use disorders, developmental disabilities or dementia. Many

people do not realize they are caregivers, yet the role is one that touches nearly everyone at some point in life.

According to AARP, by 2030, 77 million Americans will be age 65 or older and face increasing risks of chronic conditions that can make independent living difficult. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 20% of adults ages 45 to 64 expect to become family caregivers during their lifetime.

Members of the Ventura County Caregiver Coalition include the Alzheimer’s Association; Area Agency on Aging; Community Caregivers; Coast Caregivers Resource Center; Compassionate Care Faith Community Coalition; Community Memorial Healthcare; Camarillo Health

Care District; Oxnard Family Circle; Promotoras y Promotores; Senior Concerns; and the Ventura County Community Foundation.

Work groups within the coalition focus on advocacy and policy development, resource and care pathway creation, and systemwide improvements. Their efforts include studying and adapting caregiver support models to better serve the evolving needs of caregivers through-

out the county.

To learn more about caregiving resources available in Ventura County, visit the Ventura County Human Services Agency website, which provides access to local support services and statewide organizations such as the California Alliance of Caregivers, offering extensive information and advocacy. The Ventura County Community Foundation also provides caregiving resources and information.



Images by Patricia Schallert

### Where the Ocean Meets the Heart Continued from page 7

want to give the sport a try. With encouragement from the group, fear and hesitation often melt away once members are in the water, buoyed by the confidence and support of their fellow Sea Stars.

For women who are curious but nervous about joining, The Sea Stars offer a welcoming environment where participants are encouraged to take each wave at their own pace and never hesitate to ask for help. Out on the ocean, they find joy, relaxation and permission to be playful—to laugh, shout and celebrate without concern for appearances. “We are connected to our souls,” one member said. “Free to be ourselves without judgment.”

Above all, the focus is on fun and enjoying the experience of being in the water with other like-minded women. At The Sea Stars, the ocean becomes a place of empowerment, connection and renewal.

The Sea Stars meet every Tuesday and Thursday at 3 p.m. at the end of Martha Vineyard Street in the Pierpont area, behind the school and on the beach.

For more information, find Samantha Crisp and Becky Carron on Facebook.



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Participants are encouraged to take each wave at their own pace.



# Senior Living



## Project Love Spreads Valentine's Joy to Seniors

By Carol Leish

Project Love is an annual community outreach campaign led by Assisted Home Health & Hospice that brings encouragement, connection and joy to seniors through heartfelt messages created by local students. Each year, Assisted partners with schools and senior living communities to deliver handmade Valentine's Day cards and notes, reminding seniors they are valued, seen and loved.

"Many of these seniors are limited in their ability to celebrate holidays as they once did," said Natallie Uribe, a hospice care specialist at Assisted Home Health & Hospice in Ventura. "We saw an opportunity to bridge the generational gap by having local kids in our community handcraft valentines for seniors in assisted living communities. Receiving handmade valentines brings inclusion into their lives and spreads love throughout the community."

"The kids involved in the program also experience a sense of joy and accomplishment by spreading kindness to our senior community," Uribe added. "The program aligns perfectly with Assisted Home Health & Hospice's motto: 'Hands to Help, Hearts to Care.'"

The cards include affirming messages

such as "Happy Valentine's Day," "You are loved," and "Sending smiles and kindness."

Project Love was created to address the loneliness and isolation many seniors experience, particularly those living in care facilities or managing health challenges. The campaign creates a meaningful bridge between generations, helping seniors feel connected to their communities while teaching students the power of empathy and kindness.

"Each year, Project Love reaches more schools and more senior communities," Uribe said. "We're committed to growing this effort annually so it can touch more lives throughout our service areas. It's more important than ever to choose kindness. Project Love is a simple way to spread love and joy and reflects who we are as an organization."

The campaign takes place across all Assisted service areas, with six offices in California, serving communities from Santa Barbara County to Los Angeles County, and one office in Arizona covering Maricopa and Pinal counties.

Let's continue spreading love and joy throughout the year.

## Olivas Adobe Interpreters Honor Leaders, Volunteers



Photos by Sheldon Brown

On January 7, the new Olivas Adobe Historical Interpreters board officers—called docents—were sworn in by Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko and former Oxnard Police Chief Scott Whitney at the Adobe. The new officers are Mary Thompson, President; Marsha Brumana, Vice President; Monica Shugart, Secretary; and Lisa Mirasola, Treasurer.



President Mary Thomson serves food at the Olivas Adobe Historical Interpreters' annual thank-you dinner at Ventura Marina Mobile Home Park. About 80 volunteers from the Adobe, Dudley House, and other sites attended. The dinner, prepared by Erik Nelson and former docent Bob Sandler, featured a wide variety of dishes.

## HELP SHAPE VENTURA'S COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

### WHAT IS A COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)?

A CWPP is a community-driven plan to reduce wildfire risks, protect homes, and keep Ventura safe, particularly in areas where neighborhoods meet wildland areas.

### ATTEND A WORKSHOP

DATE	DATE
Wednesday, February 18, 2026	Thursday, February 26, 2026
TIME	TIME
6:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.
LOCATION	LOCATION
City Hall, Community Meeting Room, 2nd Floor: 501 Poli Street	Fire Headquarters: 1425 Dowell Drive
Live Spanish interpretation provided	

### TAKE THE COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

- English & Spanish
- Less than 5 minutes
- Open through Friday, February 27, 2026



LEARN MORE & PARTICIPATE  
cityofventura.ca.gov/CWPP

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## The Pet Page



# Safe Use of Flea and Tick Products in Pets

From FDA.gov

Flea bites may be more than an itchy annoyance to some dogs and cats. They can cause flea allergy dermatitis — an allergic reaction to proteins in flea saliva. And a pet's constant scratching can cause permanent hair loss or other skin problems. In severe infestations, fleas feasting on your pet's blood can lead to anemia and, in rare cases, death.

Ticks can also harm your pet, transmitting tick-borne infections such as Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Babesiosis, and Bartonellosis. And pets can bring ticks into the home, exposing you and your family to illness from a tick bite.

Hundreds of pesticides, repellents, and growth inhibitors are available to protect your pet from flea and tick bites. Some of these products are available only from a veterinarian; others can be bought over the counter.

Flea and tick products range from pills and chews given by mouth to collars, sprays, dips, shampoos, powders, and "spot-ons," liquid products squeezed onto the dog's or cat's skin usually between the shoulder blades or down the back. A few spot-on products are available for flea control in ferrets, and fly and tick control in horses.

Although flea and tick products on the market have been used in millions of pets, side effects or adverse events may and sometimes do occur. It's strongly recommended that you involve your veterinarian when choosing a flea and tick product, especially if your pet has any health conditions. You should also carefully read the label, the package insert, and any accompanying literature to make sure you're using the product correctly. You should also save the packaging for the product in case a problem does occur and you need to report it.

### When to Treat

Your veterinarian can help you determine the best time frame for treating your pet. Generally speaking, it's best to start treating your pet at the beginning of flea season if you're trying to prevent a flea infestation. The length of the flea season, which peaks during warm weather months, varies depending on where you live. If you live in a colder climate, it might only last four months or so. In other places, like Florida, fleas can live all year long. Fleas can live inside a warm house year-round no matter where you live.

Ticks are found in some places year-round. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that in most parts of the U.S., the greatest chance of being bitten by a tick is in spring and summer, with another spike in the fall.

### Tips for Using Topical Flea and Tick Products

There are many different types of flea and tick products that can be applied to your pet, and different chemicals work in different ways. That's why it's always important to:

#### Choose the right product

- Work with your veterinarian to select the right product for your pet and your needs.
- Make sure the product matches your pet's species, life stage and weight class. If the product is for use on dogs, don't use it on cats. If using the product on a puppy or kitten, make sure it is labeled for that life stage and that your pet is at least the minimum weight specified on the label.
- Don't apply a product to kittens or puppies unless the label specifically allows this treatment. Use flea combs to remove fleas and flea eggs, and a tick remover to take off ticks from puppies and kittens that are too young for flea and tick products.

Talk to your veterinarian before using a product on weak, old, medicated, sick, pregnant, or nursing pets, even if they have been fine with previous uses of the product. The same goes for pets that have previously shown signs of sensitivity to flea or tick products. Tell your veterinarian about any other products you might be using or giving to your pet, because it could make a difference in their recommendations.

#### Use the product properly

- Read the label carefully before use. Even if you've used the product many times before, read the label because the directions or warnings may have changed. If you don't understand the wording, ask your veterinarian or call the manufacturer.
- Follow the directions exactly. If the label says use weekly, don't use it daily. If the product is for use in the house or yard, don't put it directly on your pet.
- If you have multiple pets and are using spray or "spot-on," products, apply to one pet at a time and keep the treated animal separated from the other(s) until the product dries. This is to prevent one

animal from grooming another and potentially ingesting the drug or pesticide. This is especially important if the product is only for use in dogs and you have a cat in your household.

- Wash your hands immediately with soap and water after applying a product or use protective gloves while applying.
- Store products away from food or things that could come into contact with a person's mouth, like baby pacifiers, inhalers, and cigarettes.
- Keep products out of the reach of children and pets.

#### Pay attention after using the product

Monitor your pet for side effects or adverse events after applying the product, particularly when using the product on your pet for the first time. Side effects might occur immediately or

could happen sometime later.

If your pet experiences a bad reaction from a flea and tick collar, remove the collar immediately.

If your pet experiences a bad reaction from any flea or tick product (spot-on, shampoo, dip, or collar), call your veterinarian right away. Depending on the product used, your veterinarian may recommend that you immediately bathe the pet, if it's safe to do so, using mild dish soap and rinsing with large amounts of water.

Call your veterinarian if your pet shows symptoms of illness after using a product. Look for dizziness, wobbliness, incoordination, poor appetite, depression, vomiting, diarrhea, or excessive salivation. Some animals have had seizures and/or died.



Photo by Wirestock on Freepik.

## Birds of Prey Visit Ventura Audubon

The Ventura Audubon Society is hosting Stephanie Sayre as the featured speaker for its February program.

Ms. Sayre is the founder of Wings of Discovery, a non-profit organization dedicated to the care of injured and non-releasable birds of prey.

- Tuesday, February 10, 7:00 pm.
- Poinsettia Pavilion  
3451 Foothill Road

This is a family-friendly educational experience where Ms. Sayre will introduce four different birds of prey species. She will share the unique stories of how each

bird came to Wings of Discovery, along with fascinating facts about their species. Additionally, she will discuss conservation challenges affecting these birds and what we can do to help protect them.

Attendees will have the rare opportunity to see these magnificent birds up close, take photos, and even touch a bird or two! Don't miss this incredible opportunity to learn about and connect with these amazing birds of prey.

To learn more about the Audubon Society, visit [www.venturaaudubon.org](http://www.venturaaudubon.org).

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Dog walking - Adoption Events - Facility Maintenance - Community Outreach - Thrift Store

Visit [carldogs.org/volunteer](http://carldogs.org/volunteer) to apply!

No commitment required

**CARL**

# Events

## Ventura:

### NAMBA – Upcoming Events: 47 South Oak St., Downtown Ventura

Fri, Feb 6 at 7 pm: Shawn Jones & Shane Alexander rock the house with their infectious, high-energy performances!

Sat, Feb 7 at 2 pm: American Songbook Today relives the glory of Gershwin through talented local performers!

Sun, Feb 15 at 3 pm: Focus on the Masters presents A Conversation with Margaret Garcia, the first of four events this year!

Sun, March 15 at 6:30pm: Farrell, Henszey, & Collins are bringing an evening of beautiful music as a sweet fundraiser for Namba!

Visit <https://nambaarts.com> for full event line-up.

### Fly Fishing Event: Sun, Feb 7, 9 am – 11 am, Chumash Park, Petit and Waco in East Ventura.

Sespe Fly Fishers of Ventura will be conducting our monthly “First Saturday” introductory Fly Rod Casting and Intro to Fly Fishing clinic. Whether you are an experienced fly fisher or a complete novice we want to help you improve your casting and learn to enjoy this great sport. If you don’t yet have a fly rod, don’t worry, just come and use one of ours. For more information contact Casting Program Coordinator Thomas Hall [thomasfoleyhall@gmail.com](mailto:thomasfoleyhall@gmail.com). (805) 377-5249. [www.sespeflyfishers.org](http://www.sespeflyfishers.org).

### Olivas Adobe Historical Park presents “Quilts & Stories from the Past”: Sun, Feb 8, 11 am - 3 pm.

Exhibit of handmade quilts, large and small, reflecting on history and each one telling a story. Curated by docent and quilt maker Debra Milbourne, the exhibit is a grouping of privately owned and many of the Olivas Adobe’s own collection of quilts and textiles. [www.cityofventura.ca.gov/648/Olivas-Adobe-Historical-Park](http://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/648/Olivas-Adobe-Historical-Park).

### Hearts & Flowers Plant & Collectibles Sale: Sat, Feb 14, 8 am - 3 pm. Dudley House Museum, 197 N. Ashwood.

Our plant and collectibles sale features garden plants, gifts and jewelry on the grounds at the Dudley House. Call Charlie at 805-746-4317 for vendor details. <https://dudleyhouseventura.org>.

### The Home Improvement & Outdoor Living Expo: Fri – Sun, Feb 20-22. Fri & Sat 10 am-5 pm; Sun 10 am-4 pm. Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W Harbor Blvd.

Admission is free. Looking to upgrade your kitchen, refresh your bath, or explore tiny homes? See what’s new in decorating, remodeling, backyard cabanas, casitas, and tiny homes at the Ventura Home Show. From DIY projects to full makeovers, check out the latest in kitchens, baths, windows, pools, spas, patios solar, and more. Plus, specialty foods, arts & crafts, home show bingo, and the AAA Travel Showcase. On-site parking fee is \$10. Produced by On The Edge Promotions. [www.venturahomeshows.com](http://www.venturahomeshows.com).

### Ventura Marathon: Sun, Feb 22. From Ojai to Ventura.

Looking to qualify for the Boston Marathon? This fast-track race is perfect with a mostly downhill course. This popular marathon is a scenic

run that starts in the Ojai Valley and finishes in Downtown Ventura. The cool weather and downhill nature of this race is perfect for anyone working on a faster finishing time. [www.venturamarathon.com](http://www.venturamarathon.com).

### Channel Islands PC User Group (CIPCUG): Sat, Feb 28, 2026. Event begins at 9:30 am. Online only.

Discussion, Tutorial, and Q&A sessions centered around Computers, email, the Internet, AI, and social media brokers such as X, Facebook, and Google. Details for connecting to online events are emailed prior to the event. To receive connection instructions, sign up at <http://www.cipcug.org>. 805) 289-3960.

### The Ventura Gem & Mineral Society 63rd Annual Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show: Sat, Mar 7 – 8, 10 am – 5 pm, Sun 10 am– 4 pm. Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd.

The Ventura Gem Show has been a fun family event for over six decades with its focus on gemstone cutting and jewelry-making, rocks and fossils, and kids and education. Upon entering the show, kids are given a free polished stone at our Welcome Booth, where teachers receive free rock samples and educational packets. At the Kids Booth, children enjoy activities offering an assortment of rocky prizes. A nearby display provides info about the society’s two-room museum in Ojai, where teachers, home-schoolers, and youth groups can arrange tours by appointment. The show is open to the public and admission is free. [www.vgms.org](http://www.vgms.org).

### Spring Wine Walk & Vendor Fair: Mar 28, Downtown

Over 50 tasting locations. Sip Wine, Sparkling Wine, & Craft Beer as you stroll through the Spring Vendor Fair surrounded by live entertainment! [www.springwinewalk.com](http://www.springwinewalk.com).

### Housing Trust’s Seventh Annual Compassion Campaign: Thur, May 7, 5 pm - 8:30 pm. Walnut Grove at Tierra Rejada Farms.

This year’s one-of-a-kind event will be held under the stars. The Sweetest Investment gathers the leaders, partners, and supporters shaping the future of affordable housing in Ventura County. This year’s signature fundraising event highlights the sweet impact that we can make together when we invest locally. Together, we’ll demonstrate how strong community commitment can strengthen affordable housing across the region and beyond. Join us for another evening of treat-filled immersive guest experiences, inspiring speakers, and a diverse community of allies committed to creating affordable housing solutions. [www.housing-trustfundvc.org](http://www.housing-trustfundvc.org).

## Ongoing:

### Ventura Gem & Mineral Society: Fourth Wednesday (second Wednesday in Nov/Dec), 7:30 – 9:30, Poinsettia Pavilion.

Join amateur enthusiasts interested in minerals, fossils, and jewelry making. We welcome individual and family members. We participate in Science Nights at schools and - in conjunction with the County Parks System at Camp Comfort - run a two-room museum open by appointment for school groups, homeschoolers and others.

We have a youth group which meets regularly for activities. Enjoy field trips, lapidary classes to craft polished stones, speakers and refreshments at our meetings. Email [info@vgms.org](mailto:info@vgms.org) or visit [www.vgms.org](http://www.vgms.org).

### Free Grief Support Groups

Livingston’s Grief & Bereavement Program offers multiple support groups that focus on restorative activities, seeking meaning and purpose, identifying changes to self, and receiving support in making life good again.

Livingston’s Grief & Bereavement offers free grief support groups that cater to specific bereavement needs. General Bereavement Support Group on Wednesdays from 6:30 - 8 pm (Ventura in-person). Thursdays from 10:30 am - Noon (Ventura in-person). For registration and locations, contact 805-389-6870 or online at [lmvna.org/grief](http://lmvna.org/grief). Space is limited.

### Island Packers Announces Whale Watching: Runs through mid-April:

This is an annual event to see the Gray Whales with boats departing from Oxnard and Ventura Harbors. \$49 per adult, \$ 45 per senior (55+), and \$ 36 per child. Gift Certificates Available for the cruises plus day, camp or kayaking at the Channel Islands National Park. Call 805- 642-1393, visit [www.island-packers.com](http://www.island-packers.com) or visit their office at 1691 Spinnaker Dr., Suite 105B.

### Ventura Senior Men’s Group:

11:30 am - 1:30 pm, first and third Tuesdays. Poinsettia Pavilion.

Any man who considers himself in the “senior” category (and many who don’t) might benefit from a visit to the Ventura Senior Men’s Group lunch meetings - first and third Tuesday of the month. Buffet luncheon with interesting speakers and good friends. Your first lunch is free. We talk about everything except religion and politics. Eligible to all men 50+. Call Lyle at 805-341-9820 or visit [VSMG.net](http://VSMG.net).

### Country Lovers Line Dancing:

Ventura Moose Lodge. Tuesdays 7 - 9 pm, 10269 Telephone Rd.

Easy dances, first time free. Any questions, leave message at 805-889-3132.

### Ventura VFW Post 1679 – Sunday Brunches/Dinners: 3801 Market St.

Help support your local Ventura County Veterans: “Open to the Public Brunches and Dinners.” Sunday Brunch 10 am - 1 pm every Sunday. Prices from \$8 - \$15. Friday Night Dinners: 5:30 pm - 7 pm every Friday night. Prices depend on the menu for that night. \$15 - \$25. 805-642-2674. <https://vfw1679.org>.

### Overeaters Anonymous Meetings: In-person and Zoom.

Compulsive overeating, undereating, anorexia, bulimia, body image, or food obsession? We are a 12 Step fellowship of support and recovery, offering multiple meetings in Ventura:

Mon, 7 p.m. Newcomers Meeting on Zoom. For the meeting ID and passcode, please contact Christine B. (323) 573-7448

Thurs, 6:30 pm. In-person, 133 S. Laurel St. (small house next to the church). Please contact Bridgette (805) 709-4892

Sat, 10 am. In-person, 133 S. Laurel St. (small house next to the church). Please contact Christine B. (323) 573-7448

Sun, 1:30 pm. In-person, Men’s Meeting (only), in-person. For time, location and support, please contact Cliff (323) 459-4772

### Ventura County Philatelic Society: First and third Mon each month - 7:30 pm.

Church of the Foothills. <https://venturacountyphilatelic.org>.

### Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Ventura County: 6:30 - 8pm, every Tuesday. Ralston St.

At DBSA support group meetings, we share experiences, personal feelings, information, and strategies for living successfully. Groups are free, confidential, and open to people living with or who believe they may have depression, bipolar disorder, or another mood disorder. Join our community of hope, reassurance, and encouragement. Call (805) 665-3326 or Email [DBSA-Ventura@gmail.com](mailto:DBSA-Ventura@gmail.com) for more details and information.

Continued on page 13

— Weekly SUDOKU —

Answer

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

— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

J	I	B	R	C	A	S	H	A	S	H		
I	S	U	I	O	T	A	E	Q	U	I		
F	A	L	L	F	L	A	T	A	U	N	T	
			G	I	L	T		B	R	A	G	S
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O	U	R	S		F	L	A	T	H	E	A	D
S	R	I		A	L	E	R	T	S	S	E	
H	E	A	D	W	I	N	D		S	C	A	B
			R	O	T	S		H	E	A	P	S
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A	P	O	P		W	I	N	D	F	A	L	L
T	A	L	E		O	L	D	E		D	I	A
E	L	L	S		E	L	I	S		E	N	D



**By Pam Baumgardner**  
**VenturaRocks.com**

I'm sorry to have to squash the rumors, but Mark Hartley has no intention of reopening the Watermark anytime soon though painstaking efforts have been made to restore the woodwork and opulence of its former heyday. The venue will continue as a rental space for special events just in case you're interested. The rumors started after the Hartleys hosted an invite-only party musicians' reunion on Tuesday, January 27, where up to 17 local musicians performed upstairs and downstairs. Those performing included Todd Hannigan, Shawn Jones, Sam Bolle, Ed Berghoff, Guy Martin, Alvino Bennett, Nick St. Nicolas, Mario Calire, Lois Mahalia, Katie Skene, and so many more, all of whom donated their time to play. For me, the highlight of the evening was when the band jammed with Nick St. Nicolas (Steppenwolf) and performed "Born to be Wild."

There are a couple of milestones to celebrate this month, including MadeWest Brewing's 10th anniversary on Saturday, February 7, where live music will be provided by Big Tweed at their Donlon location in Ventura. Festivities include a beer release, food trucks, anniversary glasses and t-shirts for purchase while they last.

The following week, Strey Cellars celebrates their 12th year anniversary over the weekend of February 14 with 805 Social Club performing on Saturday, and Heathers on Fire on Sunday.

Superbowl Sunday, February 8, would be the reason why most venues have no live music. Subsequently, moving forward, more venues will have live music on Sundays with the football season be us.

Quick Notes: Shawn Jones and Shane Alexander team up once again for a performance at Namba on Friday, February 6; Larry Dunn's Anthology of Earth Wind and Fire lands at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center, Saturday, February 7; the Monday Club returns to the Masonic Center in Ventura with Hot Roux on February 9; ChopperFest returns to the Ventura Fairgrounds, Saturday, February 7, and as of press time, website still lives live bands as TBD; tickets are on sale now for Rich Kids on LSD and Good Riddance at the Ventura Music Hall on April 11; and as for the Ventura Theater, the Violent Femmes show is sold out for March 1, but tickets are currently still available for 311 for March 4, and Circle Jerks for May 22;

Do you have any music-related news or upcoming shows that you would like help publicizing? Please send all information, short or long, to Pam@VenturaRocks.com. For updated music listings daily, visit www.VenturaRocks.com.

## Music Calendar

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

**Art City**  
**175 Dubbers St., Ventura**

Fri 2/6: Adam Lenhard, Al Frans, Nyla Young  
**Boatyard**  
**1583 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura**  
Mondays: Katie Shorey  
Tuesdays: Ken Devoe  
Wednesdays: Frank Barajas  
Thursdays: Jim Friery (4p); Bluegrass Jam (6:30 pm)

Fri 2/6: Teresa Russell & Stephen Geyer

Sat 2/7: Epitome of Dreams  
Fri 2/13: Chris Abbott

Sat 2/14: Dave Blanchard Band  
**Bombay Bar and Grill**

**143 S. California St., Ventura**  
Fridays: Frank Barajas acoustic w/ Friends

Sun 1/15: Heart and Soul  
**Café Fiore**

**66 California St., Ventura**  
Wed 2/4: Bryan McCann

Fri 2/6: Instone  
Wed 2/11: Donna Butler

Fri 2/13: Otis Hayes  
Sat 2/14: The Beta Macks

**Cantara Cellars**  
**126 Wood Rd., Camarillo**

Fri 2/6: Amber & Smoke  
Sat 2/7: James Bros. Band

Sat 2/14: Caliente 805  
**Cooper Blues**

**591 Collection Blvd., Oxnard**  
Fri 2/6: tone 6

Sat 2/7: The Gamble  
Fri 2/13: Viernes de Fiesta

Sat 2/14: Mashbox Covers  
**Deer Lodge**

**2261 Maricopa Hwy., Ojai**  
Thurs 2/5: Zoe Basha, The Rose Valley Thorns

Fri 2/6: Tobacco City  
Sat 2/7: Tyler Ramsey & Carmel Broemel

Thurs 2/12: Modern Moment  
Fri 2/13: Bradberri, Jess Bush & the Bad Habits

**Duke's Beach Grill**  
**1124 S. Seaward Ave., Ventura**

Fri 2/13: Raging Hound Dogs, Pennie Lane & Lyla Gail

Sat 2/14: Vinny Berry  
**Feros Ferio Winery**

**310 E. Ojai Ave., Ojai**  
Sat 2/7: Tom Collins

Sun 2/8: Matthew Moran  
Sat 2/14: Eric Harrington

Sun 2/15: Frank Barrajas  
**Four Brix**

**2290 Eastman Ave., Ventura**  
Fri 2/6: Ignition

**Garage**  
**1091 Scandia Ave., Ventura**

Fri 2/6: Lowered Expectations  
Sat 2/7: The Renegades

Fri 2/13: Left of the Dial  
Sat 2/14: Doc Rogers

**The Grape**  
**2733 E. Main St., Ventura**

Tuesdays: Gratitude Jazz Jams  
Wed 2/4: RJ Mischo Blues Showcase

Thurs 2/5: Isaiah Harwood Quartet

Fri 2/6: Phoenix Big Band  
Sat 2/7: Matterform (2p); Freddie Ravel Quartet (8p)

Wed 2/11: TD Lind & the Avaitors  
Thurs 2/12: Bevan Manson Quartet feat. Suzanne Pittson

Fri 2/13: Cristo Osorio  
Sat 2/14: Jen Staves & the Bluzfish (2p); Alex Robinson (8p)

**Harbor Cove Café**  
**1867 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura**

Sun 2/8: Tommy K  
Sun 2/15: Tommy Quayle

**Keynote Lounge**  
**10245 Telephone Rd., Ventura**

Fri 2/6: Pull the Trigger  
Sat 2/7: Skeleton Keys

Fri 2/13: Soul Revial  
Sat 2/14: Old School Band

**KJ's**  
**454 E. Main St., Ventura**

Fridays: Braids & Dreads (6-8p)  
**Leashless Brewing**

**585 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura**  
Fri 2/6: Jacob Marquez & the Good Vibes

Sat 2/14: Stonehardt  
Sun 2/15: Neon Blonde

**Lucky Fool's Pub**  
**75 E. High St., Moorpark**

Fri 2/6: George Kirkes  
Sat 2/14: Natalie Wattre

**Madewest Brewery**  
**1744 Donlon St., Ventura**

Sat 2/7: Big Tweed  
**Magnavino Cellars**

**961 Rice Ave., Oxnard**  
Fri 2/6: Dueling Pianos

Sat 2/7: Cary Park  
**Majestic Ventura Theater**

**26 S. Chestnut St., Ventura**  
Sat 2/14: Delfonics Experience, Sly Slick & Wicked...

Sun 2/15: Bravo the Bagchaser x lou deezi  
**Manhattan**

**5800 Santa Rosa Rd., Camarillo**  
Wed 2/4: Mary White

Fri 2/6: Mack and D  
Sat 2/7: Tour Support

Fri 2/13: Tour Support  
Sat 2/14: Mark Zier

**Margarita Villa**  
**1567 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura**

Sat 2/7: Vinyl Gypsies  
Fri 2/13: Cinnamon Whiskey

Sun 2/15: Smokey & Friends  
**Masonic Center**

**482 E. Santa Clara St., Ventura**  
Mon 2/9: Monday Club w/ Hot Roux

**Namba Arts**  
**47 S. Oak St., Ventura**

Fri 2/6: Shawn Jones, Shane Alexander  
Sat 2/7: American Songbook tribute to Gershwin

Sun 2/8: The Listening Room  
Sat 2/14: Baila Nova

**Ojai Pub**  
**914 E. Ojai Ave., Ojai**

Sundays: Open mic  
Mondays: Rose Valley Thorns

**Ojai Underground Exchange**  
**616 Pearl St., Ojai**

Fri 2/6: Dan Mangan, Isreal Nebeker  
Sat 2/7: S'Wonderful - Gershwin Concert

Thurs 2/12: Phillip Daniel  
Fri 2/13: Terry Klein & Jackson Emmer

**Ojai Valley Brewing**  
**307 Bryant St., Ojai**

Sat 2/7: Jazzmen Suites  
Sun 2/8: Michael Rivers Jazz Quintet

Sat 2/14: Beau Red & the Tailormade  
Sun 2/15: Van Allen Twins

**Oxnard Performing Arts Center**  
**800 Hobson Way, Oxnard**

Sat 2/7: Larry Dunn's Anthology of Earth Wind & Fire

**Portola Italian Kitchen**  
**1601 Victoria Ave., Oxnard**

Sat 2/14: Teresa Russell  
**Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar**

**2209 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura**  
Tuesdays: Danny D

**Q Club**  
**2362 N. Oxnard Blvd, Oxnard**

Sat 2/7: Keyth G. & the Drift Rites  
Sun 2/15: Freddy & Friends

**Ric's Restaurant Sports Lounge**  
**2500 Las Posas Rd., Camarillo**

Tuesdays: Tour Support  
**Rocks & Drums**

**14 S. California St., Ventura**  
Thurs 2/12: Angelo Arce

**Seaward Brewing**  
**1920 Goodyear Ave., Ventura**

Sun 2/15: James Bros Band  
**The Shores**

**1031 Harbor Blvd., Oxnard**  
Wed 2/4: Ken DeVoe

Fri 2/6: Brandon Ragan Project  
Sat 2/7: Tommy Foytek

Wed 2/11: Doc Rogers & Lisa  
Fri 2/13: Gary Ballen

Sat 2/14: Ventu Park  
Sun 2/15: Lil Bit of Everything

**Strey Cellars**  
**951 N. Rice Ave., Oxnard**

Sat 2/7: The Way  
Sat 2/14: 805 Social Club

Sun 2/15: Heathers on Fire  
**Taqueria Jalisco Restaurant**

**4275 Tierra Rejada Rd., Moorpark**  
Tuesdays and Fridays: Jim Friery

**Tony's Pizzeria**  
**186 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura**

Thurs 2/5: Legalizer  
Sat 2/7: Marley

Fri 2/13: Top Shelf  
Sun 2/15: Holgers Heroes

**Topa Topa Brewing**  
**4880 Colt St., Ventura**

Fri 2/13: Pika Pika  
**Topa Topa Brewing**

**2024 Ventura Blvd., Camarillo**  
Sat 2/7: Virtual Nobodies

Sun 2/8: Elliott Callaway  
Sun 2/15: Erinn Alissa

**Topa Topa Brewing Downtown**  
**104 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura**

Sat 2/7: Katie Shorey  
Tues 2/10: Natalie Wattre

Sat 2/14: Steve and Sally Williams  
Tues 2/17: Vinny Berry

**Vaquero y Mar**  
**435 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura**

Tuesdays: The Sea Hunters  
**Ventura Harbor Village**

**1559 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura**  
Sat 2/7: Einstein Brown

Sat 2/14: Davis Gorospe duo  
Sun 2/15: Morganfield Burnett

**Ventura Music Hall**  
**1888 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura**

Fri 2/6: Exhorder, Luicidal  
Thurs 2/12: Denm w/ Obed Padilla and Evening Elephants

Fri 2/13: Shaky Feelin' and Zoo People  
**Winchesters**

**632 E. Main St., Ventura**  
Music Fridays 7-10; Sat and Sun 3-6

Fri 2/6: Erik Lemaire Band  
Sat 2/7: Frank Barajas Band

Fri 2/13: Doc Rogers Band  
Sat 2/14: Medicine Hatt

Sun 2/15: Brittney & Ben



Lupe, by Margaret Garcia, 2025 Oil on Canvas 31.5"x 24", courtesy FOTM.

## FOTM Artist Spotlight: Margaret Garcia

- Sunday, February 15, 3 to 4:30 p.m.
- Namba Performing Art Center - 47 S. Oak Street, Ventura
- FREE to FOTM members, \$20 for public; \$15 for seniors.
- Reservations required.
- To RSVP visit [focusonthemasters.com](http://focusonthemasters.com).
- Or call (805)653-2501.

The Los Angeles native began her career as a muralist, involved in the murals that swept through the 1984 Olympics. Identified as one of 24 artists who have had an impact on LA Art, Garcia's work consists of oil paintings saturated with a wildly expressive palette. Flat compositional space is firmly rooted in the tradition of Mexican folk art. Her paintings are in the collections of LACMA, the Laguna Art Museum, and the personal collection of Cheech Marin. Recent exhibitions include Chicano Dreams, Bordeaux, France; Musee D'Aquitaine, and Transforming Feminism, South Bay Contemporary. Her work is on the walls of the Universal City Metro station as part of a historic tribute to the History of California and the signing of the Capitulation of Cahuenga, making California a territory of the United States. Her greatest sense of accomplishment is from knowing that she has facilitated an artist in becoming what they want to be: a working, thriving, and recognized artist. To learn more about Margaret, visit [www.MargaretGarciaStudio.com](http://www.MargaretGarciaStudio.com).

AfterGLOW Fundraising Event: The public is welcome to join the artist for a celebratory fundraising dinner at the Vita Art Center located in Ventura. Paid reservations are required before February 8. This event is expected to sell out. Maps will be given to paid guests at the interview. \$40 FOTM members, \$50 Non-members. [focusonthemasters.com](http://focusonthemasters.com).

## Ventura Art Scene

### Events

Continued from page 11

## Camarillo:

**The Camarillo Quilters Association: Tues, Feb 10. Doors open at 9 am. Pleasant Valley Community Center, 1605 E. Burnley Dr., 2026.**

This meeting will feature Rob Appell - "Quilts from the Sea & Beyond". California's Surfing Quilter shares his journey from quilter to fabric designer, teacher, and YouTube video star. Guest fee is \$5. Come enjoy his trunk show of beautiful, original quilts. Rob Appell's workshop on Feb. 11 will be a Scrap Masters quilt. <https://camarilloquilters.com>.

## Santa Barbara:

**Ensemble Theatre - The Shark is Broken: Feb 4 - 22. Vic, 33 West Victoria St.**

It's 1974. The set of Jaws. The mechanical shark is malfunctioning, the schedule is in shambles, and three actors - Robert Shaw, Richard Dreyfuss, and Roy Scheider - are stuck on a boat, battling egos, alcohol, and artistic frustration. A razor-sharp, behind-the-scenes look at the making of one of the greatest films of all time. Runtime: 95 minutes without intermission. Recommended for ages 13 and up. 805-965-5400, [boxoffice@etcsb.org](mailto:boxoffice@etcsb.org) <https://etcsb.org>.

## Santa Paula:

**Sip & Shop: Fri, Feb 13, 4 pm - 8 pm**

Now in its 4th year, Sip & Shop will be held on Main Street in historic downtown Santa

Paula between 7th street to 11th St.

Admission is free and open to the public. The event has grown from a modest evening gathering to one of Santa Paula's most popular community events featuring antiques and collectibles, specialty shops, museums, galleries, restaurants, and historic landmarks. [www.santapaulachamber.com](http://www.santapaulachamber.com).

## 1000 Oaks:

**Kathleen Madigan's The Day Drinking Tour: Fri., Mar 27, 8 pm. Fred Kavli Theatre.**

**2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd.**

Award-winning comic's uproarious new stand-up show. As a premiere stand-up comedian for the last three decades, Madigan sells out marquee theaters across the country and is one of the few female comedians to tour over 250 days a year. Coming from a long line of Midwestern union workers, Madigan has always approached stand-up as a job and by doing so has established herself as one of the most successful road comics ever. Tickets are priced starting at \$38.75. [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), or through the Bank of America Performing Arts Box Office. 805-449-2787 or visit [www.bapacthousandoaks.com](http://www.bapacthousandoaks.com).

## Westlake Village:

**Conejo Valley Bonsai Society (CVBS) Meeting: Thurs, Feb 19, 7:30 pm. Westlake Village City Hall, 312 Oak Crest Dr.**

Bonsai Demonstration styled by David Nguy, a regarded Bonsai Master with his garden Shisei-En in Chino, Ca. [publicity@cvbs-bonsai.org](mailto:publicity@cvbs-bonsai.org).

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Photo by Diane Edmonds

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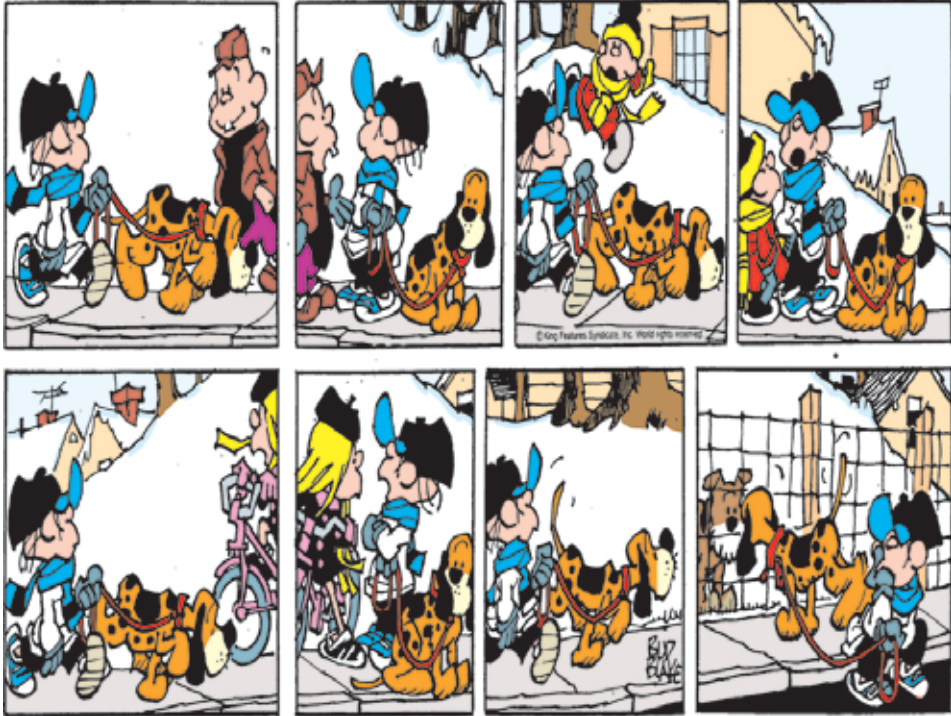
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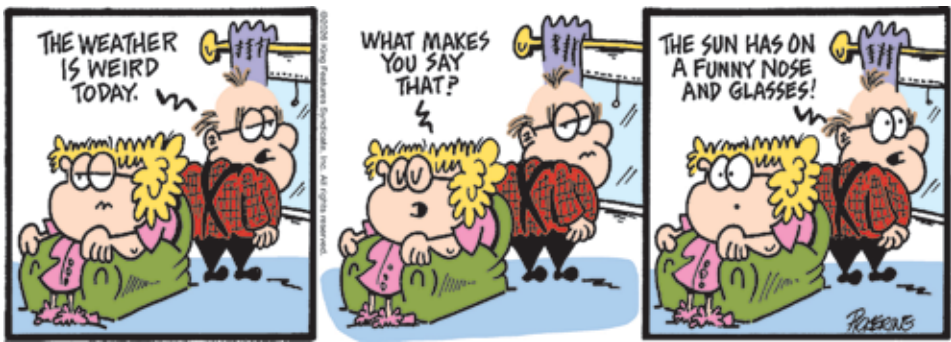


# Lighter Breeze

## Tiger



## The Spats



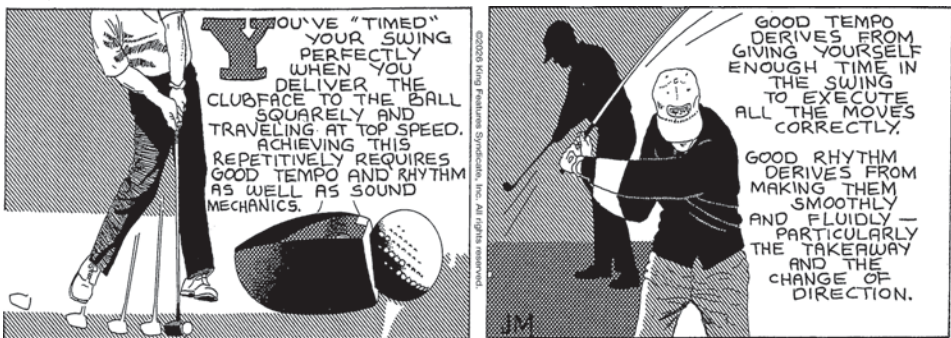
## Out on a Limb



## Amber Waves



## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



Solutions on page 11

(For a beginners guide to playing Sudoku go to [venturabreeze.com](http://venturabreeze.com))

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

## Weekly SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Solutions on page 11

## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Ship's sail
- 4 Some TVs
- 8 Corned beef recipe
- 12 Terre Haute sch.
- 13 Greek vowel
- 14 Iso-
- 15 Flop
- 17 Pop's sister
- 18 Coated with gold
- 19 Is boastful
- 20 Forest clearing
- 22 Satiating
- 24 Partially mine
- 25 Screwdriver type
- 29 - Lanka
- 30 Warning
- 31 Compass dir.
- 32 Sailing challenge
- 34 Wound cover
- 35 Breaks down
- 36 Piles
- 37 Pink hue
- 40 Seniors' org.
- 41 Each
- 42 Unexpected gain
- 46 Story
- 47 Shoppe descriptor
- 48 24 horas
- 49 Building wings

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13						14		
15			16						17			
		18						19				
20	21				22	23						
24				25					26	27	28	
29			30							31		
32			33						34			
		35						36				
37	38	39				40						
41					42	43				44	45	
46					47					48		
49					50					51		

### DOWN

- 1 Skippy rival
- 2 "This - stick-up!"
- 3 Sofia's land
- 4 Rummage (through)
- 5 Stallion-to-be
- 6 - standstill
- 7 Plopped down
- 8 Fireplace part
- 9 Water color?
- 10 Crooned
- 11 Chart toppers
- 16 Pot covers
- 19 Cigar remnant
- 20 "Holy cow!"
- 21 Entice
- 22 Secluded spots
- 23 Cooking fat
- 25 Move like a butterfly
- 26 Adventure memo
- 27 Now, in a society newbies
- 30 Missing GI
- 33 Curtains
- 34 Lowly worker domain
- 36 Devil's domain
- 37 Blanchett of "The Aviator"
- 38 Milky gem
- 39 Sandwich bread
- 40 "The King -"
- 42 Misery
- 43 Under the weather
- 44 Architect Maya
- 45 Young fellow

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FEBRUARY 4-22

# THE SHARK IS BROKEN

Three legendary actors. One broken shark. The incredible story behind the making of JAWS.

BY Ian Shaw AND Joseph Nixon  
DIRECTED BY Pasha Rudnick



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# Theatre



A View from House Seats

## Opera With a Twist at Conejo

By Shirley Lorraine

Now on stage at the Conejo Players Theatre in Thousand Oaks is a barrel of laughs mixed with Italian opera, physical hijinks and outright over-acting in the form of Lend Me A Tenor, book by Ken Ludwig. The play is well directed by John Eslick who is also credited with the beautiful set design.

Set in 1934, the plot takes the audience to Cleveland, Ohio in which the Cleveland Grand Opera Company is expecting a world-renowned tenor, Tito Merelli, to be the guest vocalist in their one night only production of Pagliacci.

When the famed singer becomes unable to go on, Max, an underrated but talented assistant agrees, albeit reluctantly, to go on in his stead. He is in costume and makeup so no one will be the wiser, supposes General Manager Henry Saunders. The ploy succeeds, although, unknown to the rest of the players, the real star makes an appearance that throws everyone into confusion.

Ultimately the ruse is discovered; Max is heralded for his amazing performance, and all is well. How they get there is the fun of the action.

As in any good farce, there are the requisite multiple doors to be hidden behind, mistaken identities, bawdy goings-on, and erroneous assumptions. The cast is well up to the challenge the farce demands in all aspects, leaving the audience laughing throughout.

Josh Medina gives his Conejo debut performance a solid turn as Max the meek, who ends up being the one who saves the day and gets the girl. Joe Mulder is excellent as the Italian lothario. Both men

display wonderful vocals and an impressive amount of Italian-sounding dialogue.

A third cast member with an impressive voice is Andrew Landecker who breathes a fresh rendition into his role as The Bellhop who would rather be on the stage himself.

Michael Thompson gives an outrageously physical performance as Henry Saunders with grace and precision.

Lilliana Rose Villanueva, a newcomer to the Conejo stage, embodies the ingenue Maggie with an earnestly coy demeanor.

Tito's Italian wife Maria is played by Britanni McNeal, displaying the needed hair-trigger Italian emotional range, switching from loving to yelling in the same sentence.

Jordan Birgy-Krasnoff portrays Diana, a member of the opera cast who aspires to greatness, masters the double-entendre dialogue expertly and winningly.

The role of Julia, head of the opera guild, was played at the performance I attended by stand-in Beth Eslick, script in hand. She did an admirable job of delivering the dialogue smoothly and didn't miss a beat. In her full-length silver gown, she simply sparkled.

Costuming by Beth and Elene Mills (who usually plays Julia) was lovely across the board.

The play runs through February 7. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. with Thursday January 22 at 8:00 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturdays Jan 31 and February 7. [www.conejoplayers.org](http://www.conejoplayers.org) or 805-495-3715.

### Seven Ventura Retailers Pass Continued from page 1

"This is exactly the outcome we hope for," said Tyler Buck, the City's Alcohol Enforcement Officer. "Preventing underage access to alcohol protects young people and strengthens public safety across our community. The fact that every business checked followed the law shows a strong commitment from our local retailers to do the right thing."

A Minor Decoy Operation is a routine compliance check where an underage decoy, working under the direct supervision of police officers, attempts to purchase alcohol. These operations are designed to educate retailers, reinforce responsible sales practices, and prevent underage access to alcohol.

Studies have shown that individuals under the age of 21 are at a higher risk of alcohol-related traffic collisions and injuries. In communities where compliance checks are conducted regularly, violation rates drop significantly, in some cases, to single digits or lower.

The Ventura Police Department will continue to conduct compliance checks and work collaboratively with businesses to promote safe, responsible alcohol sales and protect the well-being of the community.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) through its Grant Assistance Program.

CITY OF VENTURA

# Ventura Housing Connections Series

Free workshops for tenants, property owners, and property managers.

Learn about property and rental rights and responsibilities, housing standards, communication tools, and resources available in Ventura.

Register and submit questions at [cityofventura.ca.gov/VHCS](http://cityofventura.ca.gov/VHCS)

Time: 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Location: Ventura City Hall  
501 Poli Street  
Community Meeting Room



JAN 29

Presented by:  
Ventura County  
Coastal Association  
of Realtors

Fair Housing  
Essentials

FEB 5

Presented by:  
Ventura County  
Coastal Association  
of Realtors

Legal Landscape  
for Landlords

FEB 26

Presented by:  
Housing  
Rights Center

Basics  
of Renting



ONLINE SURVEY

## 2026 Ventura Breeze Reader Survey

### We Value Your Feedback!

As a truly local publication, the Breeze has established itself as more than just a news source — it's a vibrant part of the fabric of our city, committed to informing, engaging, and connecting readers with the people, businesses, and stories that define Ventura. This short survey takes about 4 minutes to complete.

### Your Input Helps Guide What We Cover and How We Serve Our Readers

To show our appreciation, we're offering participants the option to enter a drawing to win a \$100 Visa gift card. To enter, simply complete the survey and provide your name, phone number and email address at the end. Your survey responses will remain anonymous and contact information will be used only to contact the winner. Drawing will take place on 2/28/26.

[www.venturabreeze.com/survey](http://www.venturabreeze.com/survey)



*Yes!*

## Life really is this fun at the Townehouse!



Welcome to the Ventura Townehouse, a carefully designed retirement community that maximizes enjoyment, comfort, and an expansive life at every level, including independent living, assisted living, and memory care.



We invite you to discover the unique beauty of this premier luxury resort senior community nestled on over 12 acres of lush, verdant landscapes. The Ventura Townehouse is unmatched in retirement communities in its expansive park-like beauty, and unparalleled views of the ocean and mountains.



From the moment you step onto our beautiful property, you'll experience a sense of wonder and belonging. Here you'll enjoy indoor-outdoor California living at its finest, with daily strolls through impeccably landscaped grounds filled with vibrant flowers, plants, and trees. Ventura's natural beauty with its picturesque views, magical sunrises and sunsets, and near-perfect weather year-round offers an exceptional daily lifestyle.

At the Ventura Townehouse, we offer lifestyle options and compassionate care services specially designed to fit your unique needs. If you're seeking the finest retirement living community for yourself or a loved one, one visit will convince you that the Ventura Townehouse is the ideal place to retire and embrace the next chapter of your life.

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